

# The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 4

**"It is a reality that the legitimacy and the stability of a foundation determine the value of that which is built upon it. The value of things is greatly determined by the foundation that they have."**

*See, "ABIDING IN CHRIST"*

*Full-length message begins on page 4*

**May/June 2026**

## THE CHURCH—THE BODY OF CHRIST

By the late Bro. Alvin Craig

**P**AUL'S LETTER to the saints in Rome contains many precious truths, truths that are just as important today as in Paul's day.

The twelfth chapter instructs us to present ourselves a "living sacrifice" to God, and not to be "conformed to this world." It also informs us that we, as Christians, are members of the body of Christ.

"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Romans 12:4, 5).

As we think of the church—the body of Christ, I would first make a few comments on what the church is NOT. It is not a social club where people are provided clean social activities. Yes, there is a social side of life. Christians do enter into some social activities, but that is not the purpose of the body of Christ. The church does not exist to provide year around sports programs for the children and young people. The church is not a literal building, and we do not "go to church." Many congregations do have a building they meet in, and they do go to that building for worship, but we do not "go" to church. The saved are the church! And the saved meet together to worship "in spirit and in truth."

When you are "in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17), you are "in the church." When you are in the church you are in Christ. Yes, you can be in a church and not be in Christ, but you cannot be in Christ without being in THE church, and you cannot be in THE church without being in Christ, for THE church is the BODY of Christ.

When you "leave Christ," you leave "the church." When you leave the church, you leave Christ. The church exists only IN Christ. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

To put it another way, the church exists only in union with Christ, as the branches exist only in union with the vine. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4).

Christ tells us in verse one, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." He goes on in verse two and tells us that if we do not bear fruit He will take us away. That one verse alone shows us a person can backslide! It also shows us that we must not only be IN Christ to be IN the church, but that we must bear fruit to remain in Christ, in the church.

Again, you can be in "a vine," that's belong to a religion, without being connected to Christ, but if you are connected to Christ, then you are connected to the TRUE vine.

In verse five, Christ again says He is the vine, so Christ being the true vine, He is the source of life for the branches—the Christian—the church.

There is no spiritual life outside of Christ, therefore there is no spiritual life outside the church. A branch broken off from the vine, is separated from its source

of life, for life comes from the vine. Life for the soul is found only in Christ.

As the church LIVES in Him, it shares His power, His holiness, freedom, and victory. The church is HIS body! His life flows through it.

Let us look at these points one at a time:

1. **POWER**—"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). It takes power to leave the pathway of sin, to give up the world, and to stop evil habits—as many as truly receive Christ, He gives them that power.

That is only the beginning. Having become a child of God, we must then walk "in newness of life." "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Christ is not saying we are to walk on, or pick up, literal snakes. We read in the gospels where John, the forerunner of Christ, and Christ Himself, referred to certain religious people as "vipers," etc., so Christ will give the true Christian power over false religion, over seducing spirits, over doctrines of devils, and over "all the power of the enemy," and nothing will be able to hurt your soul, if you abide in Him.

2. **HOLINESS**—"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. With His life flowing through you, He gives you power to live a holy life.

Paul said, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; ..." (I Corinthians 15:33, 34a). When you are truly saved, you become a part of the body of Christ, and you do not go to the ungodly places as before. "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; ..."

3. **FREEDOM**—"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Freedom from sin, freedom from the servitude of the devil. Not free to do anything and everything, but free to serve God and obey His Word.

4. **VICTORY**—"And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

No, we do not have to sin more or less every day. In Christ we have victory over sin, and this includes the love of the world. Jesus said of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).

In Christ we are to have victory over self. Someone has said "self" is our number one enemy, but through the saving, sanctifying grace of God, we have victory over the self-life. Self-serving is the way to spiritual death.

In Ephesians, chapter two, Paul tells us in verses 15, 16, that Christ abolished "the enmity [hatred], even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

In this New Covenant Age, it is not a literal Jew, or Gentile, black or white, but "ONE NEW MAN." The Lord takes away the enmity, the race hatred, etc., and makes all one in Christ. The soul does not have color—only the "house" we live in!

# THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (I Corinthians 12:12).

Regardless of the color of your skin, your education, nationality, male or female, if you are IN Christ, you are in His BODY the church, and it is His will that we show this ONENESS to the world—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20, 21).

Thank God for the privilege of being a part of the body of Christ, His church. †

## WHY ARE YOU A SERVANT OF CHRIST?

Radio Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

I WOULD LIKE for you to turn to the book of St. Luke, chapter 17. I will begin reading from the seventh verse: “But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”

Our thoughts on this broadcast are entitled, “Why Are You a Servant of Christ?” I’ll be speaking to my

audience who profess to be believers in Christ. I would like each one of you to consider this question, for I’m convinced that a lot of people are trying to serve Christ for the wrong reasons. It’s remarkable that so many people make an effort for a short time to live a Christian life, only to go back to the life they were living before. This ought not to be, Beloved. Everyone who takes up the cross to follow the Lord Jesus Christ ought to stay true to Him until their last day on earth. This is God’s plan, and it ought to be so. I believe if we build our experience on a solid foundation it will go a long way in helping us to remain servants of Christ. We need to be established. We need to stand.

Why is it that some people serve Christ and eventually fail? Well, one reason is, some people try to serve Christ simply because that’s what they have been taught that they should do. I know that some people say to a Christian, “You believe what you believe simply because that’s what you’ve been taught,” but, Beloved, all of us have been taught what we know. Some have been taught by God, some have been taught by the world, and some have been taught by ungodly people, but all of us have been influenced by the people that we have come in contact with in our lives. There’s nothing wrong in believing in what you have been taught as long as you’ve been taught the proper things. Our point here is that individuals need something more than just doing something because that’s what they’ve been taught to do; for instance, a child

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trying to serve Christ simply because that's what Mom and Dad told him he ought to do. There needs to be something more than just a head knowledge that this is what he should do.

Some people try to serve Christ because someone else wants them to be a Christian. It's not because they have been under conviction themselves or because they see the error of their ways, but because someone else wants them to be a Christian. This, too, is a reason that this is not sufficient enough. You can't serve Christ just because your wife wants you to, or just because your husband wants you to, or just because your parents want you to. It is something that you must be convinced of in your own heart.

Another reason why some people try to serve Christ and eventually fall by the wayside is because they're trying to get something out of Christ for themselves. They're trying to serve Christ simply because of the benefits—what they can get out of receiving those benefits. This is not a good reason because there are things that are going to happen in life that this reason will not be sufficient to hold you up. What do I mean by that? If you're serving Christ simply because of what you can get out of it, or the benefits you might receive, there are going to come times when persecutions and temptations come. There are going to come times when it's going to be difficult to continue following Christ. If you are in it for what you can feel and gain, it's not going to be sufficient to carry you through those difficult times.

Some people try to serve Christ simply for the good feelings they receive. Some say, "Oh, it feels good and wonderful." Yes, it does. I gave my heart to the Lord many years ago. I remember it so well. I arose from the altar shouting the praises of God because something had happened to me. It was a good feeling, but I could not serve Christ just for a good feeling because it wasn't long until the feeling left, and I had to live life in a normal manner and meet the devil on the battleground. The good feelings aren't always there, so you need something more than just a desire for good feelings.

People need something more than just a fear of hell. Some people just try to serve Christ because they don't want to go to hell. Well, I think that is good up to a point, but if that's the only reason you're following Christ, someone some time is going to come along and try to convince you of an easier way to escape hell, and doubtless you'll take it. It is a fact, Beloved, that a person can backslide. It is a fact that many have started in the way and have fallen by the wayside. Not only does the Bible show us this, but we see it in everyday life, but that does not have to happen, thank God.

