

The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 10

November 2025

In Everything . . .

Give Thanks

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."—Ephesians 1:18, 19.



AS WE ENTER the Thanksgiving season, I want to challenge my readers to see the needs all around you. We don't often think in terms of our heart having eyes to see, but Ephesians 1:18 reads in the *New International Version of the Bible*, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, that you may know the hope to which he has called you." The Bible refers to sin as walking in darkness and walking in the light as having our spiritual understanding open. To make it to heaven, we must have eyes of our understanding to be enlightened; in other words, the eyes of our heart must be opened.

The eyes of many hearts have been closed by heartaches, disappointments, bad experiences, lost loves, by sin, by backsliding, loss of loved ones, neglect, deteriorating health. II Corinthians 4:4 tells us, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Foolish hearts were and are darkened, "because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). This blinds the heart of man: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18).

The glorious gospel has the power to "open the eyes of the blind who sit in darkness." Isaiah 42:6, 7 declares, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART TO SEE HIS GLORY

We need to see God's glory!

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."—Isaiah 40:26.

"Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with

us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha."—II Kings 6:14-18.

We need to open the eyes of our hearts to behold Isaiah's vision!

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."—Isaiah 6:1-8.

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART TO SEE MYSELF AS GOD SEES ME

We need to allow God to reveal ourselves to ourselves. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

—Revelation 3:14-20.

Open the eyes of your heart! "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked

ABOUT THE COVER

As we as a nation celebrate the Thanksgiving season, let us remember to put into practice Psalm 100:4, 5, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations."

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Devoted to the gospel of our loving Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave freely His life-blood, to save us from our many sins, to sanctify our fallen nature and to bring into one body all true believers, by whose stripes we are healed.

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how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"—Romans 11:33.

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART

TO SEE THE RICHES OF HIS GLORY

Behold the glories of heaven, its beauty, and splendor! Isaiah 51:6, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

Open the eyes of your heart as the apostle Paul did. "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.

Open the eyes of your heart as the apostle Peter did. He saw it as an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."—I Peter 1:4.

Open the eyes of your heart as Stephen did. "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.—Acts 7:56.

May the Lord help me to allow Him to open the eyes of my heart! †

way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Psalm 139:23, 24.

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART TO SEE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

Jude 1:20-23, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference." The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us to see our neighbor's need. The man bound in Gadara needed someone to open the eyes of their heart.

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART TO SEE A LOST AND DYING WORLD

Increase our soul burden! John 4:35-38, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART TO SEE THE DEEP THINGS OF CHRIST

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—I Corinthians 2:10.

There are depths of faith and experience where few have traveled! Grasp the challenge, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

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BIBLE UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP

By the late R. L. Erwin

Scripture text: John 17:20-23—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me



I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”

THE REVELATION of Jesus Christ as set forth by St. John tells of many plagues, woes and vials of wrath. Today we are living in the closing days of grace; these woes are upon us. The devil is working even among some who are supposed to be free—of Satan and sectism—right in among some who make profession in the Church of God today. Man-rule sticks its ugly sect-head up with a seducing spirit.

“Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” (Psalm 94:20).

“If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

Today when a true minister rebukes all evil, then some professors sympathize with the evil.

The accident rate is high today; still the automobile doesn't run down nor wreck as many lives as the gossiping, hypocritical tongue.

Listen, my Friend, the farther this present-day compromise of Church of God professors goes, the more seducing and corruptible it becomes. Yes, the great masses of today's false religions have become tolerant and friendly toward corrupt, satanic, apostate conditions. We all know the powers of sin have reached hurricane velocity, and the pressure and suction of today's departure from God are like hidden currents in treacherous waters. These satanic currents are sweeping the youth of today into moral wreck and spiritual ruin. In this strife-torn, sin-wrecked, confused world, the Spirit of God is the only true remedy to guide us into paths of peace and eternal safety.

There seems to be confusion among some of the saints as to when unity is to become effective among

Christians in the Church of God. What is the basis of Bible unity? What is the basis of Bible fellowship? Is unity established sometime later after fellowship is established? Does unity of doctrine establish fellowship? Paul tells the Church of God in Ephesians 4:3 to endeavor to keep the “unity of the Spirit” until they all came to the “unity of the faith [doctrine].” We can clearly see by this that Christ intends that every ONE of His saints who compose the true Church of God come to the same doctrine. Paul also speaks in several scriptures that the saints are to be of the same mind and doctrine.

Let us notice in the above scriptures that this is a command: endeavor to keep the unity; and, therefore, every true Christian **MUST** be obedient to this commandment in order to remain a Christian.

According to the Scriptures, those who divide themselves off into groups are not pleasing Christ, the Builder and Organizer of His one church. **Therefore, those who backslide sever fellowship with Christ, and those who follow their group are guilty of causing division.**

When is fellowship established? We recognize that there is no Christian fellowship among the unsaved, for they are strangers and foreigners to God's way; but when sinners become saints, Paul says in Ephesians 2:19, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God [or Church of God].” How can anyone who has been saved not be able to see by this one verse that salvation makes EVERY saint a member of the household of God, or the one true church, and establishes Christlike fellowship with God and every other saint of the true Church of God? Anyone would think, by the way those so-called Church of God preachers divide into groups, that the household of God is the household of man; and that it is scripturally proper to separate the saints into the non-scriptural groups, and that it is in the order of the Lord. But such is NOT the case; it is a transgression against God and against Christ, His body, or church. All the saved people are the one household of God, the body of Christ.

Ephesians 2:21, “In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” In this verse, which was inspired of God, it says that all the saints are fitly framed together by the hand of God, not divided and separated into groups by preachers. By reading the 22nd verse, everyone ought to see the terribleness and wickedness of this dividing and separating the saints into groups. Paul said, “Let God be true and every man a liar.”

We read in verse 22, “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God.” The Church of God, here and now on the earth, is the dwelling place of God; and the question quickly comes to the minds of many: Which Church of God group does God live in? Or, is God going to divide and separate His true spiritual body into parts in order to dwell in these separate groups with different preachers as their head, each with a different church organization?

We can plainly see by this next text that salvation is the basis of fellowship and unity of Spirit in Christ's church or body. We are all baptized by one Spirit; and that fellowship and unity of the Spirit is established

between Christ and every saint in His church here and now on earth. And after studying this one scripture, how can anyone spiritually divide and separate Christ's true church into groups and not see scripturally that it is sin? Instead of dividing the saints, these leaders should teach the unity of all the saints, not only in word, but also in example and practice.

It may be a fact that there are true saints in every one of these separate groups; but they are kept separate by the spirit of "groupism." God's heart must be grieved to see His true Christians separated in fellowship, when His Son died on the cruel, agonizing cross to make perfect unity of the Spirit and faith possible. Christ, through salvation and sanctification, makes unity; it is carnal man who separates. This work of Satan tears the church, Christ's body, into division. Why let Satan defeat God's plan? Why not answer Christ's prayer, "THAT ALL BE ONE"?

—Reprinted from the July 1989 issue †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE FAMILY OF GOD A PLACE FOR EACH CHILD OF GOD

Scriptures: Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 12:18; Mark 16:17; Romans 12:1-3, 5; Galatians 6:6, 10.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

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

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Memory Verse: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

—I Corinthians 12:18.

Aim: To show that there is work for every member of the family of God.

INTRODUCTION

GOD HAS A definite plan for every human being who comes into the world. Very few allow God to accomplish His plan! However, in the family of

God, we must strive to fulfill God's will and plan for our life. There is a work for everyone to do. Some are called to preach the gospel, some to teach, some to fill the office of a deacon, some must have the gifts of healing, or miracles and other gifts; all must work together. We need to realize that God has always had leaders, and He still has today! May God help us not only to learn our place and fill it, but also to recognize others in the office to which God has called them.

MEDITATIONS

THE MINISTRY OF PREACHING—Matthew 28:19—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations—

There is a great need today of Holy Ghost-filled, God-called preachers. The fields are white, and the laborers are few. Who is seeking the gift of preaching? The job of teaching all nations was given to the Church of God. You cannot remain a member of this family without doing your part! When God calls and sends a man, he will preach THE gospel. How many reading this lesson are willing to say, "Here am I; Lord, send me"?

GOD PLACES US IN THE BODY—I Corinthians

12:18—But now hath God—This verse is very clear. God places the members in the family of God, the church, as it pleases Him. However, we need to realize that God has told us to seek the best gifts. This we must do! If God gives to another more gifts than He gives to us, let us rejoice! After all, we are not fighting one another, but each member of the family must strive to fill his place. In the body there is God-given leadership. Let us recognize this and follow those whom God has called to lead us.

THE WORK OF THE FAMILY—Mark 16:17—

And these signs shall follow—Jesus said these signs would follow the family of God. There is no use to make excuses. The thing to do is to get down to business and be the family of God. With God our Father, Christ our Savior and King, what enemy can defeat us? This is no "maybe so" thing; these signs shall follow those that believe. Without faith it is impossible to please God. May God help us to be the winning church over which the gates of hell cannot prevail!

THE WAY TO VICTORY—Romans 12:1—A living

sacrifice—Here is the answer to why more is not being done. When people will sell out to God, hold back nothing—life, talents, money, family, job—putting everything on the altar, then God will answer from heaven. We will see the "fire" fall—no, not wild fire, but the holy power of heaven to heal the sick, save the lost, to cast out devils, and thus show to the world that Christ is alive forevermore! This kind of gospel, a gospel of power and victory, will be inviting to sinners.

