

The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 5

Tributes to Brother Greg Tyler

(See Editorial Inside)

July/August 2026

Editorial

I JUST READ the editorial from the March issue again, thinking about Bro Greg's testimony and our plans for him to continue on as editor of *The Way of Truth* paper. The hope was that it would last for a considerable amount of time! But reality has proven different, and it is still difficult to process fully that he has gone to be with our Lord and Savior so quickly. I've been privileged to share a rich legacy of working together with him through the years, in *The Way of Truth* work, as a young person, in travels to many fields of labor and his assistant pastor. The impact he has had on my life is difficult to express in words, but he will always have a special place in my heart and memory. May his faithful example continue to challenge and inspire all of us who have known him so well through the years! We are including a number of tributes that have been submitted in his honor and memory. We trust they will prove a blessing to all.

—By Brother Doug Shenberger †

TRIBUTES

Tribute to Brother Greg Tyler - On Behalf of the Jamaican Brethren:

Dr. Myles Munroe once said, "The value of life is not computed in its duration, but in its donation."

These words beautifully describe the life and ministry of our beloved Brother Greg Tyler. His life was one of service, sacrifice, and sincere devotion to God and His people.

On behalf of the Jamaican brethren, I extend our heartfelt condolences to the immediate family of Brother Greg Tyler and, by extension, to his entire church family. We share in your sorrow and pray that God will surround you with His peace, strength, and comfort during this difficult time.

We also wish to express our profound gratitude for Brother Greg's many years of devoted service to the ministry in Jamaica. Throughout the years, he was not only a source of spiritual guidance but also a pillar of strength, compassion, and wisdom. His commitment to our spiritual well-being left an indelible impression upon our hearts and lives. The many sermons he delivered were thought-provoking, inspiring and uplifting.

We have shared many wonderful and unforgettable moments with Brother Greg. One memory that remains especially vivid occurred during a revival service in Jamaica. As he preached under the powerful anointing of God, the very hair on his head stood upright. It was an extraordinary sight and a visible reminder of the passion, conviction and divine anointing with which he delivered the Word of God. Those who witnessed that moment will never forget it.

Brother Greg's care and concern for everyone helped to create a warm and welcoming environment in which everyone felt valued and respected. Beyond the pulpit, his tireless efforts to assist others truly demonstrated what it means to be a servant leader. The impact Brother Greg had on our spiritual growth and personal development cannot be overstated.

Although our hearts are saddened by his passing, we are comforted by the knowledge that his labour was not in vain. His legacy will continue to live in the hearts and lives of the Jamaican brethren. The seeds he planted through his preaching, his service and his example will continue to grow and bear fruit for generations to come.

Brother Greg's life reminds us that a person's true value is not measured only by the number of years lived, but by the lives touched, the souls encouraged and the service given to God and humanity. We are eternally grateful that Brother Greg gave of himself so faithfully. In the words of the well-known song, we are thankful that he gave to the Lord, for many lives were changed because he gave.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that I, personally, am a living testimony to Brother Greg's faithfulness to God and his commitment to prayer. In 1992, I suffered from continuous nosebleeds for three months and was scheduled to undergo surgery on my sinuses. Brother Greg anointed me and prayed earnestly for me, and the Lord miraculously healed me. The surgery was no longer necessary. This experience has remained a lasting part of my testimony and is one of the many reasons Brother Greg's ministry will always hold a special place in my heart.

To his family, please know that Jamaica remembers him with deep love, gratitude and respect. We thank you for sharing him with us throughout the years. We pray that the memories you created together and the knowledge of the lives he touched will bring you comfort.

With Deepest
CONDOLENCES

— ON BEHALF OF —
**PASTOR GREG TYLER FAMILY
AND THE CHURCH OF GOD
AT HAGERSTOWN, MD**



**FROM THE CHURCH OF GOD AT
COXEN HOLE, ROATAN, HONDURAS**

Our hearts are with you during this time of grief.
May God comfort you, strengthen you,
and give you His peace that surpasses all understanding.
You are in our prayers.

In Christ,
PASTOR LEE N. JEFFRIES
CHURCH OF GOD AT
COXEN HOLE, ROATAN, HONDURAS

*"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
— Psalm 34:18*

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Vol. 84

July-August 2026

No. 5

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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—Doug Shenberger, Editor

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On behalf of the Jamaican brethren, we say: Thank you, Brother Greg, for your faithful service. You have fought a good fight indeed, you have finished your course, and you have kept the faith.

Submitted by Sister Dorrett Clarke

On behalf of the Honduras Ministry, we extend our deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences on the passing of Brother Greg Tyler. We are profoundly grateful for his dedicated missionary trips, his faithful service, and his impactful contributions to the people and ministry of Honduras.

Brother Greg's selfless love, unwavering faith, and tireless efforts touched countless lives across our communities. His passion for the gospel and his spirit of generosity have left an indelible mark on our nation. He was a true vessel of God's grace, and his legacy of compassion and devotion will continue to inspire those he served. We share in your sorrow during this difficult time.

Please know that the people and churches of Honduras are praying for your comfort, strength, and peace. We hold Brother Greg's memory in the highest regard, and celebrate the beautiful life he lived in service to the Lord. With our deepest sympathies and eternal gratitude. (Given in Roatan, Bay Islands of Honduras on this 15th day of June, in the year 2026)

Tribute to Brother Greg Tyler from the Church of God (Universal) Cayman Islands:

Brothers and sisters, family and friends, today we stand together to honor a man whose ministry crossed oceans, whose heart crossed cultures, and whose love for God's people crossed every boundary of time.

We honor Brother Greg Tyler, a man who became part of our spiritual family long before many of us realized just how deeply his presence would shape our congregations.

When Brother Greg first stepped onto Cayman soil in November of 1976, he came as a young minister—full of energy, full of conviction, and full of the fire of the Holy Ghost. He came as we dedicated our “new” church building, but what he truly dedicated was himself. Those early years were marked by powerful preaching—preaching that stirred the soul, preaching that called us higher, preaching that reminded us that God was still moving among His people.

Brother Greg didn't just bring messages; he brought revival. He brought a spiritual refreshing that lingered long after he boarded the plane home. And he kept coming back. Year after year, convention after convention, revival after revival—he returned to the Cayman Islands with the same humility, the same passion, and the same love for the church. He remembered our faces. He remembered our stories. He remembered our children as they grew.

What made Brother Greg special was not only the strength of his preaching, but the gentleness of his spirit. He carried himself with grace. He listened with compassion. He prayed with a heart that truly believed God could do anything. He was a brother in the truest sense of the word.

Today, as we reflect on his life, we do so with gratitude. Gratitude for the seeds he planted. Gratitude for

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the encouragement he gave. Gratitude for the faith he strengthened in so many of us. Gratitude for the wisdom he imparted to us. And though our hearts feel the weight of his absence, we rejoice in knowing that he has finished his course with honor. The Scripture says, "He has fought a good fight." And oh, how true that is of Brother Greg. He fought with faith. He fought with joy. He fought with purpose. And now, he rests in the presence of the One he served so faithfully.

"HE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT"

He came with a word and a fire in his soul,
A young man on mission, surrendered and whole.
He walked with God's people, he stood in God's light—
Brother Greg ran his race, and he fought a good fight.
Through seasons and storms, through joy and
through pain,
He sowed seeds of faith that still rise like grain.
His voice may be silent, but his impact burns bright—
For the Kingdom was strengthened by the strength of
his might.
Now he rests with the Savior, his journey complete,
His crown won in glory, his victory sweet.
Though we miss him today, Heaven shines ever
bright—
For a soldier came home ... And he fought a good
fight.

His legacy lives on in our congregations, in these islands, and in every life he touched. May his soul rest in peace.

*From Pastor James Arch, Minister Duane Jeffries,
Minister Ray Hydes*

*And the entire congregations of George Town and
East End, Cayman Islands*

To our beloved Brother Greg E. Tyler:

My heart is so heavy as we say goodbye to our beloved fellow co-laborer in Christ. You were not just a co-laborer in His vineyard; you were a true brother in the faith.

Thank you for your prayers, for your love and concern, for your shared burdens for God's work in the Philippine Islands. Though you were not able to achieve your goal of coming to the Philippine Islands every other year, for twenty (20) times, those twelve (12) times that you came (Dec. 1994 to Dec. 2014) were overflowing with cherished memories, a fruitful ministry, and many Filipino souls led to the Lord.

Heaven gained a faithful servant. Thank you for your tireless dedication and for being a true reflection of Christ's love to everyone around you, around the globe. We take comfort in knowing that our beloved Brother Greg Tyler has now heard these beautiful words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

You will be deeply missed, but your legacy of faith and service to the Master lives on in all of us, the Filipino Saints.

"Paalam Brother Greg! Mahal ka namin." ("Good-bye, Brother Greg. We love you.")

Judith Batalla, The Church of God in the Philippines

Brother Greg's wisdom and dedication to the Lord have left an indelible mark on so many lives. Heaven has gained a remarkable soul. Thank you for sharing him with us; his ministry and heart for God will never be forgotten. His race was run with such grace and purpose.

May you all find comfort knowing he has heard those beautiful words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Brother Julio Robinson, Honduras

*On behalf of the Church of God in Carmichael,
please accept our most profound condolences on the
passing of our dear Brother Greg.*

Although we are relatively new in our relationship with you all, considering Brother Greg's long service as a minister and pastor of the Gospel, we feel as if we have known him for much longer. Brother Greg was easy to know.

We were kindred spirits.

He has left us all better than we otherwise could have been. His love for his Savior, his love for truth, his love for his wife, his family and his congregation, and his love for the church are enduring examples we will strive to follow.

A part of our heart is missing. But we rejoice that he is no longer suffering physically. He knows now what we desire to know. Everything is real now, and there will be no more death, no more tears. May the Lord help us to continue his legacy of love.

With much love,

David F. Goble, Pastor of the Congregation of the
Church of God of Carmichael

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of
him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace;
that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation;
that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

I am so grateful for the legacy Brother Greg has left behind. I was in attendance at the first service in which he preached to the Jamaicans at Cornwall Mountain in September 1974. It was his first message ever. (As young people, we were impressed.) It was also his first missionary trip.

For many years, as a young convert, I looked forward to the youth page. He had great respect for elders. He would not go on a missionary trip without Brother Alvin's approval.

It was always interesting to see the interaction between him and Brother Samuel Barrett. He would engage us in little conversations during our break, from which we benefitted.

Our loss is heaven's gain. (Grace Ramsay, Cornwall Mountain, Jamaica)

A HEART-FELT TRIBUTE TO A GREAT WARRIOR OF THE CROSS

The sad news of the late Brother Gregory Tyler took us by surprise. It was true he had a long battle over sickness, and minds may be having mixed feel-

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ings. I didn't know him personally, but our intimacy started when we were building the chapel at Okposi. In 2010, he wrote to me that brethren from Germany sent us an offering, and I should write to thank them before he forwarded the money to me. I did, and received the money. Our communication started growing.

Before then, I knew Brother Greg through his powerful messages in *The Way of Truth* magazine. In October, 2011, the late Brother Alvin A. Craig told Brother Greg, "I have confidence in you." In about 2023, in a reply to a report I sent to him, he wrote, "I have confidence in you."

From 2017, he was strong in his fight for the unity of the Church, which bore much fruit to the glory of God. His death leaves a great vacuum in the church universally.

Death is a translation. He has gone to his reward in a better world, having fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith. We should be consoled in the fact that the Psalmist says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." (Psalm 116:15). Our great loss is heaven's gain.

Let the church family and the immediate family receive my condolences. Let us all fight the good fight of faith so as to meet when the battle is over.

Brother Okereke Ogbonnaya, Okposi, Nigeria †

A REBELLIOUS PEOPLE

Radio Message by Brother David Shaw

IT IS A BLESSING to greet you in radio land. It is a joy to know that God is, and we can find in Him a friend and an associate. He has never failed in one instance. Down through the ages He has been the same, and certainly He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God loves man with a sincere love and with a heart of compassion. He favored man in many ways, but seemingly man does not understand the love that God has imparted unto mankind.

I want to speak to you from Ezekiel, chapter 2, verse 3: "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day." I would like to entitle my thoughts, "A Rebellious People."

As a nation, we must not forget that God's eyes are in every place, beholding the good and the evil. Because man has forgotten, he acts like he acts, but I'm here to remind you, in whatever we do, wherever we be, God's eyes are watching us.