There are some reasons for serving Christ that are proper ones. If you serve Christ for the proper reasons, you will become established in the gospel. When the winds blow and the storms rage, you will be able to stand. That's my desire even in bringing you this message. I want you to stand. I want you to serve Christ, not only today, but tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. Yes, I want you to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." It takes some fight. It takes

some strong determination and desire on your part. It's as Jesus told us in St. Luke, chapter 17—after we have done our best—"We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

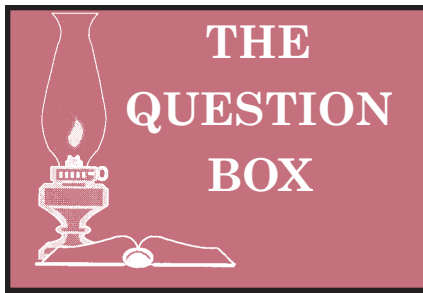
One reason why people serve Christ and become firmly established is because they want to do what is right. Whatever the consequence, they want to do what is right. Oh, for more people in our day and age who would have a desire to do right! So many people don't desire to do right and don't even think there is such a thing as right and wrong. But there is, Beloved. The way of the Lord is right, and if you truly have that fervent desire to do what is right, it's going to help you to become established and to firmly stand.

You need to serve Christ out of a heart of deep gratitude. The Psalmist spoke of this in the 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm, beginning with verse 1: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." Oh, Beloved, you need to have a real gratitude in your heart! Sometimes it's easy to forget what God has brought you out of. It's easy to forget the condition you were in before the Lord so graciously saved you. The devil would try to make us think that God is trying to rob us, but remember what the Psalmist said. Look back to that pit from whence you came, that will help you to keep a heart of gratitude.

We need to serve the Lord because He is worthy, simply because He is worthy of our love. I love Him too much to fail Him now. If we're serving Christ because we love Him and want to please Him, think of this verse in the Psalms: "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications." Dear Ones, if you truly love Christ and your fellowman and want to please the Lord, it's going to help you to become established. You're not serving Christ because of the benefits alone. You're not serving Christ just because someone else wants you to, or because you've been told that's what you ought to do. You're not just serving Christ because you're afraid of hell. You're serving Christ because you love Him and want to please Him. If we have this love, we will lose ourselves and find it all in Him. If we love Christ supremely, we will do what He says, no matter what anyone else says or does. If we have the supreme love for Christ, it will help us to obey His Word and live right, clean, and pure.

We need to serve Christ because we know what lies ahead. We have a vision of the future. We can see the judgment bar of God, and we don't want to hear the words "depart from me," but rather, we want to say what the apostle Paul had to say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Oh, Beloved, to hear from the Master's lips, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" will be worth it all.

If you're in need of Christ, seek Him with all of your heart and serve Him for the right reasons. †



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

**Q**UESTION: What is the meaning of Acts 2:38? “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

**A**NSWER: There are two misconceptions that are taken from the interpretation of this scripture. One, that water baptism is the only necessary thing for salvation, and that having been baptized you have received through this virtue the gift of the Holy Ghost. Although this meaning might be taken from the mere reading of this scripture apart from all the rest, yet there are so many scriptures in other places in the Bible that refute these thoughts absolutely. It is necessary that we have a clear understanding in order to know what we should about salvation.

In the very first place, we want to impress upon the hearts of our readers that there is not enough water in all the oceans, all the seas, all the rivers and lakes, and in the skies, were it applied to one poor sinner, to remove the spot or stain of one single sin. There is only one thing that can effectively remove the stain and spot of sin in the human soul, and that is the blood of Christ that was shed upon Calvary's hill. Had it been true that baptism was the entrance into God's church and that baptism by water was the all-sufficient thing for the remission of sins, then John the Baptist would have gone ahead and baptized the Scribes and Pharisees when they came to him in his ministry. But when he was confronted with them, he saw by the Spirit of God that their hearts were not clean, and he told them, “Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

What he means to tell them here is that they are to get saved, and get their sins under the blood of Christ, then he will baptize them as they come to him. Baptism is not that which is needed to cleanse the heart from sin. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God, as we learn in I Peter 3:21. In other words, after we have been forgiven of our committed sins we have a good conscience, and because God has said that we should be baptized, we are. It is an act of obedience and it also tells the world that we have forsaken it and are declaring our allegiance, our affection and our all in all to God.

It is very evident that a sinner who comes to be baptized does not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, nor does the believer, who has just had his sins forgiven, receive the Holy Spirit through the practice of baptism. We are told in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of John that Christ would pray the Father and He would send the Comforter, “even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but [speaking to His disciples] ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” The disciples were saved men and He put it future. He said, “You know him; for he dwelleth [present] with you, and he shall be in you [future].” So the man that comes to God is of the world and it is impossible for him to receive the Holy Spirit. He first must be saved from his sins and then he becomes a candidate for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What Peter was saying in this verse was, should they repent (which is the equivalent of salvation) and be baptized, then they would be in a position where they could receive the Holy Spirit. Now the method by which we receive the Holy Spirit is plainly taught to us in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” So then, the Holy Spirit comes into our life, not as a result of works that we do, or actions that we participate in, but as a result of faith. God says He will give us the Holy Spirit if we ask Him. So when conditions are met, he that asks God for the Holy Spirit must believe that he receives Him and God will give him the priceless gift.

**Q**UESTION: I once read that we are not saved by the law; for example, Galatians 2:16, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Does that mean that keeping the laws will not lead us to Christ?

**A**NSWER: No one has ever been saved by the law! A person must confess and forsake his sins to be saved. He is saved by and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not by some outward observance of laws. Paul said he kept the law before he met Jesus Christ.

However, this does not mean that we can live as we please. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, but having been saved, we must obey the known Word of God to keep saved.

**Q**UESTION: Can you explain Luke 22:36?

**A**NSWER: Jesus had sent His disciples out on a mission and He told them, “Take nothing for your journey, neither [staff], nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece” (Luke 9:3). In verse 35 of Luke 22, we find Jesus asking them, “When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing?” And they said, “Nothing.” There was a special reason why Christ instructed them as He did, but now in verse 36, we find Jesus telling them to take those things with them. Some have tried to bind Luke 9:3 on ministers today, but such is not proper! Again, that was for that one mission alone. Doubtless, it was to teach them a lesson on faith. †

# ABIDING IN CHRIST

Message by Bro. Thomas Harris

I WOULD LIKE to call your attention to St. John, chapter 15, verses 1-8: "I [Jesus speaking] am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."



To introduce this thought of "Abiding in Christ," I want to first think about foundations and the importance of foundations. It is a reality that the legitimacy and the stability of a foundation determine the value of that which is built upon it. The value of things is greatly determined by the foundation that they have. A common example of this is, and one that we all might jump to right away, is about a house. If I want to buy or sell a house, and I know that there are problems with the foundation, then all of a sudden the value of that house is really diminished. It doesn't matter how pretty of a house, how modern of a house, if it has foundation problems, the value is greatly diminished.

It is the same for some business models. I was thinking about some businesses that are really foundational upon certain technologies. There are businesses that are founded upon the technology of the internet, and all of a sudden if the internet ceases to be a reliable thing, the foundations of those businesses would be cut, and they would not be worth very much. A common term we hear today is I o T (*the Internet of Things*). There are so many ways that we can control devices from the internet, from web applications, and Apps on our cell phones. All of that happens because we have connectivity to the internet. But, you know, it wouldn't matter how good my web application looked, it wouldn't matter if I had a sleek interface on my mobile App that I could talk to my car with and let it do all kinds of fancy things, because if the foundation of the internet went out, that business would quickly fail because it's founded upon the internet.

This fundamental importance of foundations is not something that is new. Jesus knew and understood about the importance of foundations. He gave a parable dealing with foundations. We can read about it in Mat-

thew, chapter 7, or Luke, chapter 6. I'm going to turn quickly to Luke, chapter 6. The parable is summarized pretty well here—verses 47-49—"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

As we read that parable, let us think about it a little bit. Both the wise man and the foolish man could have had very beautiful houses. The foolish man could have had a fantastic house, an exquisite house. He could have had marble countertops and an exquisitely tiled bathroom. He could have had spacious walk-in closets, a butler's pantry, and all the things that make a house fancy and desirable. The foolish man could have had all of those things. His house could have been valuable because of the items that were placed in it. All the effort that he had put in his house was wasted, because when the storm came, and the floods descended, his house fell immediately. It was worthless.

Now, we have the wise man. The wise man built upon a solid foundation. Jesus said that he dug deep. He put some effort into building a strong foundation. After that he worried about what type of finish he wanted to put in his house and what type of countertops he wanted. He made sure that he was on a solid foundation first.