Verse 2—And be not conformed to this world—The one who is seeking after the world need not expect to see the glory of God manifested through his life. No man can serve two masters. He cannot conform to the world and to the Word of God at the same time. A church that conforms to the world in dress, etc., need not expect to see God's mighty power revealed through it. The family of God has been saved from the love of the world.

THE HUMBLE LIFE—Romans 12:3—For I say through the grace given unto me—The gifts of the

Spirit are given for the benefit of the whole family, also for the help of the lost. Let no one glory in self or think more highly of himself than he ought. What do we have that we have not received? People who find themselves in a cold, worldly, proud, dead church need to come out, for such is not the family of God. God's people are a humble people.

ONE BODY—Romans 12:5—Many members—

Just as the human body has many members—hands, eyes, ears, feet, arms, legs—so the body of Christ has many members. The great need is that every member fill his place as each member of the human body does. There is no place in the body of Christ for jealousy. Every pastor needs to realize that it is not his congregation but God's, and that he is responsible to God. Therefore, he should be glad to receive any help from another brother who has more ability than he.

SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL—Galatians 6:6—

Let him that is taught—All cannot go, all will not be called to preach, but all can help. The word, "communicate," as used in this verse means more than to get in contact with, or write a letter. The word means for those who are taught the truth, to support, to give to the one who is teaching. Modern printing presses should be running twenty-four hours per day turning out the pure gospel in every language. Every radio station in the world should be sounding forth the pure gospel, but only they who have it can give it! Are you doing your best? Are you supporting the spread of the truth? **Verse 10—As we have opportunity—**There is a great need today of the family of God fulfilling its responsibility to the sick and needy. We dare not neglect our fellowman, for in so doing we are neglecting the Lord. When we face Him at the last day will Christ say to us, "Depart," because we did not feed "Him" when "He" was hungry, and we did not visit "Him" when "He" was sick or in prison? This is for every member of the family of God.

CONCLUSION

It is sad that today many of those who say they are members of the family of God and standing for its truths are opposing God and those whom He has chosen to lead His people. If God makes a man a leader, those who are to be led must follow, or else they cannot follow God. How can you follow God and reject His leadership? It remains to be seen what could be done in our day if all who name the name of Christ in sincerity will band together, fill their place, and allow God to have His way in every heart.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Do you think that God has a particular plan for each of us?
2. What is meant by giving our bodies a living sacrifice?
3. Why are we not to be conformed to the world?
4. Why is humility such a great asset in the work of the Lord?
5. How can we all help in the spreading of the gospel?
6. How can we escape deception? †

The Reality and Necessity of Grace

Radio Message by the late Bro. Alvin A. Craig

UR SUBJECT for today's broadcast is, "The Reality and Necessity of Grace." Our text of scripture—Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The usual definition for the word *grace* is "unmerited favor." And, of course, that is a correct definition, but it does not fully explain all that the word means. *Vines Expository Dictionary* says "that which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favorable regard; on the part of the bestower, the friendly disposition from which the kindly act proceeds, graciousness, loving-kindness, goodwill generally, especially with reference to the divine favor or 'grace.'"

First of all, we notice that Jesus Christ had the grace of God. Luke, chapter 2, verse 40 says: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." We understand the word *grace* in this passage of scripture to mean "favor." He grew in favor.

Paul said, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6).

Someone has said: "Let all your conversation be such as may tend to exemplify and recommend Christianity. Let it not only be holy, but wise, gracious, and intelligent." Let me quote that again: *Let all your conversation be such as may tend to exemplify and recommend Christianity. Let it not only be holy, but wise, gracious, and intelligent.*

Grace, in respect to salvation, is a summary of all God has done to effect the salvation of man. That covers more than just one thing. The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to *all* men, so God's grace is for us and for salvation. That is a summary of all God has done to effect, or to bring about man's salvation. Of course, that would include God giving "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

We know that it is the love of God, through the workings of the Spirit of God, that brings a sinner to Christ, for Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Though God gave His only begotten Son, and His Son gave His life, which is a great expression of the grace of God, it also takes the convicting, drawing power of the Holy Spirit. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (II Corinthians 7:10). Whenever we come to God for salvation, we must come with a broken and a contrite heart. Again, this is the working of the grace of God. When the Spirit of God visits the unsaved,

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convicts them of their sins, that is one of the manifestations of the grace of God.

God's grace, in providing salvation, is extended to all mankind. I realize that there are religions in the world that teach the predestination doctrine. I also mention this quite often on the broadcast, because I think it is something that needs to be emphasized. God did not predetermine who would be saved and who would be lost before He made this world. God determined that whosoever will may come to Him, and Jesus Christ tasted death for every man. Again, John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world [talking about the world of people], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to *all* men, not to a select few, but to all men. The word *men* here is talking about the family of man, not just the male factor in the family of man. *All*—men, women, boys, and girls are offered salvation through the gift and grace of God. God is no respecter of persons, and Jesus died for all.

The grace of God shows us that salvation is not of works. Our text also says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." *The Reader's Digest* carried an interview with Muhammed Ali, the former boxer. He had converted to the Muslim religion, and they were questioning him in reference to his eternal welfare, I suppose. He said, "Well, I consider that if my good deeds outweigh my bad, then I'll go to heaven, and if my bad deeds outweigh my good, then I'll go to hell." Beloved, I want to emphasize the fact that we are not saved by works. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves." Once we sell ourselves to sin, we will be in bondage to sin until Jesus Christ, through the grace of God, sets us free. Yes, whom the Son makes free is free indeed.

It is quite true that after we are saved, we must have works, and those works must be through the grace of God. Also, we must bear the fruit of the Spirit, but we're not saved because we give so much like the Pharisee did in the parable that Jesus gave. That man went up to the temple and stood there boasting about how often he fasted, how much he tithed, and how he did this and that. He went there a hypocrite and returned home a hypocrite. The publican that Jesus told us about bowed his head. He didn't even feel worthy to lift his head heavenward. He bowed his head and smote his breast and said, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." He went home justified. So, we are not saved by works, but we are saved by and through the grace of almighty God.

Grace teaches us some things. Titus 2:11, 12: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." While the devil is loose, while the devil is able to tempt and try, we are to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Again, the grace of God will enable us to do this. The Word of God, the grace of God, does not require anything that the Word and the grace of God will not provide us to overcome and to do. God is not an unreasonable God. He's not an unjust God, and He does not expect nor does He require of us

the impossible. What He does require, what His Word teaches, He'll give us the grace to do. The apostle Paul sought the Lord three times to have a certain thing removed, and the answer that he received from the Lord was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." I don't believe that was limited to the apostle Paul. I believe that the grace of God is sufficient for everyone who will take advantage of it.

There is a great need for the grace of God, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Once we sell ourselves to sin, there is no way we can deliver ourselves from the prison house of sin. We must have God's pardon, we must have Christ's redeeming grace. So, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," therefore, all need the grace of God. All need the grace of God extended to them. God has extended His grace to anyone and to everyone who will take advantage of it.

Since man sold himself into the bondage of sin, all are under the servitude of sin and the sentence of death. Paul said in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; ..." And, the Lord said in Ezekiel 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." God told Adam and Eve, "Ye shall not eat of it [the tree of knowledge of good and evil], neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." So, whenever we knowingly and willingly commit sin against God, it brings death to the soul. I'm not talking about annihilation. Death, spiritually speaking, is separation from God. To be separated from God is to be separated from the Source of life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12). Therefore, all have sinned, and all stand in need of the grace of God. The wages of sin is death. We cannot deliver ourselves, we cannot resurrect ourselves from the dead state of sin.

Paul said, "You hath he [the Lord] quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Being reconciled with God, being resurrected, being quickened is only by and through the grace of God. I might add here, whenever we are saved, whenever we are resurrected from the dead state of sin to life in Christ, that is the first resurrection. These millennialists, literal kingdom teachers, who teach that the first resurrection is the physical resurrection of the righteous are missing the mark. They are teaching error. The first resurrection is deliverance from sin, resurrection from the dead state of sin to life in Christ. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Paul goes on in Ephesians, chapter 2, and tells us what he's talking about. He said that salvation is the grace of God, and it is through salvation that we are resurrected and are made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

God, in His matchless love and grace, provided the ransom price for our sins. "For he hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us [That does not mean that Jesus Christ sinned. It means that Jesus Christ took our sins, bore our sins.], who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Those are words Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in II Corinthians 5:21.

Peter said, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation

received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18, 19). Isn't it sad that so many are taking the blood out of their songs and sermons? But without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. I repeat: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Yes, Jesus Christ died upon that cross. He shed His life's blood. He gave His life so that we could have life. Behold, therefore the goodness of God! "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (I John 3:1). This is possible only through the grace of God.

We ought to be grateful for the loving-kindness, favor, and grace of God, and we should show our gratefulness by loving Him and serving Him. He's the one who loved us so much, one who gave His only begotten Son for us, so we should indeed love Him in return. This is indeed the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment" (Mark 12:30). If we really love Jesus, we will serve Him. He who loves Him will keep His commandments. He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Whenever we are saved by the grace of God, the Holy Spirit is shed abroad in our hearts, and we love the Lord and want to please Him, we will show our devotion to Him by doing those things that are pleasing to Him. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." It's only through the love of God. †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late

C. W. Naylor



Part
IX

Entire Sanctification

Holiness, a Biblical Doctrine

In our English Bible we have the two words "holiness" and "sanctification" in their various forms; but they are translated from a single word in the Greek text, and consequently the two words mean the same thing. It matters not, then, which word is used in the English translation; for the meaning is always the same, and the words are perfectly interchangeable. If we would understand what the Bible says about the subject, we must keep this fact in view.