Israel was God's selected nation. They began to sin against God and grieve Him in many instances. He warned and warned them, but Israel continued to do what they were doing in the eyes of God. God saw their attitude as being rebellious.

Certainly, it is not good to be rebellious. It is important that we understand that God wants us as a people to adhere to what He has commanded us to

do. He wants a people who love Him, for He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Just as Israel was God's selected nation, they were like the Christians today. Christians are God's selected people. These are those who are to give Him praise, honor, and adoration. They are to live according to God's Word, so that the world might believe that there is a God to be served. He is worthwhile serving.

Christians are special in the eyes of God. He keeps them in the hollow of His hand. He sees them as the apple of His eye, so we want to value ourselves as God values His people. We know we serve a God who never fails.

When Israel became rebellious, God chose Ezekiel to speak to them. Why? Because He trusted Ezekiel. He was a man that God saw fit to send to His people. As I speak, there are many people who say they are speaking for God, but He did not choose them. This is happening today, but God has men He has sent out into the world to warn the nations not to rebel against Him. Just as He called Ezekiel, He has called the ministry today to stand for truth. When God called Ezekiel, He said unto him, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me." God wants man to stand up for Him.

A songwriter wrote:

Stand up, stand up for Jesus!

Ye soldiers of the cross;

Lift high his royal banner,

It must not suffer loss:

From vict'ry unto vict'ry

His army shall he lead,

Till every foe is vanquished,

And Christ is Lord indeed.

Ezekiel was called to stand up, and God gave him a message to Israel telling them He was against their rebellious attitude. God is still that way today as He was then. He is against every rebellious people who came into this world since the time of Ezekiel. He intends that man should not be rebellious against Him but to obey His every Word and do as He commanded them to do. If we obey His commandments, there is life. If we disobey His commandments, there is death.

We read in Ezekiel 2:3, "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day." This chapter reads, as it were, in the present tense—"Unto this day." I am convinced in my heart that things today are just as they were in Ezekiel's day. As a matter of fact, things are becoming worse. Why do I say so? Because the Bible teaches that "evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse" (II Timothy 3:13). In the last days, which are the days in which we are living, men are becoming more and more evil. They have sought out evil inventions, and continually increase in evil. The evil that dwells in them causes them to think they are in the path of truth. And so man is experiencing greater and greater

difficulty. The condition of the world is worsening, and it will lead everyone that is involved into a pathway of death and disaster.

Here, God is saying, "They are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them."

As evil as it is, the world needs to know that there are still true ministers of God. Yes, we are seeing that the gospel is not obeyed, especially when it is preached in sincere truth. People find it hard to adjust to the truth. It seems easier for them to adjust to evil. But I want to say to us today, that the truth of God's Word stands, and it is the only thing that will make man free. "You shall know the truth," says the Word, "and the truth will make you free." Man doesn't want to hear, but God is saying to the ministers in charge, "Preach the word in season and out of season." Men will be rebellious, they will be confounded in their attitude and conduct, but God intended that the world should know that He is God, and there is none besides Him.

Ezekiel 2:6, "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." It has always been that the nation is rebellious against the Word of God, and so man is always confounded and has found himself in serious trouble with God. But we need, as ministers, not to be afraid of their words, not to be afraid of their faces, though they are rebellious, though they are hardhearted, though they are stiff-necked, the gospel must be preached until the end comes. It must be preached until the last man is left, for no one will be approaching the throne of judgment in an innocent manner. They will stand before God's face, guilty of not obeying the command given.

Ezekiel 2:7-9: "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein." This is what God does unto the ministry. He gives them a command. He gives them a commission: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, teaching them the things I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is important to know that, though men turn their backs against you, God is still your God. He said, "I'll not leave you, nor forsake you. I will be with you alway." His words are true and will forever be.

Ezekiel received something that didn't seem enjoyable, but the world needed to hear what God wanted them to know. Ezekiel received a roll. It was a book that was written. "And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was writ-

ten therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe." Today, in our land, there is much of this taking place: lamentation, mourning, woe. Our land is utterly confused as to what will be the next step. People do not know what to expect at the end of life's journey. They are living in doubt, and fear, and dread, and do not know what will be. But we have a God who cares. He warns us that we should be careful that we live according to His will.

Paul wrote to Timothy, and he charged him to preach the gospel. Paul said in II Timothy 4:1, 2: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." We cannot give in. We must preach this gospel, although the world doesn't want to hear it. Although men scoff at us and turn their backs on us, and although they see us as not being real, we must still continue to preach God's Word. We need to understand whom we serve, and that He is a God who stands by His Word. We should be encouraged, because we are reminded that though the world will not receive it, we have the responsibility to preach it. Why? Because we are responsible for the souls of men. God has set us as watchmen upon the walls of Zion. We are to cry aloud, and spare not. We are to lift up our voice like a trumpet, and show the house of Jacob their sins, and the house of Israel their transgressions.

We need to understand that God desires that we, as ministers, be true to the nation. We can't seek friendship over the things of God. Whether we are hated or accepted, we have a responsibility. The responsibility of the prophet is to take the truth to the land. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." Why? "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." If you want to have the masses coming to hear you, just preach something false. Tell them something inferior, that is not real, and you'll have the whole world following after you. But tell them the genuine truth of God, and they don't want to receive it. They see it is too strict. They are not willing to subdue themselves to the will of God. They would rather go after the way of Balaam. They do not want to accept and obey what God requires and commands. But we must do as God commands.

Paul told Timothy, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." The time has come when men are not willing to endure sound doctrine. Paul said, "But after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Oh, we are in a land where fables are increasing rapidly. People are building their hopes upon things that are not real, things that are disastrous in the long run. Oh, the time will soon come when all of these things shall come to naught, and men will regret their decision. They will be facing the judgment bar of God to give an account for the deeds

done in their bodies. Men have been warned, but they are refusing to take the repeated warnings. But even though they refuse, even though they are rebellious, God depends upon His church to be true. He depends upon His church to stand in the midst of all the tribulations and trials, all the hardships and rejections. He wants us to be firm and steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in His work.

We are called to be watchmen upon the walls of Zion. We must never hold our peace, day nor night. We are to “go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people” (Isaiah 62:10).

Paul said to Timothy, “Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” Beloved Ones, let us firmly stand in our position, knowing that we are sent by God. If you are not certain in whom you believe and trust, get a certainty. Get an assurance that you are working for this almighty God who shall reward you at the last day for the work that you have done. He will not “owe” any man, as it were. He will give unto us according to our deeds. He will give unto us the blessing that is ours to receive. And so we cannot allow men to silence us. We cannot allow men’s faces to frighten us. We cannot fear what man may do unto us. We need to know that we are servants of God who protects and preserves us in all that we do. Certainly, His promises are true.

In Ezekiel 3:16-18, we read: “And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” This is a very serious warning. The prophet is warned that, if he does not tell the people of their error, then he is responsible for the people’s sin. Their blood will be upon his shoulders. We cannot be moved by friendships. We must speak truth unto the souls of men, for that is what God requires that men might escape. If men have not been told that what they are doing is wrong, then they are left to continue in their wrong, thinking that they are right. God requires at the hand of every one of His ministers that they will help souls be delivered out of the snare of the devil and find victory in Jesus.

When a man dies in his sins, there is no hope for his making heaven his final destination. Jesus came that man might be forgiven, but they reject the Savior and continue in the ranks of sin. Verse 19 says: “Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” There are equal rights and justice with God. If one dies in sin after he has been warned, the requirement is on his own head. He is responsible for his own destruction. If one lives as a preacher of the gospel—a true

preacher (many preachers are not true)—that refuses to tell the nation what God intended for them to hear, then the nation’s blood is upon his shoulder.

Verse 20 says: “Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” People have a tendency to believe that “once saved, always saved.” That is not true. It is obvious that one can backslide. Once an individual backslides, his righteous life that he had lived for many years has gone for naught. His righteousness is no more remembered. He has once more become as guilty as any person who has never found Christ as his personal Savior.

Verse 21 says: “Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.” God has given the preacher the responsibility to warn the nation, so that its people can be delivered out of their sins. If they are willing to heed the warning, they may be saved. If the preacher refuses to give the warning, he is guilty of their sins. God judges with equality.

In I Samuel 15:22, 23, we read: “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.” These verses speak of Saul, who was ordained as king of Israel. But he rebelled against God in not doing what God commissioned him to do because he had respect of persons.

I trust that this message will help us as ministers of the gospel to know that we cannot have respect of persons. We must respect God. †



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



QUESTION: How old does a child have to be before his sins are imputed to him?

ANSWER: There is no set age, as far as years are concerned, when a child becomes guilty of

his sins. The best answer we can give to this is found in the writings of Paul, which declares that where there is no law, there is no sin. In other words, a child may do what is wrong and not be guilty if he does not have knowledge of the wrongness of it. But just as soon as he learns that it is wrong and he does it anyway, he then is responsible for his sins. In Romans 7:9 Paul informs us, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." He means that when he learned what the commandments of God were [he disobeyed], he became guilty of sin and lost his spiritual life.

QUESTION: We know Satan is a spirit, along with all his host. How can they be burned up in a literal fire, no matter how hot it is?

ANSWER: Satan is a spirit, but he shall not be "burned up." Hell, or the "lake of fire," is not filled with literal flames. Hell is an actual place, but it is not a literal place. Some people get the idea that you mean a thing is not real just because you say it is not literal. But spirits are real even though they are not literal, and hell is an actual place although it is not literal. When the world, at the end of time, comes to an end, all literal things shall cease to exist, but we shall not, hell will not, and heaven will not.

Jude tells us (verse 7) that Sodom and Gomorrah are suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL fire. Now eternal fire is NOT literal fire. I might also add that Jude was not speaking of the buildings of those cities, which were destroyed by literal fire, for the buildings did not give themselves over to fornication; it was the people.

In Matthew 25, we have a picture of the judgment, of those placed on the right hand and those on the left. Those on the left went away into EVERLASTING punishment; those on the right hand "into life ETERNAL."

QUESTION: How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

ANSWER: There are many evidences which you may find detailed in any book dealing with the subject. Some of the proofs are the manner in which it was given. Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke with an authority not possessed by other men. This was apparent in their own lifetime. God has given abundant proof that He is the real author of the promises in it by fulfilling those promises to His children and to millions of sinners who sought Him according to those promises. Again, the fulfillment of His threats and warnings against sinners and sinful nations has been clearly and markedly manifested. Then too, the fact that the Bible differs from all other books in its high moral standards, its spiritual teachings, its adaptation to human needs, and its influence on the human conscience, all show that it is divine. Its effect on society, on human laws and culture, on individual relations, its civilizing and humanizing influences, and many other things prove its divinity. Perhaps the greatest of all proof to the Christian is the strength, courage, hope, and comfort that comes to him from its pages, and the consciousness within his own soul that in the Word of God he is communing with God. One final point, the fulfillment of prophecy, is proof of its inspi-

ration. Some people might guess some future events, some may make predictions, but men could not tell what would be hundreds of years in the future without being divinely inspired, and we find many such prophecies in the Bible.

QUESTION: Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Can you please explain this verse?

ANSWER: There is a carnal anger which is wrong! This kind of anger, according to *Webster's Dictionary*, is "a violent passion of the mind excited by a real or supposed injury: often accompanied by a desire to take vengeance, or to obtain satisfaction from the offending party; resentment; wrath; ire."

Then there is a righteous anger—a stirring in the soul that causes you to want to fight sin and evil with all your powers. Not people but evil.

Then there is anger as is used in this verse. You may have a pain, or feeling of deep displeasure for the act of another. It may be against you, or it may not, but you are greatly displeased. Do not harbor that feeling, do not let it linger, lest a root of bitterness spring up in your heart and choke out the love of God. The verse says, "Be ye angry, and sin not." If you harbor a feeling of displeasure long enough, it will produce sin. Therefore, the latter part of the verse says, "... let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Overcome the pain and displeasure; do not let it overcome you.

QUESTION: Would you help me to understand Hebrews 6:1?—"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God."

ANSWER: The word *leaving* here does not mean forsake, but having the experience of justification, we are to go on to the experience of sanctification. Otherwise, we will fail of the grace of God and do things we will need to repent for. Sanctification is "standing grace." See Romans 5:2. †

WHY AM I FOLLOWING JESUS?

Message by Brother Doug Shenberger

I WOULD LIKE to draw your attention this morning to John, chapter 6, beginning with verse 26: "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." I've



entitled the message this morning with a question: “Why Am I Following Jesus?”