Obviously, Jesus wasn't talking about just building houses. The principle certainly applies, but what Jesus was really talking about is a person's life. What that means is that if I look at my life, I can make it look good and very appealing. I can educate myself and get wealth. I can own businesses. I can own vacation homes and second properties and do all kinds of things and make my life look really good and desirable, but if it isn't founded on something solid, it's all wasted. It's all vanity. The Psalmist had something very good to say about this. He said, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." Regardless of how that building looks, unless the Lord helps lay that foundation and build the house, it's all done in vain.

Now, I know that we intend to talk about abiding in Christ. I wanted to bring out the idea of the importance of a foundation because my Christianity and your Christianity are utterly dependent on our ability to abide in Christ. If I am not abiding in Christ, I don't have a foundation as a Christian. That's where it starts. Jesus, when He gave the analogy of the vine, said, in effect, "If we're not bearing fruit, then we have no part with Him." The only way we can bear fruit is if we abide in Him. So if I want any part with Jesus, I need to make sure I'm abiding in Him. I think we can all agree that's foundational to our Christian experience and our Christian walk.

I've been thinking about this for quite some time, and what it really means to abide in Christ. I suppose that there are a couple things that we could think and talk about. We could talk about how abiding in Christ

means that we're to depend on Him and take no pride within ourselves. If I'm a branch, and I take pride in myself and despise the Vine, I can't expect to last very long. If I'm abiding in Christ, I certainly must be dependent upon Him. There's a verse that we're all familiar with in Acts 17:28 that says: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." We could say that abiding in Christ means to identify with Him, to be able to relate to Him, and to have an experience with Him. But this evening, I want to focus on abiding in Christ and how that means we must simply be close to Him.

To abide in Christ is to be very, very close to Him. I used to have somewhat of a notion, I suppose, that everybody talked about being close to God because it was good to be close and good to have. But as I've gotten a little older and become a bit more of an experienced Christian, I recognize and understand that it is a good thing to be close to Christ and abide in Him. If I'm not close to Him, I'm going to lose Him. As a Christian, I need to make absolutely sure that I'm very, very close to Christ. You know, if you're saved, a closeness to Christ is where it first started. The Bible says that the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken and contrite heart. That's how I knew the Lord. That's how I first came in contact with the Lord and I got close to Him. That's the foundation of my Christianity and of your Christianity. That needs to be where our focus remains. I need to make sure that my focus remains on being close to Christ lest I lose my first love. In the book of Revelation, Jesus had somewhat a harsh reprimand to give to that church that had left their closeness to Christ. They lost their first love by leaving it.

As we think about abiding in Christ, being a branch in Christ, and bearing fruit, sometimes I think we may have an unconscious tendency to judge our own successfulness on how much fruit we're bearing. If I can look at myself and think, *well, I'm doing a lot of things, that must mean that I'm bearing a lot of fruit, and I'm a successful Christian*, but that's not the way we should be looking at it to judge our success as a Christian. I was recently chastised by the Lord a little bit because I was starting to think that way. I was unconsciously starting to think that the involvement that I had in church, the different times that I was asked to speak was the pinnacle that I needed to focus on, and if I could make it through each time I was asked to speak, that was the thing I needed to strive for, and that was the fruit I'm to bear. But that's backwards. That's not the way we're supposed to think and have our Christianity to be motivated.

The greatest achievement that I can gain as a Christian, the greatest thing that I'll ever do is to get closer to God. There is no work that is so great that it's the pinnacle that I need to work towards. There is no great fruit that I should look at to strive towards. That's not how it's supposed to work. The absolute pinnacle, the greatest thing in our Christian experience, is just how close we're able to get to God. That is simply the way it is. If I'm worried about bearing fruit, and worried that I'm not bearing enough fruit, it just means that I need to get closer to God. That is the greatest thing. That is the foundation. To abide in Christ is to remain close to Him. That needs to be the metric that I worry about. I don't need to go around trying to count my

fruit. I need to worry about just how close I am to God, and let everything else naturally flow out of that closeness to God, and let that come first. There is so much to be gained by being close to God. If I'm close to God, He can guide and lead me.

I love how intuitive Christianity is. We're talking about the analogy of the vine and the branches, and it makes sense to us. It also makes sense to us to understand that if we're not close to God, He's not going to be able to guide us. This happened to me. I'm sure it has sometimes happened to most of us: If we're driving somewhere and we don't know the way, but someone else is also going there, they'll say, "Follow me, I'll guide you there," and it's all fine and good as long as we pull out together and follow the lead car. They can lead just fine as long as we keep a good following distance. But whenever we start to back off from the lead car and start to lose sight by other cars pulling in front, before long the lead car is gone. They can't lead us anymore because we're not close enough to them to see them. It's so much the same with God. If we're not close to God, He can't lead us. He just can't because we're not close enough.

The older I get the more I realize that there are so many things that I need God's guidance for. There are so many things that we all need God's guidance for, because there are so many decisions that we make. There are so many different things we can do that we might look at and say, "Well, I don't think this is wrong. Which one should I choose?" We need God's guidance. There's no getting around it. We need God to be able to guide us because we need His help in choosing the right way. God knows the right way.

There's a little demonstration that's given sometimes that I really love about God. Someone has described God in this way: *God is not in any way constrained by time, and we are. If you take a pencil and draw a line on a piece of paper and look at the line and think, you know, that's all of time; the beginning of time and the end of time. You and I are somewhere on this line with a little dot here. We can see a little behind us of history, but we can't see it all in front of us because we're stuck on the dot. We can't move ahead of time. We can't go back in time.* That's where a lot of the uncertainty comes, because we can't see ahead and we're stuck on our little dot of time. God isn't on the dot anymore because He sees this entire piece of paper. God sees the beginning of time and the end of time. He sees my little dot. He can zoom in and look at all the events surrounding my life and see it all in an instant. That's why you should want God to be able to lead and guide you. That's why I want God to lead and guide me.

There's a verse that I'm sure we're all familiar with. It's Romans 8:28. It very much implies the leadership of God. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." That's a fantastic verse. It really speaks of God's ability to lead and guide people. But that verse also really implies that there be a closeness between myself and God. You know, we could read that verse and say, "All things work together for good to those that love Him, and that's good and great," but it also says "to them who are called according to his purpose."

I didn't look for an explanation in a commentary of Romans 8:28, but as I read that I thought about the purpose for which Jesus came to earth. Do you know of another reason why Jesus came to earth? He came that we might get close to God. The Bible talks about Jesus coming and reconciling people and making a way that they could have a relationship with God again and get close to Him. So if I want to be able to look at that verse and say, "Yes, Lord, you'll guide me. All things work together to them that love you," but what I need to understand is that I need to be living according to the purpose for which Jesus came. He came that I might be close to God. So if I want to claim the leadership of God, the guidance of God, I better make sure that I'm close. This is the foundation of my Christianity.

I think about needing the guidance of God as I'm a husband. All of us who are spouses need the wisdom and the guidance of God. There are just a lot of things that we need God to show us about ourselves. There are a lot of ways in which we need God to lead us, to show us patience, and all kinds of things.

I think about being a father. I think about how I need God's wisdom and guidance as a father, because there's just a lot that happens. You can think about having rules of thumb, and it would really be nice if you could write a manual that would just be in caps to lay out everything that you'll ever need to know, and in every situation that you may encounter, say, "Just let me go do it by the book." But there just isn't a book. You need the guidance of God.

I think that God may not purposely withhold things from us, but I don't think God ever intended to give us a manual for all of life, because if we had that, there wouldn't be any need to get close to Him. We could just read the Bible. But God wants us to be close to Him. The closer we get to God, the more we're going to be able to be taught. We all need to be able to humble ourselves and be taught. If I find myself struggling to take advice and counsel, I need to get closer to God. If I find that I'm having trouble with humility and getting offended, that's not something that I can fix myself. There's no fruit that I can just strive for. I can't just say, "Lord, I'm just going to become humble. I want to start bearing that fruit." No, I need to get close to God. How strong I am as a Christian is directly proportional to how close I am to God.

All of us who have ever climbed a tree have been clearly aware of exactly how much the branches abide in the trunk, because we look at that whenever we go to climb a tree. If there's a branch that has a big old cross section and it's really connected to the trunk, we don't have any problem with that branch and we'll climb it. But if there's a little bitty branch that only has a small cross section connected to that trunk, we're not going to climb it because we know it's not very strong. The strength of that branch is directly proportional to how much it abides in the trunk and how much it abides in the vine. That's how it is for us as Christians. Our strength is directly proportional to how much we abide in the Vine. The same thing goes for how much fruit we're able to bear for the Lord.