That it is God's plan that we should be holy, has already been shown; but it will probably be well to quote the Scriptures again. "God hath from the beginning

chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thessalonians 2:13). "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4). "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Romans 8:28, 29).

Now, this image of Christ, to which we are to conform, is the same as the image in which man was originally created. This pertains especially to his moral image. It is God's will that we be like His Son so that He shall not be ashamed to call us brethren. Christ became like us and took upon Himself mortal flesh and the nature of man that we might bear His image, and in nature be like Him. That we be in nature like Christ has from the beginning been God's plan and purpose. He has made all necessary provision that it may be so; and we may now be holy like our great High Priest, Jesus Christ; of Him the Bible says, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). And in Hebrews 12:14 we find the following words, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Concerning the purpose of Christ's death, we read, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12). Again, we read, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will" (verses 20, 21). When God called us by His grace, He did not call us to an unholy service, nor to an unholy life. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:7). He has made it possible for us to be holy and to live holy. "That he would grant unto us, that we ... might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75).

God wants us to be holy because He is holy. He can find pleasure in nothing but what is holy. Listen to what He has said: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16). And Jesus prayed thus: "Sanctify them through thy truth: ... and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified" (John 17:17-19). In this prayer He did not make His request merely for the Twelve, for He continued: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (verse 20).

Many have supposed that holiness is something to be obtained only after death. The Scriptures, however, speak of it as a present experience. When Paul wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthians, he addressed them thus: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (chapter 1:2). Jude addresses his Epistle to "them that are sanctified by God the Father" (verse 1). Neither of these apostles was writing to persons in heaven or to

persons who were dead. On the contrary, they were writing to persons who were alive and were then in this world. Those addressed in the Hebrew epistle are called "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (chapter 3:1). Paul calls the Colossian Christians "holy and beloved" (Colossians 3:12). In I Corinthians 3:16, 17, Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ... For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Surely language could not make anything plainer. Holiness is for us, now and here. Concerning the purified man, Paul said, "He shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Timothy 2:21). And here is a picture that Peter drew, describing the sanctified state: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4). The reader can, if he will consult his Bible, easily find many other texts bearing on this subject.

Two Phases of Sanctification

There are two phases, or two steps, in the work of sanctification. In the Scriptures just quoted no attempt was made to distinguish between these phases; but we shall now proceed to note that there are some distinctions. We have before shown, by Hebrews 13:12, that Jesus suffered and shed His blood that He might sanctify the people. All cleansing, therefore, of whatsoever sort, that is wrought by the work of Christ comes properly under the term "sanctification." John tells us that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The Revelator speaks of Christ thus: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). In Hebrews 1:3 it is written of Him: "When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." All who are truly Christians have been thus purified in the blood of Christ; the guilt of their sins has all been washed away. They have yielded themselves to Christ and have become holy through His blood.

The cleansing from guilt, however, is not all that the Scriptures promise. Under a previous heading it has been shown that there is a remedy for that inner depravity that still remains in the believer. To the Thessalonian Christians, Paul said, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (I Thessalonians 5:23). This language was not addressed to sinners. In verse 27 he speaks of them as being "holy brethren." If the reader will turn to the first chapter of the Epistle, he will find that they were neither sinners nor backsliders, but Christians in a very commendable state of grace. They had need, however, of still further attainment, and so he prayed that they might be sanctified wholly. This is in perfect harmony with Christ's praying for the apostles that they might be sanctified. In II Corinthians 7:1 Paul mentions "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" and defines it as being a cleansing from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." It will serve no good purpose to multiply texts here, though it might easily be done; for if anyone will reject these, he would reject a thousand, whereas, if he will accept these and submit himself to God, he may know in his own soul the truth of them.

Why People Oppose the Doctrine

There are a number of reasons why people oppose the doctrine of sanctification. One is because they misunderstand it. Some get a very exaggerated idea of what is meant by the term and of what the life of one possessing the experience must be; and that misunderstanding makes the doctrine appear unreasonable to them, therefore they cannot receive it. The experience is, of course, something that no man can understand until he knows it for himself by having entered into it. We may have a theoretical knowledge of it, but real knowledge comes only through experience.

Some persons reject the doctrine because they have, through the influence of others, been prejudiced against it, or because the theology which they have been taught finds no place for it. If we accept any theological opinions that are contrary to the Scriptures, the sooner we can get rid of them, the better for us. Those theological opinions, whatever may have been their source, are likely to prove a barrier when we come to investigate this doctrine. It is something worthy of our most careful investigation, and we should not, therefore, let our theology stand in the way of such investigation.

Some persons oppose the doctrine because they wrongly interpret certain passages of Scripture. It is probable that the interpreting of the seventh chapter of Romans to mean the experience of one who is saved by divine grace, is the greatest barrier in the way of the truth seeker. Many teachers of entire sanctification refer to that chapter as being a picture of the Christian life and as showing the necessity for a higher work of grace. It certainly does show the need of a work of grace, for it is the picture of a man without grace. It is the picture of an awakened sinner, one who finds his mind approving that which is right and good, but at the same time finds sin reigning over him and holding him by its power so that he cannot of himself break away from it. If he will be a Christian at all, he must get over into the experience pictured in the eighth chapter. The Christian life at its lowest ebb is higher than that experience represented in the seventh of Romans.

In order to emphasize the believer's need of entire sanctification, many teachers lower the standard of the justified life to a plane wholly inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible. Persons who are in the justified state are represented in the Book as being holy, not as being sinful and wicked. Neither are their hearts full of a great multitude of evils ready to assert themselves at any time. Teachings that lower the standard of justification often cause real Christians to reject the doctrine of entire holiness, because they realize that the standard of justification being preached does not come up to the standard of life to which they are living; and, as a consequence, they naturally conclude that what the preacher is teaching them is simply the experience that they already possess.

Another stumbling-block is the mistakes some preachers of holiness make in applying to the subject many scriptures that have no true application to it. The theology and interpretations of many of the teachers of entire sanctification are much in need of revision. This, however, does not discredit the true doctrine;

instead, it discredits those teachers. But it does often hinder sincere people who would otherwise accept the truth.

Another stumbling-block in the way of the investigator is the excesses of some professors of sanctification. They give way to many wild and unseemly demonstrations, actions that cause the beholders to feel ashamed. Such professors declare some things to be of God which, if they truly were, would greatly put Him to shame. These demonstrations and excesses often, instead of testifying to the presence of holiness, show the absence of that true quality of holiness for which people look. True holiness is Godlike, and will not behave itself unseemly.

Some persons disbelieve because of the inconsistency of some who profess. Hypocrisy is not dead. Those who profess to be holy and who live lives, in private or in public, not consistent with that doctrine, prove themselves to be hypocrites. Such persons' lives are not a true test of the doctrine. There are many whose lives do correspond to their profession. They shine as lights in the world. They are blameless and harmless. Such persons do not make a great noise or a show of their lives. They simply live godly and righteously and let their lives tell the story. Their lips may tell the story also; but if the experience is in the heart, the life tells it more convincingly than the lips do.

Some oppose the doctrine of holiness because depravity is in their hearts. This evil element is not in the least favorable to holiness. Being the exact opposite of holiness, it naturally repels it and everything that belongs to it. Another reason why some oppose sanctification is because they are unwilling to bear the reproach that in some places attaches to the professor of entire sanctification. They are not willing to be like Christ, if being like Him means to be reproached as He was reproached; and scorned as He was scorned. They think very highly of the people's opinion of them, and they are not willing to do anything that would lessen them in that regard. Peter looked at it differently. He said, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye" (I Peter 4:14). But those who love the praise of men cannot see how they could be happy in reproaches; therefore, they refrain from accepting both the doctrine and the experience.

Others are not willing to consecrate themselves to the Lord. They like their own way; they like to make their own plans and to do as they please. The doctrine of entire consecration does not sound good in their ears. It does not meet a response in their hearts. In order; therefore, to ease their conscience, they oppose the doctrine. If they do not do this outwardly, they have an internal feeling of opposition, and God sees and knows it very well. The person who holds such an attitude, however, will soon find himself far from God. Whatever be the motive that leads to opposition, either to accepting the doctrine or to obtaining the experience, it cannot but react upon the soul with disastrous consequences. Jesus taught that if any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine. Let him put this doctrine to that test, and he will not fail of understanding it.

What the Word Means

The word "sanctification" always has two meanings, or contains two ideas. These two ideas sustain to each other the relation of cause and effect. The two ideas in the word are never separated. The first is dedication, the second sacredness and purity. The first always results in the second; the second can never exist (except in God) without the first. There are two kinds of sanctification taught in the Bible—one, that common to the Old Testament, is a ceremonial sanctification; while the other, characteristic of the New Testament, nearly always conveys the idea of a moral dedication and purification. The theology which makes the word mean dedication only is very superficial in its nature. I shall call attention to a few examples of this two-foldness of the word as used in the Old Testament.