We have here in this passage of scripture an example of people who were aggressively seeking for Jesus. They were trying to find Him, they were seeking out opportunities to be with Him, to see where He was, and to come into His presence. One of the reasons for that was because they had just witnessed the feeding of the multitude with just those few loaves and fishes. They watched Jesus break those and multiply them to a degree that was so miraculous that it caught their attention. If you go back and look at verse 15 of that chapter, it says there, “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” So there was a lot of excitement, and a lot of desire to seek Jesus. They were trying to find Him. They wanted to make Him a king. They were so impressed, I think their minds just grasped the possibilities. They could have that kind of provision and abundance supplied to them. He could provide whatever they needed. If He could do that with food, maybe He could do it with money. Maybe He could do that with so many things that they desired. And they were so excited about following Him.

But you know, it was just a short time later that we read that they said, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” And they turned, and they walked away. That’s a stunning contrast—a stunning thing to realize how quickly people can change. What they were so excited about following, they were not able to see the value in any longer. Because Jesus shared with them the need for them to fully accept His teachings. Their mood changed abruptly. I’d like for us to consider this question this morning: Why am I following Jesus? I am not asking that question to bring condemnation upon us, but because as I thought about this subject, I thought, you know, that is a valuable question for each and every one of us to consider from time to time, Why am I following Jesus? What’s the reason? What’s motivating me? What’s causing me to follow Jesus?

FOLLOWING JESUS FOR THE MATERIAL BLESSINGS

There are a lot of reasons why, I think, people endeavor to follow Jesus. The example Jesus gave when He saw them, and they came to Him, He said, “Ye seek me not because you saw the miracles.” Now the miracles, you would think, would be enough reason to seek Jesus. “But,” He said, “because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Because I provided for your physical hunger and need, that’s why you’re here. That’s why you’re seeking me. It isn’t because of who I am.” And I believe there are a lot of people today that are following Jesus because of the material blessings and benefits that it can give. You might say, “Well, what does following Jesus do for me materially? How does that bless me?” Well, the principles of God work. God’s laws work.

There are a lot of people who have found that endeavoring to follow the principle of godliness is good

business. They’re good for you. They bring material blessings. There’s actually an entire thinking in the religious world that sometimes we call the “prosperity gospel.” It very much seeks to accentuate that positive part of following God, of following Jesus, because it’ll give you blessings. It’ll help you. And I believe that it does. But the desire, or the expectation, for that physical abundance and prosperity, for protection, the benefits that God gives is based on material things. It’s predicated on the idea that we can measure spirituality by physical things, by material abundance. That it’s an indication of spirituality, or a relationship with God. I don’t have time to go through that this morning, but I don’t think you’ll find—in a careful study of the Word of God—that Jesus ever makes that promise. Yes, He told the people that weren’t giving, and paying their tithes to Him, He said, “Prove me, if I won’t open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing upon you that you won’t be able to receive it.” That’s a part of God’s love for His people. Yes, He does bless us sometimes materially, but a lot of times it isn’t really about the physical things we receive. It’s about the intangible things that are more valuable than just material things. But there are people that are attracted to following Jesus for the loaves and the fishes. That’s just the reality. And I’m not here to find fault with them, to cast blame upon them, but to help us realize that it’s one of the motivations that people have sometimes in following Jesus.

FOLLOWING JESUS TO GAIN THE GOOD WILL OF OTHERS

Some people follow Jesus because of the good will they feel they can gain. People may have a better opinion of you if you say you’re a Christian. This world is not necessarily a friend to true Christianity. But we do live in a country where Christianity is still generally accepted as a good thing. There’s not a lot of the sense that if I’m a Christian, then I’m going to suffer persecution because of that, or that I’m going to have everybody turn their backs on me. There’s a general regard for Christians. But it goes beyond the general worldly sense, and involves the people that may be close to you—people that you might want to have a good opinion of you. If you’re involved with a group of people, a family, even a workplace, where there are people who are endeavoring to love and serve God, and you want to have their good opinion, you may seek to follow after Jesus because you desire that. You appreciate the value in that. That attracts you to follow Jesus.

You may have the desire to be attractive to a specific person. We’ve often seen people that made a profession of following Jesus for that reason. There are a lot of things that motivate the family of man. Some people are just naturally rebellious. Some people tend to be more compliant. If you have a compliant personality, you may want to please your parents. You may desire to follow Jesus because your parents would be pleased, or your husband or your wife would be pleased, or your siblings. People would think well of

you. You would fit in better. So you could follow Jesus because of a desire for association—a more pleasant path that avoids conflict or problems.

FOLLOWING JESUS OUT OF HABIT

I believe that sometimes people are following after Jesus just out of habit. It's what they've always done. They've been endeavoring to serve the Lord all their lives now—thirty, forty, fifty years—and they're just maintaining some habits that they've gone through. This is what they do. They go to church. They're a part of a group of people. They're claiming to follow Jesus. That's their identification. It's a part of who they are.

FOLLOWING JESUS FOR POSITION

Sometimes we see that people have a desire to follow Jesus for position. Some people like to have followers. They like to be the spiritual guide. They like to be the instructor. They like to be the teacher—someone that people look up to. We live in a world today that, obviously, the tendency has been there in humanity, but I don't remember when I was young ever hearing about "influencers." Now there are all these "influencers." It speaks to something that's prevalent in the family of man. They desire to have influence over people, to have people look up to them, to have people regard them. Certainly, in some of those areas, there's a lot of money that goes along with that, a lot of power, so there are people that are endeavoring to follow Jesus because it gives them position. It gives them influence. I don't think you have to look very far around you in the world today to find that, and to see examples of that. It's prevalent throughout the religious world, and many people are involved.

FOLLOWING JESUS TO ESCAPE HELL

Some people are following Jesus because of fear. They're afraid of punishment, so they're trying to follow Jesus because they really, really want to escape hell. They really, really want to escape punishment. There's some benefit to realizing the seriousness of punishment. It's not wrong to come to the realization of a sense of guilt before God. But to just follow God because of fear of punishment, I don't feel that's the best reason to follow Jesus. That's not the best motivation to cause us to endeavor to follow Jesus. There's a lot of the religious world that's based on, as a part of that, an appeasement of a person's conscience. "I want to follow Jesus so I'll feel better. I'll feel like I'm doing what I need to do to avoid punishment. I want to make heaven my home some day. I don't want to go to hell. I don't want to go around all the time feeling like I'm guilty. I need to appease my conscience, so I'm going to follow after Jesus. I'm going to have people accept me as going to heaven, and it's going to make me feel better to be in a group and have that motivation."

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

We could talk for some time about some of those motivations, and there are certainly a lot of other

motivations. Jesus saw all of these people that were excited to follow Him, but He knew their hearts. He understood humanity. He understood why they were following Him. He didn't just get excited and say, "Well, this is wonderful! I've got this huge following. I've got all these people who are listening to me, that are excited to hear my words and to partake of what I'm here for." He saw their hearts, and He saw their real motivations, and He saw that they weren't really following Him for the right reason. They weren't really understanding, and so He told them, "You seek me, not because you saw the miracles, not because you saw the power of God, but because you want to be physically filled." They were thinking of how much they would gain, and all the benefits and advantages. They didn't have any thought of a cost. They weren't thinking, in this sense of following Jesus, that there was any price involved, any cost involved—anything that they needed to do. They were just seeing the benefits that they could receive, and how they could be blessed.

So Jesus began to teach them. You can read through that passage of scripture in John, chapter 6. It's a beautiful passage. He began to teach them about who He really was, why He was here, and what the purpose was. He talked to them about how He was the Bread that came down from heaven. And He got into speaking ... well, let me read verse 51. He said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Jesus had to talk about what He was going to give. Of course, the Jews questioned and had trouble understanding. But Jesus went on and He told them that, unless they ate His flesh and drank His blood, they could have no part with Him. They would have no life in them. Of course, we know that He wasn't talking about them actually eating His physical body, and drinking His physical blood. He was talking about them fully identifying with Him—of identifying with His teachings, His example, His message. He was talking about the reality of the experience that He was bringing—that they could be born again, that they could be new creatures in Christ, that they could live holy before Him. That's what He was saying. So he began to teach them, and to explain to them, and to talk to them about the requirements, about a cost, about a price to be paid, about what it meant to be a part of Him.

Verse 60 says: "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" They said, "We can't accept this. This isn't what we're here for. We're here for the loaves and fishes. We're here for some desires of our hearts, seeking to have the fulfillment of something that we need. But this is a hard saying."

That brought such a different result. I just picture Jesus watching them turn and walk away. I don't know if it was a group that all at once walked away. It probably started as a trickle. A few people started to walk

away, and other people saw them going, and they started walking away, too. Jesus stood there and just watched them. He didn't chase after them. He didn't say, "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Let me explain a little more. Let me see if I can change something." He just watched them go. He turned, and He looked at His disciples, and He said, "Will you go away, also?"

They needed to know at that moment, at that time, why they were following Jesus. They had to decide, "Why am I following Jesus? Why am I here? What's the real reason why I'm here, following Jesus? Because all these people are turning and leaving, and it's easy to follow the crowd. There's only a few left, and Jesus just asked me, 'Are you going to go away?'" They needed to have an answer for why they were following Jesus. They needed to know something in their hearts.

FOLLOWING JESUS BECAUSE HE HAS THE WORDS OF LIFE

I love Peter. He's a wonderful character in the Bible. Yes, he had problems. He made mistakes at times, but he had a wonderful heart. He had faith in God. Jesus asked the twelve, in verse 67, "Will you go away also?" Beginning with verse 68: "Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." He captured the essences of the matter right there. He went right to the heart of the matter. He went right to the very important point. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." That needs to be the reason we are following Jesus. That needs to be the reason why I'm following Jesus—because I know that He is the Son of God. I know that He has the words of eternal life, of eternal truth. Not because of what He's going to give me, not because of what I'm hoping to achieve, or to become, or to receive, but because of who He is. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." He told us that there's a strait gate and narrow way, and few there be that find it.

I'd like us to think for a few minutes about the words that Peter said: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." I want to ask us about our value of those words—the degree of importance we put on those words, how much they are motivating us, how real they are to us, how much they are the reality in our lives—that we want the words of eternal life. That that's why we're interested in Jesus. We're not just coming here to be in service occasionally, but we want to hear His words. We want to know His words. We know He has the words of eternal life, that He's the Son of God, and that's what is motivating us to follow Him, that's what is motivating us to know Him, and that's why we want to know what the Word of God says, and why we want to know what we can experience in the house of God, and in the presence of God. That's our motivating force.

The words of eternal life—that's the gospel message, the message of salvation from sin. There are a

lot of people who have become afraid of that message. They don't want to preach that message. They don't want people to feel bad. I don't want people to feel bad, either. I want people to be happy. I want people to be blessed. But I can't turn my back on the words of eternal life. Eternal life isn't just a feeling, just a desire, just a wish. It's the words of Jesus Christ in action—the gospel message of salvation from sin, the way of holiness and righteousness, of love and peace, of loving our brethren. Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, because you love one another." Do we really love one another? These are part of the words of life.

There is no other place to go. There's no other belief system. There's no other God. There's nothing else you can worship. If you accept the words of Jesus Christ at all, you have to come to the realization that there is no other place to go. Peter identified that so clearly as a child of God, walking with Jesus. What he saw, and what he experienced, and what he knew, he identified that so clearly. "To whom shall we go?" When Jesus asked that question, "Will you go away?" Will you go seeking another way to get the things you want?

"To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." That's why we're following Jesus—because He has those words. There's nowhere else we can go to find a different solution. There are a lot of people who have trouble accepting that. They want to believe there is some other way. Jesus talked about that. He said, "You know, he that trieth to climb up some other way ..." He knew there were people who were going to do that, who were doing that. He said that person was a thief and a robber. They were trying to get a reward without doing what was required to get it. They were trying to steal their way in. Even way back in the early days of creation, you had people come together and try to build their own way to heaven. People are still trying to do that today. They want to depend on their own thoughts, their own ideas, their own reasoning—what seems reasonable.