If there's a little branch with just a little bit of cross section, it might bring forth a piece of fruit or two, but if there's a big branch that has a huge cross section and

it's really connected to the trunk, really connected to the vine, then there's so much ability for nutrients to flow through and get into the branches to bring forth fruit. That's what I want. I want to be really connected to God. I want to be really close. I really want to abide in Christ, to abide in Christ just to draw resources from Him.

If you think about branches and trees, there are some that have become so big that they just look like part of the tree. If you step back and look at the tree, sometimes you have difficulty discerning where the actual trunk is and where certain branches start because they are so absorbed into the trunk.

There's a verse in St. John, chapter 3, verse 30, where John the Baptist said: "He must increase, but I must decrease." As I think about abiding in Christ, that's exactly how I want it to be. I want Christ to increase, and I want to decrease. I just want to be absorbed in that Vine who is Jesus. I don't want people to look at me and think that I am somehow separated from the Vine. I want people to look at me and see that I'm connected. I want to be part of that trunk which is Christ. I want to abide in Him fully. I want all the fullness of God to be available to me so that I can glorify Him and bring forth much fruit.

As we think about this analogy of the vine and the branches and the fruit, it is something to think about it from a couple of different standpoints. We've been thinking about it from the perspective of Christians abiding in Christ, but the idea that Jesus set forth in the parable of the vine, followed by the branches and the fruit, helps us to understand that there is a particular way that we can get to Christ, and there are certain ways that we cannot get to Christ. There are some misconceptions in the world that I can somehow start at the fruit and then I can make my way to the vine. But it is absurd to think about it that way because that's not how it works. You don't have the fruit and then grow the vine. You start with the vine then end up with fruit. If I think that I believe in God and that I would somehow like to know God, and I think, *O Lord, if I'm just a good person and do good things, that would somehow make me acceptable in the sight of God.* That's not how it's going to work. I can't start at the fruit and make my way to the vine.

Jesus said, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Jesus said that the only way to the Father is through Himself. I can't make it to God by just being a good person. I can't start at the fruit and work my way to the Vine, because that's backwards. It doesn't work that way.

I was thinking about this, and the thought came to my mind: *well, shouldn't good works be proof of how much I abide in Christ? Shouldn't I focus on good works just to prove that I abide in Christ?* You might think that's the right way. That might sound like it makes sense, but that's not the case.

Jesus said that the Father was glorified by the bearing of much fruit. The purpose of my bearing fruit is to bring glory to God and not to myself. The reality is that if I try to bear fruit, do good things independent of the Vine, at the expense of closeness to God, at the expense of abiding in the Vine, there is going to be

selfishness and pride that creeps in. That is just not going to bring glory to God. If I really want to bring glory to God, I have to start at the Vine.

This evening I would encourage you to really try to understand that the pinnacle of your Christian experience is not something that you're going to do for God in church. It's not to become a missionary or a pastor or anything like that. That's not the thing to strive for. The thing to strive for in your Christian experience is just to get close to God. That's the absolute pinnacle. There's nothing higher. My greatest achievement in this life, your greatest achievement in this life, is just going to be how close we can get to God. That's it; that's the greatest thing! There will be things that come from that. There will be works that flow from that naturally. But don't get that order backwards. Don't focus on it backwards. Make sure that you're close to God before anything else.

I am encouraged whenever I read the parable that Jesus gave of the wise and the foolish man. I am encouraged when I think about it in this light: Jesus said that whenever the house of the foolish man was destroyed that the fall was great and the ruin was great. But if you think about what the Scriptures also say in Isaiah 61, it says that Jesus wants to give beauty for ashes. So if there be anyone who has experienced what the foolish man experienced, if there be anyone who thinks that their life is ruined or unraveled, it's fallen down, and all has been wasted, that's exactly why Jesus came. He came to give beauty for ashes. That's just a message of hope that Jesus would take the ruins of someone's life that has been broken and destroyed, and He would say, in effect, "Just give me what you have, and I will give you something beautiful in return." I would encourage anyone who doesn't know the Lord, and your life hasn't been ruined yet, to make sure your life is on a solid foundation so it doesn't come to that point.

All of us, whether we know God or not, need to understand that the greatest thing that we can do in this life is build a very, very solid foundation upon God, to become close to Him, and abide fully in the Vine which is Christ.

Thank you all for your attention, and God bless you. †

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## HE FIRST FINDETH HIS OWN BROTHER—SIMON

John 1:41

This case is an excellent pattern of all cases where spiritual life is vigorous. As soon as a man has found Christ, he begins to find others. I will not believe that thou hast tasted of the honey of the gospel if thou canst eat it all thyself. True grace puts an end to all spiritual monopoly. Andrew first found his own brother Simon, and then others. Relationship has a very strong demand upon our first individual efforts. Andrew, thou didst well to begin with Simon. I doubt whether there are not some Christians giving away tracts at other people's houses who would do well to give away a tract at their own—whether there are not some engaged in works of usefulness abroad who are neglecting their special sphere of usefulness at home.

May/June 2026

Thou may or thou may not be called to evangelize the people in any particular locality, but certainly thou art called to see after thine own servants, thine own kinsfolk and acquaintance. Let thy religion begin at home. Many tradesmen export their best commodities—the Christian should not. He should have all his conversation everywhere of the best savor; but let him have a care to put forth the sweetest fruit of spiritual life and testimony in his own family.

When Andrew went to find his brother, he little imagined how eminent Simon would become. Simon Peter was worth ten Andrews so far as we can gather from sacred history, and yet Andrew was instrumental in bringing him to Jesus. You may be very deficient in talent yourself, and yet you may be the means of drawing to Christ one who shall become eminent in grace and service. Ah! dear friend, you little know the possibilities which are in you. You may but speak a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian church in years to come. Andrew has only two talents, but he finds Simon. Go thou and do likewise. †

—Taken from Charles Spurgeon's  
*Morning and Evening Readings*

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## BELONGING TO CHRIST

Selections from *The Bible Illustrator*

When Christians say the Christ-life is in them, they do not mean simply something mental or moral. When they speak of being "in Christ" or of Christ being "in them," this is not simply a way of saying that they are thinking about Christ or copying Him. They mean that Christ is actually operating through them; that the whole mass of Christians are the physical organism through which Christ acts—that we are His fingers and muscles, the cells of His body.

—C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

"I will make the place of my feet glorious"—among the poor, the devil-possessed, the mean, the decrepit, the selfish, the sinful, the misunderstood—that is where Jesus went, and that is exactly He will take you if you are His disciple.

—Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." At first sight this looks like an enormous honor: to be "as his Master" is marvelous glory—is it? Look at Jesus as He was when He was here, it was anything but glory. He was easily ignorable, saving to those who knew Him intimately; to the majority of men He was "as a root out of a dry ground." For thirty years He was obscure, then for three years He went through popularity, scandal, and hatred; He succeeded in gathering a handful of fishermen as disciples, one of whom betrayed Him, one denied Him, and all forsook Him; and He says, "It is enough for you to be like that." The idea of evangelical success, church prosperity, civilized manifestation, does not come into it at all. †

—Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

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## THE POETRY PAGE

### HOME AGAIN Abbie M'Keever

Home again! Mother, your boy will rest,  
For a time, at least, in the old home nest.  
How good to see you in your cornered nook,  
With knitting or sewing, or paper or book,  
The same sweet mother my boyhood knew,  
The faithful, the patient, the tender and true.

You have little changed; ah, well, maybe  
A few gray hairs in the brown I see,  
A mark or two under smiling eyes,  
So lovingly bent in your glad surprise:  
'Tis I who have changed, ah, mother mine,  
From a teasing lad to manhood's prime.

No longer I climb on your knee at night  
For a story told in the soft fire-light;  
No broken slate or book all torn  
Do I bring to you with its edges worn;  
But I'll come to you with my graver cares;  
You'll help me bear them with tender prayers.

I'll come again as of old, and you  
Will help the man to be brave and true;  
For the man's the boy, only older grown,  
And the world has many a stumbling-stone.  
Ah, mother mine, there is always rest,  
When I find you here in the old home nest.