Exodus 29:9 states that Moses was told to consecrate Aaron and his sons. Then follows an account of the directions as to how Moses should do this; and in verse 21 we read, "And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." As a result of this consecration and hallowing of the garments, they are in verse 29 called "*the holy garments*"; and of the priest who had been thus dedicated, it is said "*for he is holy* unto his God" (Leviticus 21:7). After telling how to consecrate and sanctify the altar, God said, "Seven days thou shalt make atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be *an altar most holy*" (Exodus 29:37). Again, "And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be *an altar most holy*" (chapter 40:10). Concerning the tabernacle and the things belonging thereto, God said, "And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shall hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and *it shall be holy*" (verse 9). From that time forward these were called "the most holy things." In Numbers 4:4-15 we find a full account of these things and the treatment that must be accorded them on account of their holiness. In I Chronicles 23:13, we read that "Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons forever." This does not imply that the things were holy before they were sanctified, but that they became most holy as a result of that sanctification.

The scriptures quoted show the truth of the statement already made, that dedication, or the first idea of sanctification, always produced the second, and resulted in the holiness of the object sanctified, whether that was an animate or inanimate thing. Whatever was sanctified became, from that time forth, a sacred and holy thing, and might not be used for any but a sacred and holy purpose. This use of the word is uniform throughout the Scriptures. In the New Testament the same two-foldness of thought runs through all the texts relating to the subject. The purpose of dedication, both in Old and New Testaments, is that the object may be holy; not simply that it may be dedicated, but that it may be sacred and holy unto the Lord. †

YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

2025 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Ross Tolbert



I WILL BE SPEAKING on “Ye Are the Light of the World.” I want to take my text from Matthew, chapter 5, verses 14-16. These are the words of Jesus: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Jesus was talking to the people there, telling them that they are the light.

What is that light? Each of us are born by nature without this light. We’re born in darkness. We don’t have this light, so this light Jesus is talking about is not something that is here naturally. It’s not something that we find in another person. It’s something we only find from Jesus Christ. We’re without this light by nature. This light is the divine work that happens when we ask God for salvation. He comes into our hearts, and guess what? He gives us a light. Right then, the devil starts to work to put out that light. That’s his job.

I’m going to give you an example of what the devil tries to do. (*Bro. Harley is asked to stand as an example.*) So here are the two of us. I’ve come to Christ. He’s given me His great salvation. He forgave me of my sins. I’m blood-washed. (*Bro. Harley was asked to walk away.*) I’m here trying to serve God, even if someone else comes and tries to get my attention. Here I am trying to walk with Christ. I’m just saved, and there’s someone here trying to get my attention and trying to get me to turn away from this light. Something that has happened that’s miraculous. Something that’s beautiful. Temptation is always going to be there trying to get us to turn away. (*Bro. Harley sits.*)

HAVE WE LET THINGS DARKEN OUR LIGHT?

This afternoon, how is our light? Have we let things darken our light? You see, we live in a very dark world. I don’t know about out here, but I live in California. You have probably read about things that have happened there. It’s a dark world. We all live in a very dark world.

This light that God has given us isn’t something that He says, in effect, “Alright, Bro. Ross, I want you to take your light and sit down and hide in the corner.” Oh, it’s a dark world! Look around. Look at all the evil around us—the sin, and all the disgusting things of this world. We’re living in this world, but God has given us this light to do something with. God is challenging us today.

Our little children sing this song—
*This little light of mine,
I’m gonna let it shine;
This little light of mine,
I’m gonna let it shine;*

*This little light of mine,
I’m gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, all the time.*

*Won’t let Satan blow it out,
I’m gonna let it shine;
Won’t let Satan blow it out,
I’m gonna let it shine;
Won’t let Satan blow it out,
I’m gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, all the time.*

*Hide it under a bushel, No!
I’m gonna let it shine;
Hide it under a bushel, No!
I’m gonna let it shine;
Hide it under a bushel, No!
I’m gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, let it shine, all the time.*

You know, Jesus was a carpenter. Do we remember Him as a carpenter? This is interesting when I look at this. We see it in a few little scriptures. Well, His dad was a carpenter, so back in that time, He took on the occupation that His dad did. Joseph trained Him as a carpenter. But do we really know Him as a carpenter? No, we know Him as the divine Savior of man.

ARE YOU KNOWN AS A CHRISTIAN?

I’m in commercial real estate. That’s what I do for a living. I started out as an electrical engineer, but God had a different path for me. Let me tell you something: God is challenging each one of us today. I don’t want to be known as someone who is great in commercial real estate. I want to be known as a Christian who has stood for God through my whole life. That’s what I want to be known by. We may be great at what we do, but God wants us wherever we are in life to be known as that person who is standing for Him. Someone your friends can go to and ask for prayer. Have you ever had it happen at work?

I work with a lot of religious people. People come to me and say, “Can you remember something in prayer?” In my mind, I’m thinking, *Well, there are all of these other religious people here. Did you go and ask them? Why didn’t you go and ask them?* No, because they think, “Ross, I know you have what you say you have. You walk the talk. You don’t just talk to talk. You walk what you say you have.” That’s because of the light that God has given us. When we’re at work, God wants us to shine that light. Don’t be afraid of it. I live in California. We have to be careful what we say at work or else they might bring some action against us. We’re going to hear from HR [Human Resources]. “Ross, you can’t be talking about God at work.” But, God has a light for us to shine, no matter where we are in life. So,

as Christians, we ought to live our lives that whatever we do in life, this light swallows it up, and when people come in contact with us, they'll know we're children of God, and we love God. That means when we're driving down the street, right?

In California, we have a lot of fast drivers. You're going somewhere, and they think they need to get there ahead of you. As you're driving along, they look at you to get over, then they get over and cut you off. How's your light? I've cut people off inadvertently and I look in my rearview mirror. Do you know what I see? Hand gestures. I'm getting words coming from their mouths. You can see things in your rearview mirror. You know what they're calling you. You can see these things. How are we when we're out driving? Is our light shining? We're in a very dark world. There is darkness all around us. This world needs our light. It needs our light, because without our light, this world is lost. It'll have no choice but to go to hell. With our light, we're giving the world a chance to see God and see what He can do for them.

PAUL AND SILAS LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE

I love the story about Paul and Silas. They were in what I call a very dark place. I've never been a prisoner, but I've visited prisons. Prison is not a bright shining place. It's a place that I never want to go permanently. Paul and Silas, two men of God, were thrown in jail for preaching the gospel. They were in a dark place, but what did they do? When we're in the most difficult times, God still wants us to shine our light. The world needs to see that when we're going through difficult situations, we have something that's not of this earth. Something that gives us these unsearchable riches of Christ, something that gives us something better than this world can offer. Let's go to Acts 16:19. This verse tells us that they caught Paul and Silas and threw them in jail and laid many stripes on them. Let's go on down to verses 25 and 26: "And at midnight [They were in a dark place, but you know what? They pulled out their light and started shining their light. They started giving God praise.] Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."

When you shine your light, thank God, something is going to happen. When God is within you and that light is shining out to those around you, something is going to happen. That's the purpose of the light. It's not just us as children of God, it's what we're shining. It's God's power through us that He wants us to shine to others. Here were Paul and Silas in a difficult place, but they weren't going to hide their light under a bushel. They weren't going to say, *Oh, this is horrible. We've never been in this horrible place before. We've been beaten. We've had stripes put on our backs. This is a difficult situation.* They took out their light and started shining for Christ. What happened when they shone their light? What did we find out? Souls got saved.

When we don't shine our light, there is no chance for souls to get saved. We don't have an influence on

others around us. When our light is not shining, God is not working in us to show others the ways of Christ. Souls don't get saved when our light is not shining. I don't believe God wants any undercover Christians.

I heard this little children's song before—

*Nobody knows I am a Christian,
My light won't give you a clue;
Nobody sees there's any difference,
I do what all my friends do.*

*Nobody knows that I'm a Christian,
I never pray o'er my food;
I'll rant and rave and tell others off,
And that's when I'm in a good mood.*

*When I am late to school or work,
I lose my cool I must say;
Some people honk because they love Jesus,
My honk says "out of my way."*

*I tell the world that I'm a Christian,
Wear a big sign on my chest;
But if I want the world to know it,
My light should say it the best.*

God doesn't want any undercover Christians. Being an undercover Christian means you're ashamed of the light God has given you. God has given this light so that it could shine in this dark world. This is a big danger sometimes for people who come into church, and they just sit here and they think, *Oh, I'm just going to be here. I love coming in with the saints. I love hearing the singing and the worshiping of God,* but when they get out in the world, they're quiet. Their light gets covered. It's sort of like Peter at the foot of the cross around that little fire when that little maiden girl said, "You're one of them." "No, not me, I don't know anything about Him." He was in a very dangerous position. It caused him to deny Christ because he would not shine his light. It's dangerous for us to cover our light. It's very dangerous.

GOD WANTS YOUNG PEOPLE TO SHINE

I want to give you an example (illustration) of what happens when you shine your light: (*Five young brothers are called up to the platform. They stand in front of the audience.*) God loves young people. I worked with the young people in our church for 25 years, and I just love them. These young people here will be leading the Church of God in a few years. That's beautiful. God has given us beautiful young people. Let me illustrate: *Here is this young person who comes to God. God's dealing with his heart and he gets saved, so God gives him a light. God gives him that light to shine in this dark world. He's not ashamed of this light. He's telling his friends. He's talking about this light. He's shining a light. He's excited about what God's done for him. His friends are looking at him, and saying, "Oh, there's something different about him."*

Let me share something with you: When you get this light, it separates you from what you were doing before. This light has a separate work. When God comes into our lives, we're different. We're not the same per-

son, and our friends see. *“Man, you used to lie. You used to curse, but you’re different now in front of all your friends.”* So he’s there shining the light with his buddies. His buddy looks over and says, *“Wow, there is something different about him! I want what he has.”* If he hid the light, his buddy wouldn’t see it. If he hides the light, his friends have no chance of seeing God from his light.