Peter said, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." It's through Jesus Christ, and Him, alone. We must follow Jesus because of who He is. We must believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That's such a simple statement, but I want us to realize that not everyone believes that. They haven't allowed their hearts to come to the place where they fully believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He is the authority, that He is the solution, that there is no other name given under heaven whereby men may be saved. We must follow Jesus because of who He is. We must follow Him because we know we are following the very Son of God, who has all authority and power, who is sitting on the right hand of God, and who is being worshiped and adored for who He is. No matter how the world looks upon Him and His teachings, and His words, we must believe in Him for who He is.

FOLLOWING JESUS BECAUSE OF WHAT HE HAS DONE

We must also believe in Him and follow Him for what He has done. The Bible tells us that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And you know, if you've read the Bible and know the words of God, what that entailed. What He truly did. Jesus died for my sins. I needed a Savior, and the only Savior I could have was Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the only plan of salvation. He, indeed, has the words of eternal life.

FOLLOWING JESUS BECAUSE WE LOVE HIM

Besides those realities, the reason that we need to follow Jesus is because we love Him. You're never really going to successfully follow Jesus for the loaves and the fishes, for the desires, the promises, and the benefits. There are going to come times where there are difficulties, uncertainties, and problems to face. Love is the strongest human emotion. It is the strongest motivator that we have. Even people who do things because of hate—that's a form of love. It involves that feeling that is prevalent in the human heart. When we love, everything becomes easier. I submit to us this morning that when Peter told Jesus those words, he was expressing love for Him. If we're going to successfully follow Jesus, it needs to be because we truly love Him for who He is, and what He's done. We can't allow anything else to come in and replace that love for Him in our hearts.

When Jesus gave the parable of the sower that went out to sow, and he sowed the seed, and some of it sprang up, and it grew for a while amongst some thorns and thistles, Jesus gave the explanation for that. He said, "The cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches, rose up and choked the life out of the seed. So it became unfruitful." What the cares and riches did, they choked out the love of Jesus. They distracted from the love of Jesus. The reason someone became unfruitful was because they didn't love Jesus the most. They got distracted with other things, and they got their eyes on other people or situations, or desires, or goals, or ambitions. They stopped loving Jesus. If we truly love Him, it's not hard to follow Him. It's not hard to desire to learn more about Him, to sing about Him, to worship Him, to praise Him, to gather together with like minded people to worship Him. That's not hard when we really love Him.

I'm not here this morning to tell you that you don't love Him. But I am here to tell you that from time to time we need to step back and look at ourselves and say, "Why am I following Jesus today?" Is it just a habit I have formed, or is it being renewed and motivated by love for Him and what He's done for me? We can just start to drift and exist. We need to know why. We need to feel that love, and that devotion, and that desire for God to motivate us to eat His flesh and drink His blood—to truly identify with Him. To not be afraid to say "yes" to His call. To be available to Him, to His work, His service.

We talk about a complete surrender to God. Love is what motivates us to be able to do that. Love for Him, for His example, His sacrifice, His love for others. You know, God loves people. He loved me so much, while I was unlovable, that He died for me. We need to love people. Love for God motivates and enlarges our love for one another, for the people around us, for the people in need. A love for His holiness.

Jesus also told us that the servant is not greater than his lord. He said, "If they rejected me, they're going to reject you, also. If they hated me, they're going to hate you, also." He didn't guarantee us freedom from persecution, or troubles, or problems, or difficulties. There are a lot of examples in the Bible of saints of old—what they gave, and what they did, because they loved God. "They loved not their lives unto the death," the Bible tells us. Because of the love of Jesus Christ—that's why they were following Him.

That love will cause us to follow Him regardless of our circumstances, regardless of offences and misunderstandings, whether or not we feel appreciated, whether or not everyone is doing what they should to us.

WHY AM I FOLLOWING JESUS?

Why am I following Jesus? Is it because of other people, or is it because of my relationship with Him, and my love for Him?

Where will we go? If we're going to leave Him, where will we go? We can go to other churches, or to other religions. We can find some easier way or something that might seem more exciting, or have more promise.

But the real question is, "Why am I following Jesus? What do I want? What am I seeking? Why am I here?" It ought to be because I've heard the words of eternal life, and I want them. I'm determined to have them. I'm determined to please Him and serve Him. I know that Jesus died to offer salvation for my poor, sin-sick soul. I've come to Him for salvation, and I've been regenerated in newness of life. I have a new life, a new heart, a new hope. I'm following Jesus because I truly love Him. He is the Son of God, and I want to please Him. I want to know His approval, and I want to know His love for me. I want to walk before Him in truth, and righteousness, and holiness. I want His smile of approval upon me. I'm going to serve Him, and I'm going to worship Him. I'm going to obey Him, and I'm determined to dwell with Him eternally.

No other reason to follow Him is worthy of Him. None of those other reasons for following Jesus are worthy of who He really is. Only by following His path and His plan will we have the power to truly please Him, no matter what.

Many will go away and say it's too hard. But what will my answer be? Am I prepared to look at Jesus Christ with the eyes of faith and say, "Where else will I go? You have the words of eternal life. You're the Son of the living God. I'm going to follow you to the best of my ability, to my dying day. I'll be what you want me to be, I'll go where you want me to go. I'll say what you want me to say." It's a wonderful, wonderful life.

May the Lord help us to know why we're following Him, to be determined, to be settled, to be sure. †

THE POETRY PAGE

WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS **Grenville Kleiser**

Watch your thoughts,
Keep them strong;
High resolve
Thinks no wrong.
Watch your thoughts,
Keep them clear;
Perfect love
Casts out fear.
Watch your thoughts,
Keep them right;
Faith and wisdom
Give you light.
Watch your thoughts,
Keep them true;
Look to God
He'll govern you.

WHO TOOK YOUR VOICE **Christine Welds**

Who took your voice?
Is a question to be asked;
As it's good to sing and rejoice,
Not to just sit and be relaxed.

God made us to be there for others
In many more ways than one;
No matter if you're a father or mother,
Or even a daughter or son.

There are many people around us
From whom you don't hear a peep;
But if they hear a big ruckus,
They have no problem to peek.

God's Word is to be shared
To all along life's way;
To help them get prepared
For His great judgment day.

So speak up and speak out
Before it's eternally too late;
And let them know all about
What will be their dreadful fate.

Let them know that God will forgive
Their wrongs right here and now;
And at the end of life's journey live
With Him in heaven above.

LET NOT **Harold F. Mohn**

Let not your faith be shattered
When Failure comes your way,
For faith in God that you possess
Will bring a brighter day.

Let not your soul be troubled
And cast aside each fear,
For God will give you inner strength
And fill your heart with cheer.

Let nothing e'er deter you
In goals you seek to gain,
With faith in God to lead you on
Each one you can attain.

QUALITY **Chris Zambarnard**

It's not the quantity that counts
But quality instead,
It's not a multitude of words
But a spoken word well said.

It's not a gesture multiplied
But a deed that is sincere,
It's not praying so others notice
But praying so God will hear.

It's not having friends galore
But a real friend you can trust.
It's not the quantity that counts
But the quality ... in us.

QUALITY **Chris Zambarnard**

Lord, hem my life with praise,
Praise to Thee above
For all Thy wondrous attributes,
Thy worthiness, O God.

Hem my life with faithfulness
To follow in Thy way;
Lord, keep my foot from slipping
Along the narrow way.

Hem my life with thankfulness
And humbleness, O God ...
Hem my life with each of these
And stitch it with Thy love. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



ALL THAT WE DO A Bible Lesson by Sister Rebecca Bland

"Sister Rebecca, may I please sit with you in church this morning?" I looked down to see the smiling face of a little first grader who was in my class at school. She and her family attended church services in the same congregation that I did, but usually *Leanne sat in the pew with her parents.



"I would be happy for you to sit with me," I replied, "as long as it's ok with your mother."

Leanne nodded quickly. "I already asked my mother, and she said I could," she replied.

"Well, then, how about you come over to sit with me after I come down from the choir," I said.

Leanne nodded again. Sure enough, as I came down from the platform after the last choir song, I saw Leanne leave the bench where she had been sitting with her parents and tiptoe over to the pew where I usually sat.

The speaker for the morning was our pastor. When he announced the text for his message, I opened my Bible to follow along. Leanne had her little Bible, too, and I helped her find the scripture passage the pastor was reading.

After a few minutes, I laid my Bible on the pew beside me. It was near to hand if I needed to pick it up again. I noticed that Leanne laid her Bible on the pew beside her, too, but I didn't think much about it until I noticed that, when I crossed my ankles, Leanne crossed her ankles.

Maybe it's just a coincidence, I thought to myself, but it seems as though Leanne is watching every move I make so that she can copy it. I decided to find out.

I waited a few minutes, and then I folded my hands and laid them in my lap. Sure enough, Leanne folded her little hands and placed them in her lap. I unclasped my hands and rubbed my right knee with my forefinger. Leanne dutifully copied the movement.

Now I knew it was no accident. Although she didn't appear to be watching me, Leanne was intently copying my every move. I smiled to myself. And then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw Leanne smile, too.

For the next several minutes, I hardly heard any of the pastor's words. I was thinking hard about what I had just noticed. All of my life I had been taught that we need to set a good example because we are always being watched by others. But I had never before seen that truth so clearly displayed.

If Leanne is watching my little motions so carefully, then how much more carefully might she be watching my more important moves every day at school? I wondered to myself. If I show impatience, she will think that is an allowable attitude. If I speak gently to others, then she will try to speak gently, as well.

Children, you may think that, because you are young, your actions are not important to others. However, you never know who is watching you. Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 20:11, which says, *Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.*

You may say to yourself, *I want to do whatever I wish without worrying about who may copy me.* But that is not how it works. Whether or not we like it, we are influencing others every day by our words and actions. Younger children look up to you. Because you are older, they believe you are wiser than they, and that they will be wise, too, if they copy you.

The best way to make sure you are a good example for others is to follow Christ. If you live your life the way He lived His, and if you obey every command He has given in His Word, then you will not need to worry that you are going to lead others astray. They will be safe in following you as you follow Christ.

**Not her real name*

ACTIVITY

We know we are following Christ when we live our lives the way He lived His. Here are some examples from the scriptures:

1. Christ was _____, even to children. (Mark 10:14)
2. When Christ was reviled (insulted or criticized), He _____. (I Peter 2:23)
3. Christ was _____ to His parents. (Luke 2:51)
4. Christ was _____ for every blessing. (Matthew 15:36)
5. Christ _____ to His Father in heaven. (John 17:1)
6. Christ did only the things that _____ God. (John 8:29)
7. Christ showed _____ to others. (John 13:34)
8. Christ showed _____ to those in need of help. (Matthew 9:36)
9. Christ did the _____ of God. (John 6:38)
10. Christ _____ even His enemies. (Luke 23:34)

ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S ACTIVITY

In the Old Testament, we read the story of a prophet who displeased God by failing to obey immediately when he was asked to do something.

1. The prophet's name was Jonah.
2. God asked him to go to Nineveh and tell its citizens that, because of their wickedness, their city would be overthrown in forty days.
3. When Jonah did not obey God, he was swallowed by a great fish (whale). After three days and nights, the whale vomited Jonah upon dry ground. Jonah decided to obey God and go to Nineveh.
4. Jonah learned that it is important to obey every command of God. †

RAYS OF HOPE

By the late D. O. Teasley
(Part IV)

DOUBTING

Doubting God and His Word is a habit imposed by the devil, and the longer it is indulged in, the stronger becomes its binding power. Doubting causes a path, or furrow, on the brain like a path across an orchard or a field where many feet have trod; and nothing but a stern resistance and the power of God can ever erase these furrows and break the habit of doubting. I repeat that doubting is a habit, imposed by the devil, for no reasonable person can willingly or maliciously doubt God.

Possibly the worst phase of doubting is doubting what God has done for the soul. Those who are habitual doubters often do much praying, but do very little believing. If Satan can succeed in getting you to doubt your experience and cast away your confidence, he has gained an inroad to the soul, which, if not quickly closed, is liable to cause prolonged trouble. I have known persons to doubt their experience, go and ask God's forgiveness, and doubt Him again before rising from prayer. Doubting spirits and accusing spirits are very closely allied and often work together.

To some people doubting becomes almost a second nature, and doubting becomes much easier than believing. If such people would treat the doubting spirit as some people treat peddlers they would not be troubled so much. Some people shut the door in the peddler's face notwithstanding his pleas to show his goods. If people would always shut their hearts' doors to all doubts regardless of their earnest pleas for entrance they would soon cease to come so often. Doubts, like some book agents, almost force an entrance, and the only way to get rid of them is to tell them to go.