### THE BOOK MY MOTHER READ Dwight Williams

I have it yet, the dear old book  
That lay upon the stand,  
In which she often used to look,  
And always at her hand;  
The corners rounded are with age,  
The leaves are worn and thin,  
And dim the lines on many a page  
She so delighted in.

A half-hour's rest in household toil  
For needed strength she caught,  
And in the light of fragrant oil  
She found the place she sought;  
And heavy labor turned to love,  
And duty led away  
To visions of the land above,  
A Sabbath-hour each day.

The book remains more sacred still  
Because of her dear eyes,  
That saw therein God's wondrous will  
And saw not otherwise;  
For thus she found a way to Him

Who down to evening late,  
And through the valley, lone and dim,  
Brought her to His dear gate.

### JUST MOTHER Floyd R. Nalls

As life's end is drawing nigh  
And the years go rolling by,  
I often see a vision and sigh  
Of a mother gentle and shy.  
Ever willing to lend a hand  
To her neighbors throughout the land,  
Always faithful and ready to stand  
In God's Word spoken to man.  
Through the years the memory lingers  
Of her caress and work-worn fingers,  
Fingers that tucked me in to sleep,  
After she prayed at Jesus' feet.  
What a friend she will always be,  
Brother and sister to you and me,  
In our sorrow, heartache, and pain,  
Always so near and ever the same.  
Remember the toils and trials she bore  
Long ago in days of yore;  
When life's curtain falls from high,  
I hope to meet her in the sky.

### MOTHER'S DAY Lois O. Painter

She's just a little mother  
With smiling, wrinkled face,  
But oh, those eyes are shining bright  
With love and inner grace.  
Sometime the load's been heavy,  
And she has made mistakes ...  
She's had a heap of trouble  
To keep the children straight.

But someday, 'round her humble head  
There seems to come each year  
A halo, and for one brief day  
It's your day, Mother dear;  
The quick words go unspoken,  
Instead, a pleasant smile—  
They bring her sweets and flowers  
And bid her "rest awhile."

And so, while others praise her  
Her own heart meets the test:  
"Dear Lord, You know my blunders,  
I hope I've done my best."  
Then when the day is over—  
The hours have flown so fast—  
She smiles and wonders in her heart  
Why Mother's Day can't last. †

# THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



## NERVES

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

“Could you please stop that!” I grumbled to my younger sister, Twila. “It’s getting on my nerves.”

Wilma, my seven year old sister, turned to me in surprise. “Twila’s not even doing anything!” she exclaimed. How could she be getting on your nerves?”

I frowned at Wilma. “That sound she’s making—doesn’t it bother you?” I asked.

“What sound?” Wilma asked.

Nine year old Twila, focused on her job of placing egg cartons onto the parcel shelf under the rear window behind the backseat of our car, paid no attention to either of us. Loading the eggs we sold to families in town was her responsibility.

The parcel shelf was made of cardboard, as were the egg cartons. There was something grating about the sound of cardboard against cardboard that made me feel as though I wanted to jump out of my skin.

“That noise of egg cartons sliding against the shelf sets my teeth on edge,” I said.

“What does that mean—it ‘sets your teeth on edge’?” asked Wilma.

I didn’t exactly know what the phrase meant, but I had read a lot of books in my eleven years, and I knew by the way authors used the phrase that it was related to a feeling of great annoyance.

“It means that I hate that sound. It drives me crazy,” I told her.

Just then, the front passenger car door opened, and my mother slid into the front seat with Baby Rosemary in her arms. “Take Esther back there with you,” she called to us over her shoulder. We pulled little three year old Esther up onto the backseat with us. My father opened the driver’s side front door and quickly took his place behind the steering wheel.

“Mommy, Twila is getting on Rebecca’s nerves,” Wilma reported.

“What is going on?” my mother asked. “Do I need to come back there and take care of things?”

“No!” we all said in chorus.

“I was pushing the egg cartons around on the shelf under the back window where they belonged,” Twila said. “That’s all I was doing. I didn’t know it would get on her nerves.”

My mother gave me a quick look and said, “If you’re not careful, young lady, I’ll be the one to get on your nerves, and it will be worse than hearing egg cartons slide around.”

I sank back in my seat with a frown.

“And get rid of that frown,” my mother added. “You look like you could bite nails!”

“Smile a while, and give your face a rest,” sang my father as he backed out of the driveway and started down the road.

I didn’t feel like smiling. I didn’t feel like sitting in the backseat of a car with cardboard egg cartons sliding against a cardboard shelf behind my head. I didn’t feel like hearing my parents cheerfully explain that I shouldn’t let things get on my nerves.

I stared morosely out the window as the landscape flashed by. I thought about other things that got on my nerves—handling dusty potatoes from the garden, listening to my sister grind her teeth in her sleep, hearing the baby cry when I was trying to do my homework after supper.

My reverie was interrupted by my mother’s voice. “Did it ever occur to you that you might get on other people’s nerves sometimes?” she asked.

I knew she had a valid point, even though I didn’t feel like acknowledging it.

It is true that we all do things from time to time that annoy others, even though we might not be aware of it. The Bible speaks about this very subject.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 10:26, which says, *As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.*

Even in Bible times, people recognized the effects of vinegar on their teeth, and of smoke in their eyes. Those effects still hold true today. Acidic foods and drinks can erode the enamel of our teeth, making them sensitive to foods that are hot, cold, or very sweet. And when smoke gets into our eyes, it makes them sting.

The writer of this proverb said that waiting for a sluggard (lazy person) to come back from an errand was just as nerve wracking as dealing with acid on our teeth or smoke in our eyes.

I am sure that, when I played around instead of starting right away on my chores, I annoyed my father. I am sure it got on my mother’s nerves when she had to tell me again and again not to let the screen door bang shut behind me when I entered the house.

Through the years, I tried to become less annoying to others. I tried not to get on their nerves. I tried to be more responsible in doing my chores, and answering cheerfully when I was called.

The better we become at taking care of our responsibilities without constant reminders, the more pleasure we will bring to those around us.

This is especially true in our spiritual lives. We want to please God by obeying Him right away, and doing all that He asks of us.

### 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.

Who was this prophet?

What did God ask him to do?

What happened when the prophet did not obey God?

What did the prophet learn from this experience?

HINT: Unscramble these letters to find the name of the prophet. NAJHO

Only God can:

- give us sunlight and rain (Matthew 5:45)
- give us life and breath (Acts 17:25)
- give us salvation (Acts 4:12)
- give us eternal life (Titus 1:2) †

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## RAYS OF HOPE

By the late D. O. Teasley

(Part III)

### PREREQUISITES TO FAITH

We all look upon Daniel as a man of faith, so let us inquire what was the secret of his faith. After Daniel had been cast into the den of lions and the den had been sealed with the king's own seal and the signet of his lords, the king, we read, "went to his palace, and passed the night in fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him: and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt" (Daniel 6:19, 22).

Daniel gave two reasons for God's sending his angel and shutting the lions' mouths—first, "before him [God] innocency was found in me"; second, "before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." In order to be innocent before God we must have our sins forgiven and be living a holy life. We must be where we know that we are saved and can "assure our hearts before him." "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:20, 22). In the second place, we must be living at peace, so far as it lies in us, with all mankind. Then, and not until then, can we exercise perfect faith in God. It is rather unpleasant and detrimental to faith, when we are praying for some favor from God, to have some neglected duty or committed wrong stand between us and God like a dark cloud, shutting out the sunlight of his presence. Just here, however, the weak and doubting need to be careful in discriminating between sin and the accusations of Satan; for an accusation, if heeded, will stand as much in our way as a real neglect of duty.

The three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, are also good examples of faith, and in their conversation with the king of Babylon before being cast into the fiery furnace is portrayed another prerequisite to faith. Hear, in the following scripture, the

awful threats of a frowning monarch, and see the undaunted boldness and decision of three humble sons of the Highest:

"Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:15 18).

Not even the stern countenance of an enraged king nor yet the fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than usual could weaken their decision or dim their faith. In these bold witnesses for the Lord we see portrayed the foundation of faith mentioned in a former chapter. First, they had confidence in the God they served—so much that they were not careful to answer the king. Secondly, they believed in his ability. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." Thirdly, they believed that he would do it. "And he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king." Fourthly, we note the leading characteristics of these three men—decision. "But if not [that, is if it is not his will to deliver us], be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

If you would go through every fiery trial and come out without the smell of fire upon your garments, make the decision that God is true to His Word, that He is able to deliver you, and that He will do it. Lastly, decide, firmly decide, that if it is God's will for you to die, you will serve no other god nor worship the golden image set up by men and Satan.