I believe God’s faithful. He might use somebody else’s light. When God has given you a light, He wants you to shine for Him. *The young person holds up a light (candle) that was given him previously.* That friend comes to him, and he’s able to tell him about the light. Guess what? His friend gets saved, and his friend gets a light, and the saints rejoice. We say, *“Praise God, God’s moving!”* Why? Because one young man got the light and said, *“I’m going to shine my light. It doesn’t matter if I’m with my friends. They may not like me. They may go out drinking. They may think drugs is the path to go, but that’s not the path I’m going. I’m going to be a light.”*

GOD WANTS SINGLES TO SHINE

Do you realize that God used a lot of single people in the Bible? One person. What happened against those 400 prophets of Baal? One person stood up, believed in God, and shone that light. God sent down the fire. God made Himself real. That’s what will happen when we shine the light. God’s going to make Himself real. He’s going to make Himself real to others, and He’s going to help us to show that light to others. Then, people are going to come to God, and they’re going to receive that light because they got salvation. God has redeemed their souls. They’re saved.

The young brothers are told to look over in another direction. They are asked, *“Do you see a light? Look at those two. Do you see a light?”* They have no hope if this light’s not shining. *“Get your light up there? Can you see the light now? Now, you have the next person. The next young man says, “Wow, there’s something different about those two! God is moving in their lives. They’re showing the unsearchable riches of Christ. The joy is flowing their lives. The love is showing in their lives. They’re showing these things. That’s what happens when we get the light. We start to show these things to the world. God doesn’t want us to keep this light to ourselves.”*

What did God’s great commission say? *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”* He wants us to shine the light. *The young man comes to his third friend and he tells him how to get saved, and he gets the light.* I get excited when souls get saved, because God is doing something with His light. This is beautiful. So there are three now. Guess what? There is power when you have people join together with this light. There is power. That’s when the devil starts to work. He wants to separate people who have the light, because he wants to get one over here by himself, one over there by himself, and another person farther away by himself, and this light starts to get a little dimmer. So then there is only one candlelight instead of three.

Another young man is asked to look in a direction: *“What do you see?” “Light.”* He gets excited and says,

“I want to have what they have.” Why? Because this world is dark. All they’re seeing are horrible things—hatred, lying, cheating, stealing, and people slandering each other. They’re seeing all these things in the world and saying, *“This is a dark place, but look over there.”*

I tell you, when you’re shining your light, you’re giving the world hope; hope for something better than what they have. Then, the next friend says, *“I want what you have.”* Shining the light. And, then the next friend, *“Well, I’m not going to stay where I am. What they have is better than what I have.”* Now, he has the light. He’s shining for God.

This is what God wants us to do in this world around us. He wants us to shine this light. He doesn’t want us to hide our light. He doesn’t want us to snuff it out. He doesn’t want us to sit down when we leave this place. He wants our light to shine. This world is dark. This world needs our light. It’s not just our light. It’s the light we have from God. I hope you understand what I’m saying. *“Ye are the light of the world.” The young boys have finished their part in the illustration and sit down.*

When we get this light, it is needful for ourselves, but it’s also needful to others around us. God has not given this light just for us to enjoy it. Yes, this light is good. I have found the unsearchable riches of Christ. They’re wonderful, but God doesn’t want us to just hold them up right here. *“They’re all mine. I have them.”* This world needs what we have. They need it desperately. Don’t let anyone cover your light.

DON’T HIDE YOUR LIGHT

Let’s turn to Matthew 5:15—*“Neither do men light a candle [And do what?], and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”* Jesus was telling them, in effect, *“There’s a danger with the light that I’ve given you. People will hide it.”* This is a danger. This is what the devil wants us to do: He wants us to come to church, enjoy the good things of God, and go out there in the world and hide our light. But light isn’t given to us to be hidden. This light is given to us to put up on a candlestick so the world can see what God has done for us. We don’t want to put our light under a bushel.

Have you ever been into a really dark place? We have some caves in California. We go into a cave and it seems like the first thing the guide likes for you to do is to get down to the bottom of the cave. The guide really likes this. He tells everybody to stay where they are. *“Don’t move.”* What does he do? He shuts off the light. It’s pitch dark. You can’t even see your hand in front of your face. There’s no light. But I’ve had him to light just a match stick in the cave or to turn on a little flashlight. All of a sudden, there’s light. You see, darkness in this world causes a lot of bad things. I’ll share with you, when you live in darkness, where there’s not a lot of light, it’s depressing.

At our last company, we had some property in Alaska that was team managed. This was the first and only property. As you know, there are many times in the year when there’s not much light in Alaska. They don’t get the shining sun. I remember when I received a call, *“Ross, what do we do?”* The person went up to the fif-

teenth floor of the parking garage and jumped off, because there was no light. It was dark. They were depressed. That is what this world does to people. It keeps them in depression. The devil offers them all this shiny stuff, but the end result of it is, it's not shiny.

In the city of Sacramento, where I live, there are 76 hundred homeless people living on the streets. Of that number of 76 hundred, approximately 85% are either alcoholics or are on drugs. They are at a situation in life where nobody can really help them. That's the end result of the darkness of this world. As you drive down the road in our town, you see all of these campers and tents where people are living. If you go there at nights and watch, the drug dealers show up. People come out and get their nightly hit. Bound, because of this world of darkness.

Are we shining our light? Does the world know that there's a God who has all power to save people from sin from our light? You see, this light that we have shows the good works of God. It shows these unsearchable riches, and when the world is in such a dark place, they need this light, but are we shining the light? I tell you, if your light burns dimly, the world is going to have a dim light to turn to.

THE WORLD IS A DARK PLACE

I was thinking, *it would be horrible to go to a city that was all darkness*. I've been to places where there are no street lamps. Sometimes when you're driving out in the country, it's all dark. All you have is your headlights on at night, and being new to town, you're trying to find your place and you're hoping that your cell phone tells you where you're going correctly.

If we burn dimly, dim will be the world's light. God is calling us to burn brightly. What about in our homes? To me, that's where the light starts. We should be shining brightly in our homes.

Young People, do your brothers and sisters know that your light is shining, especially when there's only one bathroom in the home, and you're running late? How is your light shining? I remember four of us children growing up. We had one bathroom. I remember trying to be patient. It was difficult, but when God gave me the light, He helped me with patience.

What about at work? What about our neighborhood? I'll share a story with you. Living in the city, we have fences all around our backyards. Everybody has a fence. It's our property, so we define it with a fence. We have a neighbor who believes in what I call a *different landscaping method* than we do. He believes in what I call the *jungle method landscaping*, so he allows anything and everything to grow in his backyard. We have a pool. With all the things he has growing in his backyard, droppings from them are going into our pool. It's creating a mess. I look over the fence and there are blackberries growing, and I have to get out my trimmer and trim it so that it doesn't come over and try to take over my house. I was getting upset about this because I'm human. It was troubling me. Thank God for my wife. She helps me in some of these things. It's really good to have a good, godly wife. She said to me, "We need to talk to our neighbor and be nice to him." God had to move on my heart, because he's my neighbor. Yes, maybe

there are things I don't like, but my light still needs to shine, because I'm his only hope in my neighborhood in seeing Christ. If he doesn't see it in me, where is he going to find it? It's my responsibility to shine this light in my neighborhood, to those around me, to those in my workplace.

Am I that person whom everybody knows is a real Christian in the workplace? Not just one who talks the talk, not just one who puts a big sign on and says, "Oh, I went to church. We had a great service. Everybody was glorifying God," and then the next word is a curse word, and they're talking behind a coworker's back. Things are happening in this world. God wants us to have a light wherever we are. If we don't shine our light, we won't have a holy influence on the world. The world is not going to know what God can do for them.

I look at the responsibilities of presidents, of kings, of queens, of members of Congress, and of Supreme Court Justices. Their responsibilities are insignificant compared to the responsibilities of the true saint of God to shine the light for God. That's a big responsibility God has given us. He has given us this responsibility. Without our light, this world is going to fall into judgment and hell.

CONCLUSION

Is your light shining in your home, in your workplace, on the job, driving down the road talking on the phone to that person who's been going through a difficult situation? How is your light shining? Do others know that you are a Christian?

If you don't have a light today, I have good news for you. You can ask God and He'll save your soul. Guess what? He's going to give you a light, too. He will give you a light to shine in this dark world so that people can see the glory of God shining in you.

How is our light? Are we taking our light wherever we go? †

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THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



LAYING HOLD

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"I thought I asked you to wash your hands before you set the table for supper," said my mother.

She looked at my open hands as they reached upward toward the pile of plates in the kitchen cupboard. I followed her gaze, and saw the dark, unsightly streaks that ran across my palms.

"I did wash my hands," I said, "but I can't get the dirt off of them."

"Well, you must not have washed them hard enough," said my mother. "Did you use soap and hot water? Just running your hands under the faucet for a few seconds is not enough to get them clean." I was a big girl—twelve years old—and I knew how to wash my hands. The problem was that regular handwashing had not worked for me this time.

"The dirt is stuck on my hands," I said. I opened and closed my hands a couple of times. "And they feel sticky."

"Where were you this afternoon?" my mother asked. "You must have gotten into something you shouldn't have."

I hesitated. Earlier that afternoon, I had climbed one of the spruce trees in our yard. Although she had not specifically told me not to do it, I knew my mother didn't like to see me up in the branches of those trees. Spruce branches are weaker than the branches of other trees, and so there is a greater danger of falling from them. However, since the branches of the spruce tree were low enough for me to grab easily, I sometimes yielded to the temptation to climb up into them.