Doubts are like visitors—if they are entertained, they will stay; but if no attention is paid to them and instead of entertainment they receive a rebuke, they will not stay long and will not return so often. The unrest and the tortures of the habit of doubting are too well known to the doubter to need comment. What is most interesting to the weakened and discouraged doubter is

THE WAY OF DELIVERANCE

There is deliverance for every soul that will accept God's way, even from the severest case of doubts and fears. If you are a doubter, settle it that God is true and that He loves you with an everlasting love. Though you may have failed a thousand times, God loves you still. And though you have been unfaithful many times, yet He abideth true; "he cannot deny himself"; and "his mercy endureth forever."

Your doubting, unbelief, and failures will not make God unfaithful, or untrue to His Word. God is just as true to you as if you had never doubted. Peter once said to the Lord, "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith

unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21, 22). Seventy times seven equals four hundred and ninety. Again, Jesus said to His disciples: "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3, 4). If God requires us to forgive each other until seventy times seven, and seven times in a day, is He less merciful than we? Should you forgive your brother seven times in a day until you had forgiven him for seventy times seven transgressions, you would forgive him seven times every day for two months and ten days. If God requires this much of you, how merciful must He be! This should not license you to doubt, but, on the contrary, should inspire you to believe that God will forgive you once more, even though your doubts and failings have been many. Two things you must rely on, trust in, cling to. These are—(1) The written Word of God, (2) Your God given reason, or judgment. Without these two landmarks you could never find the way to deliverance. Feelings will deceive you, doubts assail you, and past experience fail you; but the unchanging Word of God and your better judgment are way marks on the road to peace.

Meet the conditions of the Word as the best you can, implore the help of God, and resisting Satan, set your face toward the land of victory, determined to conquer or die, and Satan, doubts, and fears will stand back and let you pass. Believe where you cannot see nor feel, and trust where you cannot trace. Your fight may be a feeble one for a while, but "each victory will help you some other to win," and you will soon be able to vanquish your every foe; and standing on the banks of sweet deliverance you may sing the victor's song and sway a scepter greater than that of which any earthly potentate has ever dreamed. Never be discouraged; all discouragements are of the devil and should be resisted as the devil himself. Use your reason and strengthen your conscience; look at the mercy of God and His loving-kindness. Read the Bible, obey it, and believe it despite all your feelings to the contrary. Emotions are the doubter's worst enemies, except the devils themselves; but faith can conquer every foe. Tie the anchor of hope fast to the rock of eternal truth with the unbreakable cable of faith, and then emotions may rise and fall and the storms of doubts may rage, but your anchor is sure. And sooner or later you will learn to pay but little attention to superficial emotions, and to trust in the truth. After you have once gained a victory over Satan, you will be much stronger.

Never give up when tried or feeling bad, for you are not so capable of judging at such times. Wait till you feel well, and then consider. Put off giving up your experience till tomorrow, as some people put off seeking God, and you will get along much better; and when tomorrow comes, put it off again. Or what is better still, abandon the idea and go to helping someone else out of trouble, and God will bless both you and others. †



Greetings,

No matter how old we get we should never stop learning in life. This is true in our spiritual lives as well as other areas of life. This article, from Kyle Richards in the Hagerstown congregation, provides some good advice on having a mind that is open to

learning and growing. We never get to a place where we can't learn and grow and become more like Christ. May that be the aim and desire of everyone!

In His Service,
Brother Brian Richards

HAVING A MIND THAT IS OPEN TO LEARNING AND GROWING By Brother Kyle Richards

Psalm 32:8 says: *"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."*

Everyone needs to be taught in everything we do, whether it's school-work, a job, or even the rules of a game. But it's hard to learn from someone if you can't hear them or understand them. If you have ever been in a small room with a lot of people, you know it can be chaotic, especially if you're trying to have a conversation with someone. Our relationship with God is the same way. If we don't spend time drawing close to Him and taking time to understand and study the Bible, it's going to be hard to hear His instructions. There are countless times in the Bible when men and women called on God for guidance and wisdom. David, in Psalm 25:4, 5 said: *"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me."*

Solomon instructed us in Proverbs 2:3-6: *"Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."*

In the story of Queen Esther, Esther, through the guidance of her uncle Mordecai, was able to save her people from Haman. This brings me to my next point.

We understand that it's necessary to be taught and to have a close relationship with God. God might not talk directly to us and tell us which decision to make, but He has enabled us to learn in many ways: through people, through His Word, and through experiences. I said that Queen Esther received guidance from her uncle Mordecai. We also receive guidance from our leaders. We are always looking up to



people and following other people's examples because they have already gained experience, but we can only be taught as much as we want to learn. If we want to have a close relationship with God, we must put forth the effort. We can't rely solely on others to have a relationship with God. We must also have a one on one relationship with Him.

Another way we can be taught is through our own experiences. Often when hunting with Dad, I would follow in his literal footsteps by stepping in the imprints he made in the leaves or dirt, but sometimes he couldn't see a twig or a rock hidden under the leaves, and we would make some noise, which could mess up the hunt. It's the same with our spiritual walk. If we follow people without checking our steps with the Bible, we could easily fall away from having a close relationship with God. Psalm 118:8, 9 says: *"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."* As young people, we look up to the older saints of the congregation, and we should be able to do this because many times they have already dealt with the same trials that we might be facing for the first time. But we can't only lean on others because we are all human beings, and we mess up. God never messes up.

Also, we can learn by reading and studying God's Word. II Timothy 2:15, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* Having a relationship with God is much like a relationship with a friend. We study them, we learn what they like and don't like, and as a result we become closer friends. God wants to be friends with us. He wants to share His love and guidance with us. We just have to put an effort into drawing closer to Him.

My last point is that God will always be there to show us the way. *"I will guide thee with mine eye."* The last part of Hebrews 13:5 says: *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* In our lives we will sometimes handle things the wrong way because we are human beings, but God is patient. He is not going to throw us down and forget about us, because He is fair and knows we make mistakes. II Peter 3:9 says: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

In the song *"It Matters to the Master"* it says—
*If it matters to you, it matters to the Master,
He wants to share the burdens you bear
Whisper peace when your world gets shattered.
If it's your greatest joy or your deepest pain,
Or you're really needing an answer,
If it matters to you, it matters to the Master.*
—Lyrics: Rachel McCutcheon.

God is never going to forsake us. He created us with the intention of having a close relationship, and He really does care about every aspect of our life.

In closing, we understand that we all need to be taught, but we can't learn from God if we are too far

to hear His voice. And while learning from others is good, we can't solely depend on them for our knowledge of God. We must put forth the effort ourselves to have our own relationship with Him, but we don't have to do it alone. He will be with us every step of the way. All we have to do is ask. †

THEY FOLLOW HIM OCCASIONALLY

**Revival Message
by Brother Doug Koerner**

IN MARK chapter 10, there is a familiar verse of scripture I like to read and study. We are going to pick up here in verse 17. This is speaking about Jesus—"And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? Then Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother." So Jesus gave him a list of things that he needed to do if his desire was to inherit eternal life.

Verse 20: "And this [rich man] answered and said unto him, Master, all these things have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and he said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

It would have been a beautiful story if verse 22 was left out. Verse 22 says: "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."

LEAVING THE PRESENCE OF JESUS

This thought that I'm going to give to you was very significant to me as I thought about this message. Verse 22 says that the man was saddened "and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." The man left the presence of Jesus.

The chapter continues on. Jesus starts to talk about what just happened. I'm not going to read too much of this, but in verse 23, "Jesus looked round about and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But

Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"

This young man I always liked from the beginning of verse 17. And sometimes I pray, "Lord, give us some people that come running, excited." You know, he's running. He must be a little young if he's running. But he was excited. I believe he may have been excited, expecting Jesus to give him a pat on the back, to give him credit. "You're a good servant. You're a good person. You're part of the family." I believe maybe that was his intention or thought. Certainly, I don't think it was what he received. And he went away.

My thought for this evening is the question, "Where did he go?" I believe he went back to being what he used to be. He went back among his peers that lifted him up. They called him Brother Rich Man. Maybe he sat in the high seats. Maybe he sat up in the front seats. Maybe they bowed to him. I believe he went back to that. I don't think he stopped being what he knew. He told Jesus—and he was excited when Jesus read him the laws of Moses—"All these things have I observed and obeyed and done. From a little child, I was taught these things, and I have done them up to this very present time."

How we wish we had a community of people like this man! At this point in time, I guess we could say he was saved. Why? Because he was obeying the laws of Moses. Obeying the laws. That's what God required at that time. But when Jesus put his finger on something, that was a problem. His salvation stopped right there. And he went away.

But where did he go? Did he go back among his fellow men, and peers, and people? Did he go back and continue in the same things that he'd done from his youth up? And did not continue in the laws of God? He went back. I don't think he just quit serving God. But I think he said to himself, "Well, Jesus gave me something too hard, too illogical, too unreasonable. I have great possessions. I can't do that." He was saddened and went away.

Jesus never gives a person a command that they do not have the ability to do. He gives us the grace, He gives us the power, He gives us the strength, He



THE WAY OF TRUTH BROADCAST

(locally produced)

David Shaw, Radio Minister

JAMAICA, MELLO-FM, 88.1, 88.3, 88.5, 7:00 Sundays

LIVE STREAM: www.jamaicaradio.net

THE BIBLE STANDARD BROADCAST

James Arch, Radio Minister

GRAND CAYMAN, RADIO CAYMAN 1, 89.9-FM

1:30 P.M. Sundays

LIVE STREAM: www.radiocayman.gov.ky

gives us the understanding. When He shines the light upon our pathway, we get saved, and we start walking with God. I can remember many times as a young person that had gotten saved, just enjoying my salvation and walking with God. But from time to time, God would say, "Hold up right here. Here's something I need you to take care of." You know, the Bible still teaches restitution. You remember things you've done—stole things, or not been fair. God says you need to go back and take care of those things. You know, that can be a hard thing. If you say, "I can't do that," your salvation stops.

I thank God He gives us time. I've praised God many times, "Lord, I thank you for your patience with me. I thank you for your longsuffering with me." I've prayed to God from time to time, "Lord, if I were you, I would have given up on me a long time ago, but thank you for being patient with me."

When God shows us something, He gives us time to correct it, to walk in the light, to do those things He asks us to do. But there comes a time where people make a decision in their minds, "I'm just not going to do that." But the problem is, they still want to be a Christian, or they still want to fall into the same group that they were with before that. They follow Christ occasionally. Every congregation across the United States and the world probably has the same situation. People come in and get saved, and they're here. Next Sunday, they're not.

I remember one sister who got saved in our congregation many, many, many years ago. She was excited week after week. Then something happened. I don't know what. She started following God occasionally. People get saved and come to church, and then you don't see them. Then when they do come, you say, "Hi, how are you doing? Where have you been? It's good to see you." They say they have their own salvation. "I worship God my way now. I worship God at home. I worship God this way." God showed them something, but they're not willing to walk that way anymore. They cease to follow Christ.

The rich young ruler went away. I know that from time to time the devil battles us. The devil has tempted me and battled me. "Why don't you just quit?" and from time to time that thought is entertained. I have thought, "You know, Devil, if I were to quit this race, what I would have to do is take a contract and sign at the bottom saying that I'm quitting, and that contract says I sold my soul to a pit of hell. That's what it means."

But most people don't look at it that way. Most people say, "Well, I'm not willing to walk in the light God shows me, so I'm just going to go back to my old church where they accept me no matter what I do, and I'll follow God occasionally." There are many that you know of in this congregation over the years, in the Essex congregation, in Brother Harley's congregation, in California ... in every congregation across the United States of America. They were there, and then they went away. Many things hindered them.

PAYING THE PRICE OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Maybe the cost to this young man was too high. As I already mentioned, sometimes God says, "I need you to go back and take care of some things, make some restitution. I need you to go apologize for something. I need you to work on this," but the cost is too great, so you just slide into an attitude of lukewarmness. "I'll follow God occasionally. I'll be there every once in a while. I don't really want to leave the church. I don't really want to leave this, but I'm not willing to walk in the full light that Christ shows me."

The Bible talks about the sowing of the seed. Some get weary. The Bible tells us, "Be not weary in well doing." There's not a one of us in this congregation tonight that's been saved for a while that hasn't gotten weary in this walk from time to time. We get weary. It's a part of life. But the Bible teaches us when we're weary, we need to spend time in prayer, and God can lift us up. I've been at the bottom of the mountain, and I've been at the top of the mountain. I've been everywhere in between, but one thing I know, when I'm at the bottom of the mountain, there's only one way to go, and that's up, by the grace of God.