### SOURCE OF FAITH

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). In order to have faith we must have a promise. How, then, shall we believe unless we hear? In the days of the apostles there was but little chance to hear the promises of God except from the lips of the ministry, but now, in Christian lands, we have the blessed privilege of reading and studying the written Word of God. Having the exceeding great and precious promises constantly within our reach, we should of all people have the most faith. God's Word is the food of the soul. How careful, then, we should be to daily feast on the bread of eternal life. Nor is it enough to simply read the words; we should read them and meditate upon them until their virtue has strengthened our souls and quickened our faith.

The food that we eat is assimilated and becomes a part of our being. This is as true of our spiritual as of our natural food. The soul that is continually fed on light and chaffy matter can but be lean and powerless. Many people are feeding their souls with the light and

chaffy thoughts and with the husks of foolishness and worldliness, and yet wondering why their faith is so weak and their souls so lean. If the food that we eat is so important in the building of our physical strength and the thoughts that we think have so much influence over the condition of our souls, should we not at least be as careful in the selection of mental food as we are in the selection of food for our bodies? If you wish “to grow up as calves of the stall,” “to be fat and flourishing to show that the Lord is upright,” you must eat “clean provender which hath been winnowed with a shovel and with a fan.” You should reject every doctrine, every word, and every thought that is a hindrance to faith in God. Listening to unsound doctrine, to sect preachers, and to compromising discourses, is a detriment and should be avoided by the faithful. Faith comes by hearing only when hearing is by the Word of God. Hearing the gospel preached in its purity is a powerful stimulant to faith, and hence every child of God should avail himself of every opportunity to hear the Word preached. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).

### HOW FAITH WORKS

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). Faith works by love. When love is out, Faith refuses to work. Faith will not dwell with Malice or Hatred. He will not work in their presence. Only those who are willing to dismiss every element foreign to love can enjoy the workings of faith. Love is the motor power, the mainspring, that operates faith. “Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

Unity promotes faith; discord destroys it. The promise reads, “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). Agreement is not discord, and those who are divided and out of harmony with one another cannot exercise faith or claim the promises of God. On the day of Pentecost, when the faith of the disciples prevailed and God sent the Holy Spirit as a rushing mighty wind, “they were all of one accord in one place.”

Acknowledging the good things that the Lord has done for us is also a means of increasing our faith. Then, be diligent in testifying to the goodness of God. “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus” (Philemon 6)

### MUSTARD SEED FAITH

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of God is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matthew 13:31, 32). Mustard has two notable features—first, the great size of the plant in comparison with the seed; second, it will not, it is said, mingle or

cross with any other plant. Mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds producing a wood like plant.

Referring to the size of the mustard plant, we should not confine it to the mustard of North America for in a warm climate and rich soil it is said to grow to an almost incredible size. This beautifully illustrates the accomplishments of faith, for nothing that we possess will accomplish so much in comparison with its beginning as faith.

The fact that mustard will not cross with any other plant teaches us that faith will not mix with the things of this world. As the mustard plant, though surrounded by weeds and plants of various kinds, will partake of the nature of none of them; so faith, though beset on every side by the weeds of worldliness, doubts, and sin, will not mingle nor cross with any of them, but remains separate and distinct. Those who attempt to mingle faith and worldliness in the same heart make a sad failure. The two will not mix.

“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20). Pure and undefiled faith as a grain of mustard seed will remove a mountain; but a lifeless, inactive faith as large as a mountain cannot remove a mustard seed. †



Greetings,

It is a blessing to be in the service of our Lord and to be workers together in His kingdom. The Word makes it clear that we are in a spiritual battle and at times that battle is very real for us.

Today we have some encouraging words and a testimony from Sis. Talia Shaw from Jamaica. You may find that her battle is one that has also been familiar to you. May God bless and strengthen each one of us!

In His Service,  
Bro. Brian Richards

## STRONGHOLDS

By Sis. Talia Shaw  
Jamaica

Here are definitions of the word *stronghold* from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's and Webster's New Explorer dictionaries which present this as “a fortified place; a building or position which is strongly defended or a place or area where a particular belief or activity is common.” This focuses on physical structures and areas that are heavily guarded, which makes them difficult to access.

The Bible makes references to these strongholds. These can be seen in I Samuel 23:14 and II Samuel 5:7. These scriptures depicted David taking refuge in a

stronghold (the wilderness of Ziph) and capturing the stronghold of Zion (the City of David). Strongholds also have a spiritual representation. In Nahum 1:7 we see God here as our stronghold—a secure refuge; protector; source of strength; fortified place. Throughout His Word, God has proven to be this to those who trust in Him.

However, scriptures also direct us to destructive spiritual strongholds. One such scripture is II Corinthians 10:4, 5 which states: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Through this scripture, we see that the focus of a stronghold is not physical in nature, but the “imaginations,” “high things,” and “thoughts.” The call for alertness in this scripture occurs due to the intrusion of any imagination or thought that opposes God and what He stands for.

This causes us to then reflect on our spiritual and mental influences, our beliefs, and guiding principles. As followers of Jesus Christ, once we encounter any thought that contradicts what God represents, we are told to take it captive and submit it to the obedience of Christ. Lies of the enemy, distorted thinking, demonic influences, all need to be cast down as they become strongholds (bondage) on our lives. As humans, we can find ourselves battling with fear/anxiety, addiction (habitual sins), ungodly attitudes, pride, accusation/guilt, deception, just to name a few. Prevalence of these thoughts, if not dealt with, can lead to us agreeing and submitting to them, giving them authority over our lives. This results in a stronghold. These imaginations and thoughts stand against the freedom, strength, grace, stability, and power that we as believers possess in Jesus. Anything that stands as an opposition to our growth and stability in Christ must be cast down. If we find ourselves repeating negative behaviors (actions) that result in patterns (habits), it is a sign of the formation of a stronghold.

Thoughts of negative influence cannot be avoided. This is why we should be weaponized to constantly target them when they present themselves, to ensure we do not become enslaved to them. Like students who achieve in school by attending lectures, carrying out research, completing assignments, attending tutorials and utilizing any other strategies to secure excellence, as Christians, we are students of God. We are constantly learning and applying ourselves to the Word of God. We incorporate prayer, hymns and songs, fasting, and community fellowship to keep us in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. These actions are deterrents to strongholds putting a leash on us. Our diligence and openness to God gives Him access to assist us when we are attacked by any stronghold. It takes consistent relationship with and obedience to Christ to keep the imaginations, high things, or thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God under submission.

### TESTIMONIAL

II Timothy 1:7 became clear to me after I was delivered from the stronghold of anxiety. I was one to quote the words, “For God hath not given us a spirit of

fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind,” constantly, without really understanding the gravity of those words. Jesus declared, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” This is found in St. John 6:63. II Timothy 1:7 became ‘life’ to me. For about four years I struggled with the oppression of anxiety that began from a thought. That thought I held on to, and it became an opportunity for the enemy to weaponize. This spilled over into all areas of my life. It became an internal crippling force that decided whether I wanted to leave my house or not. I was anxious even while sleeping.

I thought that psychology would have held the answers to fixing this issue, until one day in a church service I was encouraged by a pastor to worship. His exact words were “don’t be afraid to worship God.” Remember, this fear crippled all areas of my life and it also prevented me from being bold for Christ. That night, I began to pour out my heart in worship. I forgot about the people and just focused on God. I was prayed for as well. That night I realized that the atmosphere of anxiety had left. I later felt that presence again. It paid me a visit in my room. I could feel the presence of fear standing next to me. It was not coming from within me but at me. In that moment God helped me to resist it, pray, and sleep in peace. Since that time, there are intervals when the enemy will try to reintroduce this spirit of fear, but through constant worship, it does not remain. So, yes, fear is a spirit, one that comes from the devil, but God gives us a Spirit (His Spirit) that supplies us with power, love, and a sound mind. My stronghold was cast down by submission through worship. I bless God for that. †

## HOW ARE YOU BUILDING?

Message by Bro. James Arch



THE MESSAGE title is a question:

“How Are You Building?” I will be reading from the second book of Timothy, and then from I Corinthians. II Timothy, chapter 1, beginning with verse 8: “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that



which I have committed unto him against that day.” And from I Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 10 and 11: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

There are many things in the world today that we don't know. There are so many things that I don't know, and I'm sure there are many things that you don't know. I don't know how to fly an airplane. I don't know how to work on a person's teeth or how to dispense medicine. No, I don't know anything about those things. But there is one thing that we know, and that is, we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. The Bible tells us that we do know. We know that it had to be God who did for us what He did. We know that nobody else could do what God has done. So we are not in the dark. We're not wondering or hoping for salvation when we leave this world. We're not hoping to make it right. We know.