The climb, itself, wasn't much fun. The spruce needles caught my hair and pulled it. And it was impossible to keep from touching the sticky sap oozing from the trunk of the tree as I grasped its rough bark to haul myself upward.

But the view from the top of the spruce tree was worth the struggle to climb it. From the high, swaying branches, I could look down on the roof of the house, and I could see every corner of the yard. "Look at me!" I wanted to shout. "I'm at the top of the world!"

"You were climbing that spruce tree out front!" said my mother.

"I don't see how a tree can be dirty. It didn't look dirty to me," I protested.

"There's sap on the tree trunk, and now you have it on your hands. The sap is sticky, so any dirt that you touch is going to stick to your hands."

"How will I get rid of the sap?" I asked my mother.

She shrugged. "I don't know. It'll have to wear off, I guess."

All through the evening meal, I did my best to hide my dirty hands. After supper, it was my turn to dry the dishes. The dish towel stuck to my hands so many times I begged my younger sister, Twila, to switch jobs with me and let me wash the dishes, instead.

It was several days before the dirty, sticky streaks on the palms of my hands began to fade and disappear. I was seldom tempted to climb the spruce tree after that.

It is not possible to climb a tree without laying hold of its trunk and branches. Only by a firm grip can you pull yourself up and keep from falling.

The same thing is true with another kind of climbing. When you try learning something new, you start out just like you do when you are going to climb a tree. You lay hold of the new skill you want to learn, just like you grab hold of a tree trunk. You pull yourself up higher and higher by practicing the skill over and over again. You know you are successful when you can perform the skill effortlessly and well.

But there are some skills that are not worth learning, just as there are some trees not worth climbing. The practice of some skills is dangerous and will make the soul dirty.

We should never practice saying curse words. They offend God and are a bad influence on those who hear them.

We should never practice lying. It displeases God and causes us to become a person who cannot be trusted.

The Word of God tells us which skills we should practice. Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 3:18, which says, *She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.* The "she" in this verse is "wisdom."

It is good to lay hold on wisdom with all of our might, and to ask God to help us climb a little higher each day in our ability to make wise decisions that will glorify Him and bring life to our souls.

Activity

We find wisdom compared to several beautiful things in the Bible. See if you can find what they are by unscrambling the words below. If you need help, look up the scripture location that is given.

1. Livers
2. Dogl
3. Besiur
4. Chirse
5. Norho

Scripture location: Proverbs 3:14-16.

Answers to Last Month's Activity

1. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor (Romans 13:10).
2. Overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21).
3. Vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up (I Corinthians 13:4).
4. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye (Colossians 3:13). †

THE POETRY PAGE

BLESSINGS

Mrs. David Fisher

Blessings come in many ways.
Little or big, on dark or bright days.
Each one's intended to help us along,
So we can at last sing Redemption's song.
Sometimes at first we cannot see
In darkness and sorrow the blessings so free.
Now if we'll just wait, God will reveal—
Give us new eyesight—our wounds He will heal.
So let's count our blessings—He kindly doth deal.

THOSE MANY BLESSINGS

Edward M. Brandt

Lord, give me a thankful heart
And may I ever grateful be,
For the many, many blessings
Thou hast showered on me!

Some I take for granted,
Of some I'm not aware,
But Lord I am ever mindful of
Your precious, loving care.

These countless blessings Savior, Lord,
Fill my soul with joy and peace,
They never seem to dwindle,
They never, never cease!

A THANKFUL HEART

Virginia Katherine Oliver

May we always each remember
On this special day
Many blessings that are ours
All along the way.

May we with deep humility
Forever have a part
In expressing gratitude
From a thankful heart.

Grant us strength to do our best
In each daily task,
To be worthy of this day
We would humbly ask.

Help us walk in paths of service
Doing all we can
By giving thanks through kindness
To our fellow man.

THE BLESSINGS THAT REMAIN

Author Unknown

There are loved ones who are missing
From the fireside and the feast;
There are faces that have vanished,
There are voices that have ceased;
But we know they passed forever
From our mortal grief and pain,
And we thank Thee, O our Father,
For the blessings that remain!

For the faith that keeps us patient
Looking at the things unseen,
Knowing spring shall follow winter
And the earth again be green;
For the hope of that glad meeting
Far from mortal grief and pain—
We thank Thee, O our Father,
For the blessings that remain.

GOD'S BEEN GOOD TO ME

Clay Harrison

I'm mindful of the blessings
That come my way each day.
My heart is overflowing
Each time I kneel to pray.
I'm thankful for the seasons;
Each one's a masterpiece.
I'm allowed to work the land,
But God still holds the lease.
I'm grateful for the friendships
That brighten sorrow's way,
Because my cup of happiness
Sustains me every day.
I love the children and the flowers
That decorate my life
And the quiet, gentle hours
Free from worry and strife.
I'm grateful for eyes that see
The beauty of it all.
Because God's been good to me
And blessed me through it all.
I'm thankful for the little things
That fill my life with love.
The best things in life are free;
They come from God above. †

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

—Lamentations 3:22, 23.



These questions and answers are taken from *The Way of Truth Question and Answer Book 1946-2001*.



QUESTION: What is sinning against the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: There are several ways to sin against the Holy Spirit: (1) When a person rejects the wooing of the Spirit repeatedly until He no longer will strive with them, this is sinning against the Holy Spirit and leaves that person lost and without hope, for we read in Proverbs 29:1, "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (2) For a person who has received the genuine baptism of the Holy Spirit (I have no reference to the supposed "speaking in tongues"!) and then give it up and declare that there was nothing to it would be sinning against the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:26). (3) To speak against the Holy Spirit and to say that the manifestations of the power of the Spirit were of the devil would be sinning against the Holy Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness (Matthew 12:31, 32).

QUESTION: Matthew 8:12 says, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Can you explain this scripture?

ANSWER: In order to get the understanding of this verse, it is necessary to read the preceding verse, which says *that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*. This means that many of the Gentiles from all parts of the world will accept Christ and be saved and will thus enter the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom, the Israelites, who were God's covenant people under the Old Covenant, who reject Christ will be cast into outer darkness.

The apostle John, who was a Hebrew, tells us that Jesus "came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:11-13).

QUESTION: Some are telling us that you people claim to get salvation and sanctification all at the same time. Do you teach this?

ANSWER: Such people must not read *The Way of Truth* magazine! May God have mercy on those who would spread such falsehoods. The answer is NO! We have clearly set forth the truth on these subjects in times past. We still believe and teach what Paul, Peter, and others, including Christ, taught on these subjects. (See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; 17:17; Acts 11:17; 15:9; 19:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Romans 5:1, 2; 12:1.) Some people teach that committed sins and the fallen nature

or carnal nature are removed in justification and they still claim to teach "two works," but such is error. We DO NOT teach any such thing. If committed sins and the carnal nature BOTH are removed in justification then there is NO WORK left to be done in sanctification, and in reality people who say both are removed DO NOT teach "two works." A soul is cleansed from all committed sins by the blood of Christ (I John 1:7) when he is born again, and the carnal nature, or "native depravity," as some call it, is removed (sanctified by the blood—Hebrews 13:12) when the soul is baptized by the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION: Can not a man be a Christian without believing that Christ was the Son of God?

ANSWER: What does it mean to be a Christian? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess [with his heart, not merely with his lips!] that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (I John 4:13-15). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. ... He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:10, 12). "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:5). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. **Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father**" (I John 2:22, 23).

Can a man be a Christian and call God a liar? Can a man be a Christian and an antichrist at the same time?

Now, Paul does speak of some "Gentiles" who live by the law of their conscience (Romans 2), who have never heard about God, but if there be any who are saved under such conditions, they are still saved through Jesus Christ, and they do not "deny" Him.

QUESTION: What is the meaning of Matthew 5:33-36? Does this apply to the taking of an oath such as one does when being a witness in court?

ANSWER: The manner of swearing here is understood as giving expression to carnal feelings in a fit of anger and calling upon some power or authority greater than the individual possesses to accomplish the desired end, many times to the harm or hurt of someone. This is forbidden. Taking an oath on the witness stand, which often is called swearing, is not an expression of carnal feelings, but merely an affirmation that you will tell the truth about the matter. Some courts will let you use the word *affirm*, rather than swear, if you so choose. This verse does not apply to the taking of an oath in court.

QUESTION: Would you please explain Psalm 119:67? It says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."

ANSWER: The word *afflicted* does not always mean sickness; the Psalmist does not explain just what kind of affliction was brought upon him by the Lord, or at least permitted by the Lord, to bring him to the place where he would see the error of his way. For he says he had gone “astray,” and after the affliction came on him, it caused him to turn and obey the Word; so in the end it proved a blessing to him. †



Greetings!

This month's article is written by Sis. Christy Goodyear on thoughts shared in a Wednesday evening service on "How Big Is God?" It's our enemy's desire for us to see the problems of life as insurmountable and try to discourage us. However, it is good to be

reminded just how big our God is! It's beautiful and encouraging to think that He's so great He holds the world in the palm of His hand, yet so small He can live in the heart of a man.

May these thoughts be a blessing to you!

—Bro. Doug

HOW BIG IS GOD?

By Sis. Christy Goodyear

HOW BIG is God? This is a common question a child might ask, and we might answer in simple terms that He is bigger than everything, bigger than the mountains, the oceans, the earth, the universe. Obviously, we are not talking about literal size, as we don't know Him to have a physical stature, but to explore more deeply just "how big" He is, I believe we need to examine some of the different facets of God.