We get weary. We get discouraged many times. Some people never lose the love for the world, for the appeal the world has. I believe some people never get a real vision of the kingdom of God. Many get confused by the teaching, but to walk away from this salvation, to walk away from this great gift, to have known the things of God, to have tasted salvation, and to walk away, is the greatest loss you'll ever have.

That rich young ruler was this close to continuing his salvation. Jesus knew his problem, and Jesus told him that. Maybe this man could have said, "Lord, help me. Give me time." And maybe he would have gone and started selling his things, and getting rid of his things. Maybe God would have said, "I see you love me. You're doing well." But he went away.

The most important thing in your life—the most important thing in any human being's life—is salvation; bar nothing. If you miss salvation, and you miss eternal life, the Word of God teaches us that there is a place called hell that is prepared for the devil and his angels.

The Bible tells us that a rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment, and immediately started to cry out for relief. When he realized he was not getting any relief, then he began to ask for relief for his brothers. He said, "I have five brothers at home. Send [Lazarus] back to tell them." And Father Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets." The rich man said, "No, Father, but if someone goes back from the dead and tells them, they'll believe."

People today have the Word of God and the ministers preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ. If they will not hear that (because that's how God ordained salvation), they wouldn't hear if someone came back from the dead. This is how God ordained people to get saved—God using ministers, and pastors, and teachers to deliver the Word of God through

the power of the Spirit of God to deal with souls, convict souls, and make them realize they're bound for a place called hell. If you miss heaven, your life is in pain.

The most important thing in your life is salvation. I said earlier, the devil tempts me to quit. But this is the best part of my life. There's no greater part of my life than living for God. I see what's ahead of me. This is the best part of my life: being in the house of God and being around the saints.

I love the Word of God. I can remember when I first got saved. I enjoyed getting into this. I enjoyed it because it was new to me, for one thing. I'd go home at night and I'd sit there and study and read the Bible and just enjoy it. Well, let me tell you what. I enjoy it even more today as a minister, studying. God sometimes reveals things, just like in the thought of this particular message—Where did the rich young ruler go?

See, we don't hear any more about it. The man left and was saddened. Then Jesus started to deal with His disciples about the man. "Hardly can a rich man make heaven," said Jesus. "They trust in their riches."

But where did the man go? He went somewhere. What did his life consist of after that? People come in here, sit down, hear the gospel. They may think, "Oh, I want to get saved." Long ago, people asked Peter, "What do we need to do to make heaven?" He said, "Repent, and be baptized." People say, "You mean repent today, and repent again tomorrow?" No, repent today, and stop sinning. "That's not what I was taught in the church down the road." But that's what Jesus taught. "I don't want to do that." They leave, they go back down the road, and they sit in the church that teaches you can sin more or less every day, and live the rest of their lives, and die and go to hell. And they were that close to making heaven their home. God will shine His light upon our path. He will show us what we need to do. But when we fail to walk in the light that He shows us, we cease being a Christian at that time. Until we come to the place where we can say, "Yes, Lord, by your grace I mean to walk in the light," we won't make it to heaven.

I've faced it many times in living for God. When you're young and you first get saved, I know there are a lot of battles. Sometimes there's a new thing. God showed me some things at the beginning of my walk with Him. Some things were more difficult than others. I had to say, "Okay, Lord, I see it," and then I had to walk in it. Some things may have taken weeks for me to just say, "Lord, that's hard. That's not reasonable," but my desire to serve Christ was greater than the desire to serve myself. By the grace of God, I walked in the light. Thank God.

The rich young ruler went away. He went away, never to have a relationship with God that we ever read about in the Word of God. Tonight, that man, if he never repented and came back to Christ, he's in hell because of that one decision that he made. All the riches that he had are of no value to him now.

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He's been in hell for thousands of years. He'll be there for all eternity because of that decision.

Sister Ann Davis, back home, made a comment one time. She said, "Some people have a lot to give up, some major things to give up. But you know what? Some people have absolutely nothing to give up, but they don't want to give up self." You ask, "What are you doing on Sunday?" They answer, "Nothing. I'm gonna sit here and watch TV. I have grass to cut and a car to wash."

I know a man that works at a funeral home where I've done many funerals. I talked to him one time and asked him about being saved. I asked him about being in church, and he said, "Sunday is my day off." He's a man that does funerals. That's his living. He says, "Sunday is the day that I get things done." Indicating that he does not have time for God.

DOING WHAT JESUS REQUIRES

Let's go to John, chapter 6, verse 66: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." There is nothing that hurts us as saints of God more than to see some saint, some child of God not be in their place anymore. "Where have you been?" And they say, "I do my own thing." That hurts us. Now you know the story here in John 6. It says that from that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. What happened? Jesus brought a word that was illogical to them. Jesus said, "Except you eat of my flesh, and drink of my blood, you have no part with me." They could not conceive what in the world that meant. They were offended. They went back and walked no more with Him.

I don't know when you do it here, but we partake of the Lord's Supper and feet washing the Wednesday before Easter. It seems to be a good time. There are people in churches across the nation that will take part in the Lord's Supper. I used to when I first started to work at a job. I was 16, or 17—somewhere in there. I worked the night shift at Montgomery Ward, working on cars. There were a couple of guys I hung around with. Well, this one guy, a friend of mine, after he got off work, he used to clean a big Catholic church down the road. I think it was a Catholic church. It was a big church with a big school. He'd go there after we got off work, which was about ten o'clock at night. He had to go down to that big old church in the dark, and he was a little leery to go in there. He said, "Hey, why don't you come down and help me clean? I'll give you some of the money." He said, "There's a school. We've got to go in there and vacuum the carpets, empty the trash cans, do a little of this and a little of that. Not a big deal." He just wanted somebody to be there so he wouldn't be scared. I don't remember how often we did it. Once a month, maybe.

We had to go up into the sanctuary and do some cleaning here and there. We didn't do any major cleaning. Somebody else did that. But in the back office of the sanctuary, there was a trash can. I guess the trash can was from the altar. It was full of empty

wine bottles. Five, six, or seven bottles. That trash can was full. I don't know how many people were in that congregation, but do you know how many ... you only take a sip. (We don't use wine. We use grape juice.) I'd imagine one bottle of wine would probably do a congregation. After the 300 or so congregation members, maybe two people drank the rest. They're okay with doing the Lord's Supper. "Oh, let's take part." There are many who do it every single service.

What about the second part? Jesus took water and He went to wash the disciples' feet. He sat down, put the basin down, and said, "Do you understand what I've done to you? I am your Lord and Master, and I have washed your feet. You ought to wash one another's feet." I don't believe that was an optional commandment. There are people I've talked to over the years who say, "Oh, we don't do that. That's foolish." You lost your salvation because you rejected the teachings of Jesus Christ. "Oh, we do the Lord's Supper, but we don't do feet-washing." Jesus didn't give you an option. Jesus never gives us an option.

Jesus said, "Except you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you have no part with me." And they went away. These men couldn't grasp that understanding.

Some people go away because they're offended. The disciples in John 6 went back. They were offended. Jesus didn't cut them any slack. He said unto the twelve that were with him, "Are you going to go away? I'm not changing my gospel or changing my teaching to suit you twelve, to suit those that went away, to suit one person. This is the Word of God. This is the light. Walk ye in it."

Well, thank God for Peter's boldness from time to time. Simon Peter answered and said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered them, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

There are going to be some difficult lights that shine in our pathway, and we have to continue to walk in the light as He shines it upon our pathway. When we cease to do that, we stop following Christ. I want to emphasize that tonight. People say, "Uh, well, God doesn't really care." Well, there's no use having the words put in the Bible if He doesn't.

I was at work one day, and I was looking at something, and somebody brought up the NIV (new international version) of the Bible. They said it leaves so many verses out. The Bible says that if any man takes away or adds to, I (God) will add to his punishment. We cannot pick and choose what we desire to like. Just like this rich man, and the men in John 6, they wanted to make up their own salvation.

There are millions out there today saying they're Christians. There are millions that wear T-shirts that say, "Jesus Saves" or "I Am a Child of God," or "I've Been Born Again." They have statues in their houses and statues in their cars. They have stickers on the backs of their phones, or bumper stickers that say, "Follow me to church this Sunday. I follow Christ." Occasionally, they do. Only when it's convenient. Only

when it suits them. Many times, Jesus told the people that wanted to be followers, "Go and sell what you have, give it to the poor; come and pick up your cross and follow me." Jesus told people over and over, "Pick up your cross." A cross is a difficult thing. It's something that we bear heavily.

Being a Christian isn't easy. Jesus said it. He said, "Strait is the gate." That word *strait*—do you know what it means? It doesn't necessarily mean an arrow here. It means "difficult." That word *strait*—you look it up. It means the difficult pathway. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it." You're not going to just barely make it through. But thank God, He has all the grace, all the power, all the strength to help each and every one of us when we come up to that difficult part in our lives. He will never show anything to you that you're not ready for. I thank God for that.

Here I am, enjoying living for God. I'm walking down the highway of being a Christian. I had maybe a little trial that God helped me get through, a little one here and a little one there. But God says, "Down here, I've got something for you. I need you to be victorious in these small trials." And then you get to this one, and God says, "Look, I helped you through the little ones, and I gave you the grace to go through them, and I'm going to give you the grace to go through this one."

In Matthew 12:30, Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me." You're with Christ all the way, or you're not. The devil wants us to be just like Peter when Jesus was taken. What happened after Jesus was taken? Jesus had told the disciples, "I've got to go to Jerusalem. They're going to take me, and I've got to die." Peter said, "Far be it from you, Lord. That's not going to happen." He said, "I will die with you." Jesus said, "Peter, before the cock crows, you're going to deny me three times." They took Jesus. Peter was ready to fight with his life. I believe, in his mind, he was confident of that. But when he saw them take Jesus, what happened was he started following Christ from a distance. He wasn't right up there near Him anymore. "I need to back off a little bit and follow God from a distance and see what the ending will be."

I have no Bible for this, but I believe there are going to be more people in hell that claimed, at one time, to be saved, than those that are just blunt sinners—alcoholics, drug addicts, all those things. It's saddening.

I bring this message, not to condemn anyone here at all, but as an awakening. We're living in dark times. In II Timothy 3:1, it says: "perilous times." These are terrible times, and people are just allowing you to live any way, shape, or form. You don't have to live a certain way to go to heaven. Well, you have to live the way Jesus says. If we don't live the way Jesus Christ says, if we don't live the commands of Jesus Christ, then we're not making heaven our home. Period.

Many of you have friends that are sinners that go to church and they're doing all kinds of things we

know the Word teaches against. They may even criticize you. They say, "I don't have to do that. I'm going heaven." This thing out there today where "God is love" ... The Bible says, "God is love." The Bible also says, "Behold the goodness and the severity of God." There's a day of punishment.

Peter followed Jesus from afar. Many people like to follow Jesus. And the devil wants you to follow Jesus—occasionally. Just do it when it's convenient for you. "I'll go to church here or there. I'll show up on Christmas, Easter, maybe a revival here or there. But I'm not going to be there every Sunday. I'm not going to support it every week. I'm not going to spend time in prayer every day. I'm not going to spend time in my private devotions every day. I don't need to do that. I can just open up a Daily Bread and read a verse or two of scripture and go on about my life."

I don't know if it's a fact, but maybe out in California, they have "drive thru" prayers. Drive up to a car, "Hey, let's have a prayer." Maybe they even hand you a little prayer. "Okay, I did my day's duty." It takes time to serve God. He desires us to take time.

DYING TO SELF

Let's go to John, chapter 12, starting with verse 24. Jesus says here, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour." Verse 25 says: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." I used to ponder that thought. You know, we live in a country, thank God, where we're not worried by the authorities coming in the doors and taking us out and shooting us for worshipping Jesus Christ. Thank God for that. We still have that freedom. And I have thought, "Lord, I'm living in a time, and I'm living where I'm at. How can this verse apply to me?" God brought to my mind, "When you put God first, and you put your life and your desires, your hopes, your dreams, and everything else second, you put everything else on the back burner, you have lost your life for Jesus Christ." You say, "Lord, I give you my life." We get saved, and we get cleansed. We get all cleaned up. God says, "Okay, let's get the inside clean. Let's work on self. Let's come to the place where you sanctify yourself, get yourself crucified to Christ." You see, that's why sometimes people have great trouble. They get saved, they enjoy the wonderful gift of salvation, and then God brings them to a deeper walk.