The apostle Paul said, “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” In other words what Paul was saying in effect, was, “I know the Lord Jesus Christ. I know God through a personal experience with Him and not something else that someone told me about.” It was something he had learned for himself. That's the way it is today, Friends. We can know God. We can know how to live for Him. We can follow His guidance and live for Him in this time world.

The confidence we have in God builds a carefulness. It builds a vigilance and soberness in the life of a Christian. It causes us to pause and examine how the soldier is doing on the battlefield. Sometimes as Christians we have to do that. We need to stop for a while, and not only Christians, but everybody needs to stop for a while and take a good look at themselves. Take a good examination or an inventory and see how we are doing and ask ourselves some questions.

The great King David asked God to search him. Yes, he asked God to search him. He said, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” That's a humble attitude. That's the attitude every Christian should have.

Paul said in II Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.” So a good examination once in a while is good for Christians. It's good for us to know where we stand with God. As good soldiers on the battlefield, it's good for us to know how we're doing. I've told the church at home a number of times in a testimony service that we need to tell others how we are getting on as soldiers, whether we are doing well or not doing well. We need to tell one another how we're getting on. We're soldiers on the battlefield, and sometimes we don't get on as well as our fellow soldiers do. Sometimes the battle is hot. Sometimes we get along pretty well. Sometimes the battle is not so fierce or strong as other times. Sometimes we get real sober. Sometimes we try to get closer to God and try to overcome the temptations and the battles of life. Sometimes all we can do is to get alone with God and get down on

our knees and ask Him to help us. We're soldiers. We're fighting a battle, and we're fighting this battle to win it.

We need to ask ourselves some questions: What about my conduct in the home where I live? Is my wife terrified by my presence? Is my husband terrified by my presence? Are my children terrified by my presence?

This is real life, Friends. This is a real world we're living in. You see, anybody can say, “I'm a Christian.” Anybody can go to church on Sundays and sing and pray and testify, but it takes more than that to live out the life of a soldier of the cross.

In my social and public life, how do I conduct myself? What about my ideals? What are the things I love the most? Where are the places I like to go the most? What are the things I like to do the most? Do I still love God as much as I used to love Him? Let me tell you Friends, the love for God can leak out of your soul. You have to keep the fire burning. You have to keep God in your life. That's what the Bible says. That's what we have to do. Am I as interested in the work of the Lord as I used to be? Do I care as much about it? Do I care as much about the saints of God as I once did? Has my Christian life become dull? Have I become dull and stagnant in my own Christian life?

Is it interesting for us to read the Bible and take time for a devotional period? The little things of life that people call simple are the things the devil works on to break down a person's spirituality. They are not just little things. They are major things. They are big things in the life of a Christian. You cannot survive without a devotional life. You have to feed your soul on the love of God. This old world is not conducive to grace. We live in a rat race. We live in a world of hustle and bustle, and people don't have time to even think about themselves. Some people don't even have time for their wives, their families, their church, or anything else.

We have to take time to be holy. What about our attitude toward others? There are Christians who have an attitude problem. Watch your attitude. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in I Corinthians 13, verse 2, “Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity [love], I am nothing.”

### **THE WAY OF TRUTH BROADCAST**

Is now aired on WMTC 99.9, Jackson, Kentucky, at 4:30 p.m. each Sunday. It is LIVE STREAMED on the Internet at the same time. The cost of the air time is sponsored by Reformation Publishers.

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(locally produced)

David Shaw, Radio Minister

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1:30 P.M. Sundays

LIVE STREAM: [www.radiocayman.gov.ky](http://www.radiocayman.gov.ky)

What about our attitude toward Christ? He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." It isn't hard to love the Lord. If He forgave you of your sins and sanctified you holy, it isn't hard to love Him.

What about our attitude toward our brethren? Can we speak to our sisters and brothers? Thank God, if you're a Christian, you love your brother. You can say "good morning" to your sister. We'll love one another with a pure heart fervently. These are simple things, but they're not so simple after all when we really think about them.

How are you building? A lot of people build. We're building a life. Every one of us is building a life. A woman by the name Anne Frank said: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." Friends, we are building a life, and that life is going to count one way or the other.

The apostle Paul was a great man. He was a good Christian man to emulate. He was a powerful missionary. I believe he was an outstanding man of Christian character. Paul said, "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Do you know what prompted Paul to write that? It was because some of the Corinthians were preferring Apollos. Apollos seemed to have spoken more eloquently than the apostle Paul. He asked, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed? So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

After you are converted, you must build a name worthy of God's. What did the apostle Paul write that would make us worthy of Him? "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Ephesians 4:1). We are bearing God's image and His name. We're telling the world that we are ambassadors for God. We are representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must build worthy of His name.

I tell you, the world needs God. If there ever is a time the world needs a revival, it is today. This old world is drifting so far from the narrow way. Everywhere you turn, people are compromising. People are turning away from the truth. People are stepping down from what they believed and turning to the world and its practices. Church, there is a life to build, and it has to do with the inside and outside. Thank God for the truth of the gospel. Paul said, "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

You must build your life on love for God. It will last. Build it on love. You must have a love for what you're doing. If you don't love God's way, you're not going to live it. It's going to be a drudgery. It's going to be dull. You must build it on love. You must build it on the Blueprint—the Bible. There's too much talking about Brother and Sister So-and-So who lived a hundred years

ago. This is the way she did it, and this is the way he did it. It's not that at all. It's how the Bible points it out. The Bible is what we should live by. That's the Blueprint. Not because somebody did something a hundred years ago. That doesn't mean it was right. They were men and women just like us. There's nothing wrong with changing something if it's for the best. Build on the Bible. Build on the Foundation.

Do you know what Jesus said in the book of Matthew? After He had completed His sermon on the mount, He said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Being a Christian doesn't exclude you from problems. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. You find this in everyday life. Because you're a Christian doesn't mean you'll be exempt from problems. You'll still have problems. When the little problems arise in your home between your spouse and yourself, you can go to God. You can stand on the Rock, and He'll clear it up. He'll work out your problems. There's a way in solving a problem. God has a way in solving problems for us. But when everybody is going to stick out, as it were, with a drawn sword, saying, "I'm right. I'm right, and I'm not moving," then there's a struggle and a battle on your hands. If you are married, God can solve your problems. This whole concept of living for God, and everything else, is a give and take in life. When there is more than one person involved, problems may arise. Even in churches, problems arise sometimes. Take it to God and settle it. There is not a problem that God can't take care of, and that we cannot take care of as Christians. When "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

Build a relationship with God. That's how you live for the Lord. Stop worrying about what Sectarianism is doing. Stop worrying about what this or that church is doing, what your friends are able to do and still call themselves Christians. You build a relationship with God. Let the Lord teach you. If you're doing something you're not clear on, ask the Lord to teach and show you. "Oh, I don't see this, and I don't see that." If there's a doctrine in the church that you don't see clearly, live it out anyway, until the Lord clears it in your mind and shows you.

Build up a consistency. Be the same all the time. That's a powerful thing. When you build a consistent life, that means a lot in the life of the outside world. When somebody can say, "I have known that person for forty years, and he's still the same today," that's building a consistent Christian life. Don't change for the worse. Build an image. Have a clear stand, and let people know what your stand is. That's how we have to build. Thank God for the stand. When you take your stand for God, others will see and know it. We must have a clear stand. Refrain from the pressures of people trying to get us to do things we shouldn't do.

Build a trust. Others will be able to depend on you. Build respect. Don't tear down someone else to build up yourself. There are some things in this world we don't understand, and we never will, and there are

## THE FAMILY OF GOD

## LOSING MEMBERSHIP

people in this world today who don't care who they tear down or destroy, once they build up themselves. That's not the attitude of a Christian. Christians are humble people. We must be subject to authority. We must respect those who are in leadership, those who have the rule over us. You can't lead unless you know how to follow.