First, and probably the most obvious, is looking at His creation. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We can hardly walk outside and not notice the vast expanse of sky, the trees, the grass, the flowers that change from season to season. We marvel at the amazing geographical landscapes that surround us, not just in black and white, but with colors and dimensions we can see, sounds we can hear, and textures we can feel. It seems that it would take more faith to believe that all of that could have happened by a big explosion or from evolution than to believe it was created by an omnipotent God! I tend to agree with a statement David made in Psalms, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

Next, we look at God's sovereignty. We know that He is in control of all things. Psalm 103:19, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." And Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." We know that God is the supreme power and authority and no other being

or spirit can overpower His might. In Jeremiah 32:17, we are reminded that nothing is too hard for God, and another popular verse is Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

God is all-wise, beyond what our human minds can fathom. At times when we cannot understand why something may be happening, it can be a comfort to know we can trust that He has a plan and is working all things together for those who love Him. Romans 11:33 says, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Another aspect we can examine in looking at God's size is love. God is LOVE. He shows us in so many ways, of course not the least of which was sending His very own Son to earth knowing the plan He had for Him, and doing it in the name of His love for us. In His love, He is merciful and faithful. I especially like these verses in Lamentations chapter 3:22 and 23: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

All of these things that I've mentioned so far speak of how big God is: the Creator of the universe, sovereign, powerful, wise, loving, faithful. But what may be even more amazing to think about than a God that big with all of those capabilities, is that He has both the ability and the desire to share His presence with us. Matthew 28:20 tells us, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." What comforting words! And another verse that I think is so powerful is Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And, of course, the familiar verse in Hebrews 13:5: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Those verses show so much His willingness to be with us in every situation and circumstance, and they certainly are not exhaustive. The Bible is full of such promises. If I could just take a few moments and read the first ten verses of Psalm 139, I believe these verses reinstate again the promise of God's presence with us: "O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." There truly is nothing too big or too small to take to our God! He knows us intimately as no other!

Lastly, I would like to share an account I read that relates well to this topic—

Once a small boy asked his father how big God is. Looking up in the sky and spotting a plane flying overhead, the father asked the boy, "How big is that plane?"

The child replied that it was not very big and that he could hardly see it.

Then the father drove his son to the airport, and as they approached a plane on the runway just as it was about to take off, he asked, "Now, son, how big is this plane?"

"Wow, Dad, it's huge!" the boy exclaimed.

The father then explained that God's size in your life depends on how close or how far you are to Him. The closer you are to Him, the greater and greater He will be in your life.

As James 4:8 instructs, may we all draw nigh to God and see Him draw even closer to us, and may we be able to see Him as He truly is. †

APPREHENDING THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD

By the late H. R. Matthews

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Philippians 3:13, 14).

THE APOSTLE Paul, in the foregoing verses, is stating the fact that he had not yet apprehended or won the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus can only be won beyond the resurrection of the dead on the last day. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul left to us a strong testimony, saying, that he was pressing toward that high calling.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8).

In the context of chapter 3 of the Philippian epistle, Paul wrote of attaining to the resurrection of the dead. Of course, the appointment with death and going to be with the Lord is far better; however, the rewards for Christian living are not given till the judgment following the resurrection. Many and wonderful are the benefits to Christian living while the Christian is still breathing the air of earth's atmosphere, but these are far exceeded by the prize of the high calling of God. So great is the high calling of God that Paul said he was pressing toward it. By this, he meant that this greatest prize of all could not be gained short of corresponding effort. What is the nature of this effort? The writer of the Hebrew epistle drew an analogy from the Roman sports arena. In preparation for a race they would attach weights to their bodies. When it came time for the race, they would lay aside the weights so that they might

run the race successfully. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). The weights are the things of this world which would hinder our winning the race to the goal of life immortal. The besetting sins would be those weaknesses that we have inherited from our foreparents.

As he pressed toward the prize, Paul said, "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind [forgetting the past] ..." Where there is a hankering for the past for those things that do not edify, they must quickly be evicted from memory's lane. "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" (Philippians 4:8).

In our pressing for the prize, let us call to mind a few scriptural suggestions:

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1, 2).

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:16, 22).

"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Timothy 5:22).

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Hebrews 2:1).

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 1:1, 2).

"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8).

"Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104).

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith [truth] which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (I Corinthians 1:10).

The apostle Paul had none of the New Testament writings from which to be blessed as we are, however, he received revelations and inspiration from the Holy Spirit, along with other writers of this great document with which we are so blessed. It is true that the writings of the Old Testament was his schoolmaster that led him to Christ. He contributed more to the New Testament writings than any other New Testament writers. He culminated his New Testament ministry with the greatest testimony that can be left behind, “I am now ready to be offered.”

Paul's pressing toward his high calling of God in Christ Jesus had reached the apex of his earthly existence, and he went to be the Lord, which he had said would be far better. Some would say, “He has gone to his reward.” This statement needs clarification, for it is not entirely accurate. Yes, he had gone to be with the Lord, which is far better, but the rewards will not be garnered till all that are in the grave will be reunited with their resurrected bodies on the last day. In the last day those who were resurrected shall join those who are still alive, and they will all be changed to bodies incorruptible. At that moment they will all be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

How would it be possible for the apostle Paul to receive his reward before being judged, seeing that mankind is still under the influence of his epistles and godly life? No, I am not able to explain the difference between it being far better to be with Christ and the earning of the final rewards that will be given following the last day judgment scene. Just to see Jesus face to face, and to dwell with him forever and forever will be worth it all. †

OUT OF BOX 88

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PLEASE ACCEPT THIS OFFERING TO SUPPORT THE PRINTING AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE WAY OF TRUTH MAGAZINE. I LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR MAGAZINE EACH MONTH. IT IS FULL OF EXCELLENT WISDOM AND TRUTH FROM COVER TO COVER. THIS MAGAZINE IS A BLESSING TO ALL THOSE WHO READ IT, BOTH BELIEVER AND UNBELIEVER. “THE WELLSpring OF WISDOM IS A FLOWING BROOK.”

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S. M., OREGON

WHAT KIND OF SPIRIT DO YOU MANIFEST?

Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

 OUR SCRIPTURE TEXT comes from Luke, chapter 9, beginning with verse 46: “Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us. And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.” The title of my message is, “What Kind of Spirit Do You Manifest?”

TRY THE SPIRITS

We are living in a world full of spirits. There are good spirits and bad spirits. Much of what we think, what we say, and what we do is influenced by spirits—by either evil spirits or the Holy Spirit. John said, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” So we need to do what that verse says.

The Scriptures teach us about the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. I John 4:6, “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

Many people manifest the wrong spirit and don't even know it. Such was the case with the disciples. They wanted to have consuming fire poured down upon the Samaritans. They thought they were doing what was right. They probably talked among themselves that since they were chosen by Jesus, and He had given them all power, they wanted to see some of that power manifested there. They didn't realize what spirit they were of. Christ didn't come to destroy lives. He came to save lives. So we have the influence of evil spirits.

THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE

The first one I'd like to mention is *the spirit of vengeance*. Wrong attitudes are being motivated by evil spirits. Some people have the spirit of vengeance, even among Christianity. They want to see vengeance poured out upon their enemies. Jesus didn't come for that. He said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." We as the church can be influenced by evil spirits. I don't think the disciples were inhabited by evil spirits. They were influenced by evil spirits. That influence caused them to make the wrong request or have the wrong thinking, and Jesus rebuked them for it. We should want the best for all mankind. Jesus came to teach us to love one another, not to destroy one another.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

Another spirit that influences us in the wrong way is *the spirit of the world*. I Corinthians 2:12, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." The spirit of the world and the Spirit of God are opposites. The Spirit of God works good among humanity. The spirit of the world causes havoc among the family of man. We need to be careful as God's people to not be influenced by the spirit of the world. There is a spirit of the world that we need to be careful to resist, and that is the god of this world: II Corinthians 4:4, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." The word *god* in that scripture is in small letters. It's talking about the devil. Satan is behind the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world causes havoc among the family of man.

THE SPIRIT OF DISOBEDIENCE

Another spirit that we have to be careful to guard against is *the spirit of disobedience*. Disobedience is a spirit of rebellion. Ephesians 2:2, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." There is a spirit of disobedience where people are determined to disobey God. So many people think, *no one is going to tell me what to do*. The spirit of disobedience. We were all at one time under that power, but when we got saved, the spirit of disobedience was cast out.

THE SPIRIT OF HAUGHTINESS

We need to guard against *the spirit of haughtiness*. Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." A haughty spirit—proud, arrogant, conceited, condescending, holier-than-thou. What a spirit! It is prevalent in the world today. We have nothing to be puffed up about. Everything we have, we have received from God. There's another scripture that tells us that we should not think more highly of ourselves than what we ought to think. That's dangerous! Some people think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Not in the Church of God! There's no place for a haughty spirit or a holier-than-thou spirit.

THE SPIRIT OF PREEMINENCE

Another spirit that would influence us to do wrong is *the spirit of preeminence*. III John, verses 9 and 10:

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." There are those who feel that they have the power to cast people out of the church. Man can't put you in the church, and man can't put you out of the church. Only God can put you in the church through salvation, but there are things that can cause you to lose your salvation.

Diotrephes had the spirit of preeminence. Think about it! The apostle John wanted to visit them, but Diotrephes wouldn't let him. The scripture says that he forbade those who would receive him. We see that spirit operating in the world today, even among some of the so-called Churches of God, where people think that they're preeminent and have the power to cast out someone who is saved. Every saved person is a member of the Church of God. We have no right to cast them out of the church. We should not have the spirit of preeminence.