There's a story—I think it's in Ezekiel—about the waters issuing out from under the throne. The man was standing there with, I think, the angel of the Lord. And he measured out a certain number of meters, and he said the waters were to his knees. You know, if you've ever been standing in the waters (and I don't

care if they're rushing waters), if they're at your ankles, it's not really a challenge. But he said, "Let's measure out a little more." The waters went to his knees. I can get a little more challenging then. Then the waters were up to his loins. Now we're in some deep water. And God's always calling us to go deeper. Go deeper into the things of God. He finally brought him to a place of rivers to swim in. God has blessings for us, but only if we're willing to follow the Lord.

I've been through some real war zones in my life, living for God, and many of those times that God has brought me through have been wonderful victories with blessings. They helped me to get anchored deeper into the things of God. Trust me, I don't want to be a Job. But Job made a comment one time, "Though God slay me, yet will I serve Him, yet will I trust Him." Can we say that? Jesus said you can't have two masters. You hate one and love the other. You lose one and gain the other. Here He makes it clear that you cannot serve God occasionally. Jesus said here in John 12 that you need to die to self. Verse 26: "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

I believe people follow Jesus Christ many times like they follow a winning sports team. You know, when their team is winning, a lot of people like to watch them, and follow them. "Oh yeah, they won last night, 6 5. And they won the last time." But when they start losing, and you ask, "Well, how did your Orioles do last week?" They say, "I don't know. I don't follow them anymore." As long as they're on the winning side, you're following, you're a part of them. But when things aren't going well, you sort of say, "I don't know what they're doing." People do that with Christ. As long as things are going smoothly, they want to serve God, but when the road gets rough, they just want to follow Him occasionally. The devil wants you to follow Jesus occasionally.

Are you measured up to all that you know tonight? Are you measured up to everything that God has shown you? Let me read one more verse of scripture. Revelation 2, beginning with verse 1—"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works [Jesus knows your works tonight.], and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." Sounds like they were doing pretty well. But in verse 4, He says, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

Up to this night, maybe you've been the person who says, "I came across something, and I just sort of faltered from following it fully, and I'm kind of over here doing my own little thing." Repent from that, because you're not going to heaven unless you follow

Jesus Christ one hundred percent—wholeheartedly—what God has allowed you to understand. You follow Him, and you'll make heaven. But not if you come to a spot and you say, "I just can't. I can't do that, Lord."

There are a hundred excuses why people aren't following Christ. You can give me all one hundred, and it doesn't matter to me, because God knows if they're real or not. God knows your heart. God knows your mind. God knows everything. Ask Him, "Lord, is there anything that maybe I've stepped over? I don't really want to do that. I just want to keep walking. Lord, is there anything that I need to repent of, so I can get back in the graces of God?"

May the Lord bless you. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE FAMILY OF GOD

THE FAMILY'S MISSION IN THE WORLD

Scriptures: Acts 4:19-33.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that

signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Memory Verse: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.—Acts 4:20.

Aim: To show what God expects of His family.

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we want to discuss some of the things that God expects His family to do. If we are saved, we are in the army of the Lord and are subject to His every command just the same as the soldiers in any army are subject to every order of their officers. The effectiveness of the army depends to a great extent upon prompt and willing obedience to every command of the officer in charge. Just so it is in the army of the Lord. Jesus is our Leader and Commander. He has a plan for every one of us, and unless we render unto Him prompt and willing obedience, we will not be able to accomplish all the things that He has planned for us. If we fail in our work for the Lord and fall out of the army, the work of the church in that community will be hindered. All of these little things hinder the work of the Lord, and more than likely some precious soul will be lost who might have been saved had we been faithful at our post of duty. Let God use the remainder of your life in winning souls so that you may shine as the stars forever and ever in the world to come.

MEDITATIONS

IT IS BETTER TO OBEY GOD THAN MAN—
Acts 4:19-22—Peter and John had just been brought from prison before the Jewish authorities for questioning in regard to the miraculous healing of the crippled beggar. Here we see just how the devil works on the hearts of men. Instead of the Jews rejoicing because one of their fellow men had been restored to normal health, they listened to the devil and put Peter and John in prison. After listening to Peter telling them how that by the power and mercy of Jesus, whom they had crucified, this poor unfortunate man had been healed, they threatened them and commanded them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John were filled with the Spirit, and they wanted to please God above everything else, so they boldly said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Our duty to God comes first, and we cannot let the

commands of men interfere with our work for the Lord. Jesus said that we should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, so we dare not keep still while the people all around us are lost in sin. We must be a good witness for the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

THE FAMILY RESORTS TO PRAYER—Acts 4:23-30—As soon as Peter and John were let go, they went to their own company and told them all that had happened. The church went to the Lord in prayer. Prayer is talking with God, and we need to talk with Him every day. When we are facing some hard task or problem, we can go to Him boldly in prayer and He will help us out. That is just what Peter and John did. Note that they did not ask God to let them stop preaching, but they asked God for more power so that they might preach with more boldness than before. Here is part of their prayer: “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.” Isn’t it wonderful that God gave them so much courage and confidence that they wanted to go out and preach with more boldness in spite of the threatenings of the Jewish authorities and their command that they should not preach any more in the name of Jesus? We must strive with all our hearts to have that same kind of boldness and live and act just as Jesus wants us to at work or wherever we may be.

THE POWER OF PRAYER—Acts 4:31-33—The disciples earnestly prayed, and the Scriptures say that the place was shaken where they were assembled together. If we expect to get an answer to our prayer, we must come to God in earnestness and sincerity. It will not do any good just to say a few words, or just to “say a prayer,” as so many call praying. A prayer must come from the heart and be inspired by the Spirit of God. The Bible tells us that we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself will make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. So we see that there is a lot more to prayer than just saying words or reading a prayer that has been written by someone else. We want all of you to talk to God right from your heart. We want you to have that vital contact with God that will keep the joy bells ringing in your heart. We want folks around you to know that your religion is real and that it is making you a good, respectable person. We do not want you to be satisfied with just a profession that fails to put the peace of God in your heart and fails to take away the desires for worldly amusements. We want your affections to be set on heavenly things, things that will please God.

CONCLUSION

The primary mission of the Church of God is to tell the gospel story to others. There are many ways in which you can do this. You can invite your friends and fellow workmen to services; and if you are living the right kind of life before them, they will have an

urge to come. They may not acknowledge it and they may not accept your invitation, but the Spirit of God will plead with them and show them that they ought to give their hearts to God and live for Him. You can pray for your friends who are not saved. The Bible tells us that if we ask anything according to His will, He will answer our prayer. Now we know that it is God’s will for everybody to be saved, so if you will earnestly and sincerely pray for your unsaved folks and friends, you can see them saved. But you must be earnest about it and never become discouraged if God delays the answer. Just remember that all of God’s promises are true and cannot fail.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. In what way are we soldiers?
2. In what way is God’s army like a physical army?
3. Against what does God’s army fight?
4. Tell some of the ways the devil fights against us.
5. Why had Peter and John been put into prison?
6. What gave them the courage to say it was better to obey God than man?
7. What did they do when the Jews threatened them and ordered them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus?
8. What happened when the disciples prayed earnestly?
9. What is real prayer?
10. Are you using the avenue of prayer to get closer to God? †

MARKS OF IDENTIFICATION

OR HOW TO RECOGNIZE THE CHURCH OF GOD

By the late E. Y. Eddings

Text: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—John 13:35.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTIFICATION

No two persons have identical features in all respects. All have some characteristics, or marks, which distinguish them from all others. This knowledge is useful in many departments of life. Criminology has perfected it to a high degree of efficiency in identifying lawbreakers, and many criminals who would otherwise have escaped have been apprehended and punished because of this. In this day of religious confusion, people need to familiarize themselves with the identifying marks of God’s church—the marks that will identify it and distinguish it so that there cannot be any mistaken identity.

WE ARE LIVING IN AN AGE OF SKEPTICISM

The church must meet and overcome the skepticism of the world of reality. The church claims to know God, but the skeptical world is looking for something more than claims and theories. Nominal Christianity has failed the world in witnessing for Christ and in

proving the reality of God. I refer to what is generally known as the church of God, the general idea of the church, the idea that it takes all the denominations and creeds to make up the church of God and each creed and denomination is a branch of the true church. This idea does not comprehend the true church of God, the body of Christ.

The spiritual-minded men and women of this age are seeking for something more real than just a creed or form of religion in institutions which are religious in tenet but cannot produce the evidence. The church of today, in order to convince the world of her genuineness, must present more than a mere historical statement of the facts of Christianity in the early church. We need to know these historical facts, but we also need some convincing evidence of God's working in the church of this present age; because earnest-hearted men and women are searching for reality, not formality. Religious institutions which cannot justify their existence by accomplishing the design of Christ in renewing the life of those who accept them are useless and soul-destroying. Many are cold, dead, and formal. Their religion is purely ritualistic and based upon their particular creed. There is no power in their religion to deliver them from sin and its power—no power which helps them to love one another with a pure heart fervently. They have no consciousness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Praise God! Christ is the living head of His church, and she derives her life from Him and is empowered by Him to carry on the work of redemption which He began and which will close with His return. We do not serve a dead and powerless Christ, but one who liveth and reigneth forever and who maketh us kings and priests unto our God. "For sin shall not reign over you." He imparts His life to those who surrender to Him and accept Him. "For ye are dead and your life is hid away with Christ in God." There are several hundred different religious organizations in the world, each teaching a different way contrary to the teachings of Jesus and Paul. Jesus prayed that they all might be one. Paul admonished that all speak the same thing and that there should be no division among them.

My brethren, God has set the identifying marks indelibly upon His church, and they are to be plainly distinguished so that she may be identified.

The first mark of identification is found in our text. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Another mark was that the work of the kingdom was carried out. Men gave up their sins, their lives were made anew, and their wives and children became Christians, not church members. They became new creatures in Christ: His life, His principles, His power became theirs. He empowered and sent them forth, working with them to do the works of the kingdom with signs following.

Jesus threw out a challenge to the world which was taken up by the apostles and which should characterize the church of God today. John 10:37, 38, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if

I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him." This is a noble stand to take and should be the motto of the church today. Each person should be willing to be judged by the works of their lives as to whether they be a devout follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. We should be willing to stand or fall in the eyes of the world by the kind of fruit which we produce. Christ was willing for His teaching to stand or fall by the results produced in the lives of those who claimed to follow Him. It never fails—men and women who applied the teachings of Christ to themselves became new creatures. Old things passed away and, behold, all things became new.

Nominal religion, or churchanity, has failed to meet the needs of a lost world. Only the church of God, the pure bride of Christ, has the remedy for a sin-sick world—a pure heart and life patterned after the life of Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. The church of God is unique; the church of God is exclusive; the church of God is inclusive. She is unique because she is the only one of which Christ is the head. Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Ephesians 1:22, 23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

The great body of denominational churches are attempting to convince the world of the unity of Christians by their division. They tell us that the true church of Christ is not divided, and that while there are sinners in the visible church there are none in the invisible church. In the early days of the Christian dispensation the church became the church by her adherence to and practice of the teachings for which Christ sacrificed His life. They were one because in Him they found the tie that bound their hearts together. They went far and near and proved the truth of the gospel by the lives which they lived and the deaths which they died.

The church cannot exist on mere historical accounts of the power and demonstration of the early church, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." The same conditions met in the church today will bring about the same results which characterized the early church.

They had all things common, and great grace was upon them all. God's power was manifested in the healing of all manner of diseases. His people all spake the same things. The Holy Ghost ruled the church, and kings and potentates trembled before the power of the gospel heralded forth by men who loved not their lives unto the death. Millions of saints were martyred because they stood for the true gospel and refused to compromise with evil. There are many precious souls who are deceived into believing that they can belong to the church, God's church, the spiritual body of His only Son, and still continue to live in sin day by day. Many also believe that the

days of miracles passed on with the apostles, but this does not satisfy a hungry soul who is sick and tired of sin.

The true church is distinguished by her inseparable connection with her head and builder, Jesus Christ our Lord; and by the manifestations of His divine power working in the church, these characteristics fulfilled today will bring about the state of holy unity which characterized her in the early morning of the great gospel day. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15-20.)

*Over the age-old path the centuries have trod,
Shone with its lustrous beams the golden light of God;
Bright was the early morn of this great gospel day,
When from the cross it gleamed and drove the night away.
Shining in beauty now as in the morning,
Driving the mists away, ending the cloudy day.
Cometh the truth arrayed in bright adorning,
Ever to guide us onward in the way.*

Brethren, if these conditions existed in the hearts of all who profess Christianity, they would bring about the same identical results; and men would not be saying that the church has lost her power. Jesus said, "And ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Here is the source of spiritual power today, even as then. Too many today are basing their hopes on a theoretical Christianity rather than the personal experience of the new birth, which changes their hearts and their lives. Too many are professing to be Christians who do not know Christ in the forgiveness of their sins. They hope they are saved.

By their godly lives, their power in prayer, the healing of sick bodies, and the casting out of evil spirits, men of the early church witnessed to and adorned the teachings of Christ; and thus grew the mighty church of God until she swept away the mighty heathen strongholds and conquered the mighty power of Pagan Rome, and the entire earth was filled with the glory and power of God. My beloved brethren, this power was not developed for just a single age or generation or two, but for every age in which the teachings of Jesus are believed and practiced. John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." Hebrews 13:8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." The changed life of the believer witnessed to the efficacy of the gospel. By it the Christian wife won her husband to Christ. By it the Christian slave won his master to Christ by his patient endurance of ill-treatment. Those who persecuted the saints often became ashamed of themselves, and they too became Christians. Literally thousands were drawn to this transfigured assembly who walked the earth as a testimony to Christ and the effectiveness of His teachings.

The mission of the church today is not just to display a beautiful picture of the church of God, but to present to the world a body of people who bear the marks of identification distinguishing her from all pretenders and to present to the world Jesus Christ living in His church, thereby drawing men and women

to God, seeing them made into new creatures, loving and being loved by their brethren, all speaking the same thing.

IDENTIFYING MARKS

She is pure, she is one, she is clothed with the sun of the gospel, and she has under her feet the moon of the Mosaic law and the prophets. She is outstanding in her beauty and holiness because she is clothed in His righteousness. She bears His name, and she is pure, without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:25-27). Glorious things are spoken of her (Psalm 87:3). Her foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God." She is exalted. Isaiah 2:1-3, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." She manifests all virtue. She is the bride of Christ, and the Bible alone is her creed and rule of faith. Her members are placed in her by God Himself. She contains all the truth, and she is the pillar and ground of the truth. Her members are born in her (Psalm 87:5, 6). She is fair as the sun and terrible as an army in her war against sin and unrighteousness. Her condition of membership is the embracing of the teachings of Christ as to the salvation of the soul. Her mission is to reconcile sinners to God through Jesus Christ her divine head. She is identified and made visible among men by her love and obedience to the Lord. She manifests her power in her ability to lead souls to Christ, the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, divine healing of all manner of sickness and diseases, showing forth the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. This is her identifying mark.

Any group who claims to be the church of God but has not these marks is false. Without the presence of God in the church, she is just another sect and will never be able to make her claim convincing. Jesus said, "Without me, ye can do nothing."

Her characteristics are true holiness, lack of worldliness, pure, burning love to Christ and to each other, easily to be entreated, and doing the works of the Father. This then is evidence of His presence among us and thus is the church identified. But if we do not the works of the Father, then believe us not. "For by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Within the church of God we have access to all the benefits of the Holy Spirit's power, and the teaching, believing, and obeying of the Word of God.

Justification by faith, sanctification by the Holy Ghost, the unity of all of God's people in the one body,

divine physical healing of the body through the prayer of faith: in all this she is carrying out and fulfilling the mission which Jesus gave to her, thus being assured of His presence with His church unto the end of the world. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

God's church cannot be humanly organized. No man or body of men can put you into the church. Neither can any man or body of men put you out. You can only get in by the Door of the sheepfold, and you can only get out by the way of sin. The Lord adds to the church those who are saved. You hear people talking about joining the church. They do not see the church. Some think that they can be in the church of God and drink a little, find fault a little, hold a few feuds, and still sow a little discord, and be all right. But when one starts that, he automatically cancels his membership in God's church.

—Reprinted from September 1992 issue †

A CONDENSED OVERVIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN 20 SEGMENTS

By Claude L. Chilton

1. CONDEMNATION for sin and guilt by CONVICTION of the Holy Spirit.
2. CONTRITION for sin—a godly sorrow.
3. CONFESSION of sin to God.
4. CONFIDENCE (FAITH/TRUST) in atonement of Jesus Christ.
5. CONVERSION to Christ by the new birth.
6. CONTINUOUS growth in grace through prayer and good works.
7. CONSCIOUSNESS of inner struggle with original sin (Adamic nature).
8. CONSECRATION of total redeemed self to God's will.
9. CONFIDENCE in blood of Jesus for inner cleansing and empowerment for service [sanctification].
10. CONDITIONAL security as one "walks in the light," in unconditional surrender and obedience.
11. CONTENTMENT amidst life's changing circumstances.
12. CONSISTENCY of conduct as an example to the world.
13. CONTINUAL conformity to the image of Christ.
14. CONQUERING the temptation to willful sinning by power and grace of God.
15. CONSUMED by the love of God within to persuade others of the claims of Christ.
16. A CONTAGIOUS faith undaunted by the winds of opposition.
17. Personal CONVICTIONS based on biblical principles.

18. CONTROLLED and led by the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

19. CONCENTRATION in seeking to please the Lord in thought, word and deed.

20. CONQUERING the final enemy, death, CONSUMMATING and CONCLUDING a joyous life dedicated to the glory of God and the betterment of mankind.

P.S. Would you accept one more—

21. Avoiding CONTROVERSY in the body of Christ, especially the local church body. †

WHY THE BIBLE IS SPECIAL

The Bible has meant a great deal to me always, not only for the spiritual values it asserts, but for many other reasons—the beauty of its poetry, the fact that it is the most human book or collection of books ever written, containing the story of all human weaknesses and strength. I enjoy it also because it contains nearly all the great stories that have been written and rewritten many times and because it contains the Ten Commandments, which provide the best formula ever set down by which people can live together in civilized justice and understanding. It is unquestionably the greatest of books and the whole compendium of human experience in the real world as well as in the spiritual one.

Louis Bromfield (1896-1956)

—Edythe Draper, *Draper's Book of Quotations* †

TEMPTED OR TESTED?

Alexander MacLaren distinguished between being tempted and being tested or tried. He said that "the former word conveys the idea of appealing to the worst part of man, with the wish that he may yield and do wrong. The latter means an appeal to the better part of man, with the desire that he should stand." Temptation says, 'Do this pleasant thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is wrong.' Trial or proving says, 'Do this right and noble thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is painful.' The one is a sweet, beguiling melody, breathing soft indulgence and relaxation over the soul; the other is a peeling trumpet-call to high achievements."

—Bible Illustrator †

HAGERSTOWN SPRING REVIVAL REPORT

(From notes taken by Sister Sarah Arch)

Our annual Spring Revival was held April 16-19, 2026. Our evangelist was Brother Doug Koerner, pastor of the Church of God, Essex, Maryland.

The Way of Truth

We were surely blessed by the singing of the songs of Zion by the saints, and the messages that followed by Brother Doug. Each message he brought forth was very inspiring and the plain truth revealed. We so much appreciated his effort in being able to be with us for this revival.

Below are a few excerpts of the messages:

Thursday—7:00 P.M.—Title: “Are You Looking Approval from God or from the World?” Scripture text: I Thessalonians 4:1. Excerpts: *The last part of that verse is what I want you to look at—“how ye ought to walk and to please God.” Those are the words of the apostle Paul. In our lives today, people do their best to please the world, to please the fashions of the world, to please their friends, to get the approval of the world, and to reject what God says. As long as we have the approval of God, we have the smile of God in our lives. If we can just have the smile of God, it doesn’t matter what the world says. We can have the approval of God. Paul says that we are to please God and not the world. God has patience with us. The Bible has standards for the saints of God. Our actions need to be modest. God has a desire for us. He wants us to please Him.*

Friday—7:00 P.M.—Title: “God Is Illogical.” Texts: Genesis 12:1-5; Judges 7:2-7, 17-22. Excerpts: *God’s way is perfect. Abraham and Gideon, by faith, followed God. Abraham was told to go, but he knew not where. God may ask us to do things that don’t seem logical. Give our time and talents to God. God may ask us to go down some difficult roads. Press on and trust God. Sometimes God’s ways don’t seem logical. We may miss a blessing if we reject something God may ask us to do. Have we asked God if there is anything He would have us to do? Psalm 18:30, “As for God, his way is perfect” every single time. When you are convinced of that, the battles won’t seem so illogical. Everything needs to be on the altar—my wants, dreams, hopes, heaven. God has something for each of us to do.*

Saturday—6:00 P.M.—Title: “They Follow Christ Occasionally.” Text: Mark 10:17-22. This message is included in this issue.

Sunday—10:30 A.M.—Title: “What Must I Do to be Saved?” Text: John 3:1-10. Excerpts: *Nicodemus was a teacher. He told Jesus, “We know thou art a teacher come from God.” He asked Jesus a question, “How can you do these things?” Jesus said, “Ye must be born again.” Nicodemus didn’t understand. Nicodemus’ question was in regard of how to get saved. Do we know how to help someone to get saved? We need to have the power of God to help people. If we reject Jesus’ mercy, we will pay the penalty. One thief on the cross accepted Jesus’ mercy; the other one rejected. He had the same opportunity to accept Jesus. Don’t pass up the Spirit of God. We all are going to stand before God. God is talking to you, but you must open the door. If you want to go to heaven, you must believe in the Son of God and be born again.*

Sunday—6:00 P.M.—Title: “I’m Going On.” Text: II Corinthians 4:8-10. Excerpts: *Jesus never promised an easy way. We all have a cross to bear. There is joy ahead—heaven. In spite of the battles, I will press on. Things in this world perplex—governments, diseases,*

financial difficulties, bodies fading—but praise God, we are not distressed because we have Jesus Christ. Farther along, there is victory. We need to be joyful Christians. There is a grand prize awaiting us.

We deeply appreciated this revival. The messages went forth in no uncertain sound. Saints were encouraged to press the battle on. May the Lord continue to bless Brother Doug’s labor of love.

SPRING REVIVAL CD’S

CD’s are available of these wonderful messages preached by Brother Doug Koerner. These may be purchased for \$3.00 each or the complete set of five for \$10.00.

Please indicate how many you would like by filling in the blanks. Send check or postal money order to: The Way of Truth CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088. (credit cards accepted.) No international orders, please.

___ #1816 Are You Looking Approval from God or from the World?

___ #1817 God Is Illogical

___ #1818 They Follow Christ Occasionally

___ #1819 What Must I Do to be Saved?

___ #1820 I’m Going On †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for sending me your monthly magazine, *The Way of Truth*. May the Lord continue to bless your work.

I’m sending you a little love offering.

God bless.

—S. M., Pennsylvania †

OUR SERVICES ON CD’S

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

- ___ CD #1786 Peace—Brian Richards
- ___ CD #1787 When I Arrive—Rebecca Bland
- ___ CD #1788 Results of a Dedicated Ministry—G. E. Tyler
- ___ CD #1789 Forgetting the Things Behind—Doug Shenberger
- ___ CD #1790 What It Means to be a Godly Man—Thomas Harris
- ___ CD #1791 Believe to Receive—Doug Shenberger
- ___ CD #1792 How Are You Building?—Brian Richards
- ___ CD #1793 Why Am I Following Jesus?—Doug Shenberger
- ___ CD #1794 Not of This World—Doug Shenberger
- ___ CD #1795 Identifying With the Message—Rebecca Bland
- ___ CD #1796 The Power of Repenting—Doug Shenberger
- ___ CD #1797 I Have Set the Lord Always Before Me—Paul Wilson
- ___ CD #1798 Personal Responsibility—Doug Shenberger

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COMING MEETINGS

HONDURAS FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Coxen Hole, Roatan, Honduras

September 22-27, 2026, Lord willing

Brother Lee Jeffries, Pastor



LABOR DAY FELLOWSHIP

Church of God of Carmichael, California

September 3-6, 2026, Lord willing

Brother David Goble, Pastor

ADD A NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST

If you know of someone you feel would appreciate this magazine, feel free to send us the name. Please make sure he/she wants it and it won't be refused.

NAME _____

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CITY _____

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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