A pastor has the responsibility for the flock that God has put him over, but a pastor needs to be careful not to be engrossed by a spirit of preeminence as though he's more important than someone else. We're all are equal in God's sight when we obey His Word. I don't go by the term "reverend." Don't call me Reverend Tyler! I'm just a brother who is trying to do my part in the family of God.

THE SPIRIT OF SELFISHNESS

Another spirit that causes problems is *the spirit of selfishness*. Selfishness is so prevalent today. II Timothy, chapter 3, verses 1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers [What a picture!], incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Having a form of godliness. Can you imagine having a profession of godliness and having part in those categories that are represented here? God help us! Selfishness is the absence of love. Love is giving, yet there is a spirit of selfishness in this world.

THE SPIRIT OF PARTIALITY

Another spirit that causes problems in the church is *the spirit of partiality*. Matthew, chapter 20, verses 20-28: "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the bap-

tism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Partiality wanted the advantage, wanted the preeminence.

Paul spoke to Timothy about partiality. I Timothy 5:21, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." I said last week that if we give our family advantage, our children advantage, or treat them better than we treat others, we're not doing what we are supposed to do. "What's good for the goose is good for the gander" is a phrase we have heard before. What's good for you is good for the pastor, what's good for the pastor is good for you, what's good for my family is good for your family. We are all equal in God's sight, so there should be no spirit of partiality in our midst.

THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE

Another spirit is *the spirit of bondage*. Romans 8:15, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The spirit of bondage is so prevalent in so many areas. People are brought into bondage, but we have not received the spirit of bondage. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." We're part of the family of God. We're not in bondage to the world, to sin, and to the devil. We're simply not in bondage. There's a spirit of bondage. Paul said to Timothy, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." He has given us the spirit of power, the spirit of love, and the spirit of a sound mind, but not the spirit of fear.

Those are only a few of the spirits that are around us that are trying to influence our thinking and attitudes that we need to be aware of.

THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS

Let's look at some manifestations of the truth—

The spirit of holiness. Romans 1:4, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Thank God for holiness! Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. We are able to live holy by the grace of God and the power of God through the spirit of holiness. Someone has said: "Holiness is not free from temptation, but power to overcome temptation. Holiness is not inability to sin, but the ability not to sin." Thank God we have to ability not to sin. We're not boasting in ourselves. God's power is so great that He will not allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear.

The spirit of holiness is beautiful. People can dress modestly and not have the spirit of holiness. You need to have the spirit of holiness, of honesty, and how you conduct yourself.

THE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE

The spirit of obedience. I Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Obedience is the opposite of disobedience. There's a spirit of disobedience that causes people to disobey God. Obedience causes a person to want to obey God and to obey the preaching of the Word of God. Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." We're workers together with God. It is the ministry's responsibility to preach the Word. It's the congregation's responsibility to obey the Word of God. Not because we're bound to do it, or we have to do it, but we want to do it. Again, we're all equal in the sight of God. This scripture is not to be used as a club to hit people over the head with, but just to admonish you to submit yourself to the Word of God, for I must give account for you as a minister. I want to do that with joy, not with grief.

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

The spirit of faith. II Corinthians 4:13, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." The spirit of faith is under attack. We need to have the spirit of faith in our attitude, even as Joshua and Caleb did. Joshua and Caleb were among the twelve spies that went in to spy the land. Ten of the men came back with an evil report, saying, "We can't do it, we can't do it." But Joshua and Caleb said, "We're well able to overcome it." We need the spirit of Joshua and Caleb so that we might see more come to past. We need to be people who are influenced by the spirit of faith. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," the father of the child in the Bible cried out. Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." God, keep us from an evil heart of unbelief that our faith may be inspired. We don't have the gift of miracles or the gift of healings, but we do serve a mighty God, and He's able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think. Let's not be faithless, Saints. Let's be influenced by the spirit of faith.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

The spirit of love. Galatians 5:6, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." Faith is a spirit of love. We need more of that spirit. Love is not something weak or permissive. Love is something strong and powerful. It binds us together. Romans 12:9, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Let love be without hypocrisy. Let the spirit of love be operating. I believe this congregation has the spirit of love operating in it. You

can feel the love we have for one another from heart to heart. May it ever be so. "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (I Corinthians 13:4).

THE SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS

Another positive spirit that's influencing us is *the spirit of meekness*. I Corinthians 4:21, "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" Jesus said that He was meek and lowly in heart. To be like Jesus, we have to have the spirit of meekness. Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Humility. Consider yourself. Be meek. Allow the spirit of meekness to be manifested in your life.

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM

The spirit of wisdom. Ephesians 1:17, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." We need the spirit of wisdom in our lives to influence our thinking and to influence our attitude. James, chapter 3, verses 13-18: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

If your heart is being entreated, what does that mean? When a minister points out something to you, and you turn your back and won't accept it, that's not being easily entreated. Easy to be entreated is when a minister tries to instruct you, or to help you, and you are agreeable. You're easy to be entreated. You're easy to talk to. That's the spirit of wisdom.

CONCLUSION

If you're saved this morning and have a lack in some area, you need your spirit renewed. Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." We all want to have the right spirit, don't we? Sometimes we have to seek the Lord's help for strength, wisdom, and grace that we might have the right spirit.

A broken spirit is necessary for someone to be saved. Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." The Lord is nigh to you if you have a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Won't you come to Christ this morning? †

THANKSGIVING SCRIPTURES FROM THE BIBLE

"O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD: FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER" (PSALM 107:1).

"NOW THEREFORE, OUR GOD, WE THANK THEE, AND PRAISE THY GLORIOUS NAME" (I CHRONICLES 29:13).

"OFFER UNTO GOD THANKSGIVING; AND PAY THY VOWS UNTO THE MOST HIGH" (PSALM 50:14).

"CONTINUE IN PRAYER, AND WATCH IN THE SAME WITH THANKSGIVING" (COLOSSIANS 4:2).

"AND LET THE PEACE OF GOD RULE IN YOUR HEARTS, TO THE WHICH ALSO YE ARE CALLED IN ONE BODY; AND BE YE THANKFUL" (COLOSSIANS 3:15).

"FOR EVERY CREATURE OF GOD IS GOOD, AND NOTHING TO BE REFUSED, IF IT BE RECEIVED WITH THANKSGIVING" (I TIMOTHY 4:4).

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL, AND FORGET NOT ALL HIS BENEFITS: WHO FORGIVETH ALL THINE INIQUITIES; WHO HEALETH ALL THY DISEASES; WHO REDEEMETH THY LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION; WHO CROWNETH THEE WITH LOVINGKINDNESS AND TENDER MERCIES; WHO SATISFIETH THY MOUTH WITH GOOD THINGS; SO THAT THY YOUTH IS RENEWED LIKE THE EAGLE'S" (PSALM 103:2-5).

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day in the United States is an annual day of thanks for the blessings of the past year, observed on the fourth Thursday in November in each of the states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It is a historical, national, and religious holiday that began with the pilgrims. After the survival of their first colony through the bitter winter, and the gathering of the harvest, Gov. William Bradford of Plymouth Colony issued a thanksgiving proclamation in the autumn of 1621. This first thanksgiving lasted three days, during which the Pilgrims feasted on wild turkey and venison with their Indian guests.

Days of thanksgiving were celebrated sporadically until, on November 26, 1789, President Washington issued a proclamation of a nation-wide day of thanksgiving. He made it clear that the day should be one of prayer and giving thanks to God. It was to be celebrated by all religious denominations, a circumstance that helped to promote a spirit of common heritage.

Credit for establishing this day as a national holiday is usually given to Sarah J. Hale, editor and founder of the Ladies' Magazine (from 1828) in Boston. Her editorials in the magazine and letters to President Lincoln urging the formal establishment of a national holiday of thanksgiving resulted in Lincoln's proclamation in 1863, designating the last Thursday in November as the day. Succeeding presidents annually followed his example.

A traditional Thanksgiving dinner takes place yearly at the White House and in almost every American home. Roast turkey and pumpkin pie are among the symbols of this festival. An ancient harvest symbol, the cornucopia, or "horn of plenty," has also been attached to Thanksgiving. Schools and businesses close for this day of family reunion and national, rather than individual, giving of thanks. †

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THE CHURCH OF GOD
STANDS FOR

An eternal God	Psalm 90:2
A divine Christ	John 1:1, 14
An infallibly inspired Bible	II Timothy 3:16
Salvation from sin	Matthew 1:21
The new birth	John 3:1-7
Entire Sanctification	Ephesians 5:25, 26
A holy life	Titus 2:11, 12
	Hebrews 12:10-14
Unity of God's people	John 17:21
	I Corinthians 12:13
Divine Healing	James 5:14, 15
The ordinances	Matthew 28:19, 20
Eternal life	Matthew 25:46
	John 3:15; 6:54; 10:28
Eternal punishment	Mark 9:43-46
	Revelation 20:15

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

Jesus bought it with His own blood	Acts 20:28
It has a good foundation	Ephesians 2:20
	I Corinthians 3:11
Christ is the Head	Ephesians 1:22; 5:23
	Isaiah 9:6
Christ is the Door	John 10:9
	John 10:1
	Acts 2:47
Only the saved are members	John 15:2-6
	I John 3:8, 9
Membership is offered to all	II Peter 3:9
	Revelation 22:17
Membership is rewarded	John 14:2, 3