God has called us to a life. We're building a life, and we want it to count. We want this building to continue to grow beautifully. We want this structure to continue to mount up as the most beautiful structure there is. Every one of us is building, building, building a life. Build it up, Friends. Build an attitude. Learn to accept what God has done for others. Rejoice with those who God has helped. If God calls somebody to do something you can't do, rejoice with them. This is real life. Build yourself. That's what we're talking about in this message. How are we building? When you build yourself as God would have you to, you will be able to help others.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation." This is not a church building Paul was talking about, although he established congregations, and he may have built church buildings. I don't know. "I have laid the foundation," meaning, *I have taught you and preached to you and showed you what you must build on*. What we must build on is Christ. He is the Rock. He is the Foundation to build on. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

We're living in a world today where it makes you wonder sometimes whether we're making any progress. Sometimes we wonder if it really makes sense to preach anymore. Sometimes we wonder what is going to really happen, but we really cannot be negative. We have to be positive with the message of the gospel. I believe today that God is going to do something before Jesus comes back. I believe there is going to be a real revitalizing. I believe His church is going to spring out and grow in these last days of time. The world has tried everything imaginable, and they still have not found anything to satisfy them. The old songwriter said: "Now none but Christ can satisfy, None other name for me! There's love and life and lasting joy, Lord Jesus, found in Thee." Thank God today for the satisfaction He brings. Church, you have the best thing there is on earth. You have what millions are wishing for and hoping that they could have. You have something you need to hold on to. You never know what you have until you believe it or until it slips out of your hand. Then you will realize what you had.

There is nothing wrong with building for God. There is nothing wrong with building a life that is holy and clean and pure. You will be able to lay your head down at night and know that you have pleased the Lord, and that there's nothing between your soul and the Savior and your fellow man. You will be able to say, "Forgive me, I was wrong." That builds a strong Christian. We have to build, Friends. This is a humble way, and only with God can we do it.

Thank God today that we can build on Christ. Build your life on Him. Build on the Rock. Build on the Foundation. Build on the Bible, and you will build correctly. Your house will stand. It will not blow down when the problems and struggles of life come. †

**Scriptures:** I Samuel 16:1; Exodus 32:31-33; I Corinthians 9:27; Acts 1:25; Ezekiel 18:4; John 8:21.

I Samuel 16:1 And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Exodus 32:31 And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

33 And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

John 8:21 Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

**Memory Verse:** And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.—Exodus 32:33.

**Aim:** To give Bible proof that one may lose membership in the family of God.

## INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 22:14, we read, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Many people hear the gospel message and get saved, but sooner or later lose the grace of God out of their hearts. Some seem to receive a wonderful experience and are happy for awhile; but when trials and tribulations beset them, they do not have the courage and determination to go through for God and so go back into sin. Some let the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke God's Word out of their hearts and so lose the desire to stay in the Christian race. The more we think along these lines the more we are made to realize the truth of Jesus' words, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." So many people will let the merest trifles separate them from God. Our salvation is our most precious possession, and we should consider it so and guard it with every bit of energy and power that we have. The Bible warns us in many places against becoming lukewarm and indifferent, for that will bring about a backslidden condition.

Here are a few of the warning passages: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." "Be sober, be vigilant, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." We must remember that the Christian race is a battle from the start to the finish, and we must resist him steadfastly in the faith. We must set our faces like a flint and be ever on the forward march. There can be no retreat in this warfare. God has provided us with everything we need to fight our way through successfully. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. Peter has written us some good words: "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." With the proper determination on our part and with God's help, we cannot fail.

### MEDITATIONS

**GOD REJECTS SAUL—I Samuel 16:1—And the Lord said unto Samuel—**Saul had been disobedient to the Lord, and God finally had to cut him off without hope. The Lord is very patient and longsuffering, but the Word tells that He will not always strive with man; thus we see the danger of grieving the Spirit of God to the point where He will take His flight, never to return. This was the terrible plight that Saul found himself in. It is our duty and command to pray for the backsliders in our midst, but not after they have been finally rejected of God, as was the case of Saul. No doubt Samuel had been praying earnestly for Saul until God spoke to him, telling him that it was enough. How careful we all should be, lest we, too, grieve the Spirit of God and become castaways. We should never become too sure of ourselves and think that this could not happen to us, for the Word very plainly warns us, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Peter understood the danger of falling away and gave us this warning: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (II Peter 3:17).

**THE SIN OF IDOL WORSHIP—Exodus 32:31—And Moses returned unto the Lord—**While Moses was up in the mount receiving the tables of the law, the people became impatient because Moses had been away so long and persuaded Aaron to make them a golden calf to worship. It seems almost unbelievable that any people could so quickly forget the mighty things that the Lord had done for them and turn to idol worship, but this is just what they did. This was a great sin indeed and incurred the wrath of Almighty God upon them. The command is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Human nature doesn't seem to have changed much down through the ages, for we find men today worshiping almost everything but God. Some worship their automobiles, and some, the finery of their homes, never giving a thought to God who has made all these things possible. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for all His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

**SIN PUTS US OUT OF THE FAMILY OF GOD—Exodus 32:32—Yet now, if thou wilt forgive—**Moses was greatly moved by the anger of the Lord against the children of Israel, and he pleaded earnestly with the Lord not to destroy them as He was going to do. His love for them was so great that he was willing to have his name blotted out of the book of life that they might be spared. This is real Christian love and the kind of love that we must have to please God. Jesus said for us to love one another as He had loved us, and His love was so great for us that He willingly died in our stead. We find Paul expressing this same love for his people after the flesh, the Jews. Romans 9:2, 3, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Thus we see that it really means something to be a Bible Christian. Dear Ones, don't be satisfied with only a profession, but be sure you have the kind of religion that changes the heart and gives you that same kind of love that the saints of bygone days had.

**GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS—Exodus 32:33—And the Lord said unto Moses—**We see by this verse that if we sin, our names will be blotted out of the book of life. There are some who teach that if we once are saved we can never backslide, but here is a verse that proves the falsity of that doctrine. Moses was willing to have his name blotted out to save the children of Israel from destruction, but God, being just and no respecter of persons, could not accept Moses' offer of mercy. We all must answer individually to God for our deeds here on earth, whether they be good or bad. Some are trying to excuse their own indifferent conduct by saying that they are just as good as the other person. Don't let the devil fill your mind with this kind of foolishness, for you are not responsible for the other person's deeds but only for your own. Don't be foolish enough to be willing to go to hell just because someone else does.

**IT PAYS TO BE STEADFAST—I Corinthians 9:27—But I keep under my body—**Paul realized the danger of falling from grace. To guard against this he kept his body continually in subjection to the Spirit of God. Indeed there is danger of losing out in our Christian experience, and it is even possible to do so without our knowing it. There are many who have gradually let down on the truth until the Spirit has left them. There are many who are laboring under the impression that they are doing God's service, who will find that they have been deceived and are eternally lost. If Paul found it necessary to be continually on the alert to keep true to the faith, how much more should we be diligent to retain favor with God!

**JUDAS FELL BY TRANSGRESSION—Acts 1:25—That he may take part of this ministry—**This verse also sets at naught the eternal security doctrine of "once saved, always saved," because this verse plainly states that Judas fell by transgression, and it follows that he had been saved, or he could not have fallen. Judas, no doubt, had a weakness toward covetousness, and he saw in the betrayal a chance for a little financial gain. Having been with Jesus for some time, he was familiar with His supernatural power and had no idea

that Jesus would permit Himself to be taken by the Jews. This is evidenced by the fact that when it was apparent that Jesus was not going to free Himself, Judas repented of his act and went to the priests and told them that Christ was innocent and begged for His release and returned the thirty pieces of silver that he had received to betray Jesus. But his efforts were of no avail, and his remorse and sorrow were so great that he went out and hanged himself. What a sad end for one who had been so closely associated with Jesus! The Word warns us to beware of covetousness; so let us all take heed lest our affections become wrapped around some material thing instead of being centered on things above.

**SIN BRINGS SPIRITUAL DEATH—Ezekiel 18:4—Behold, all souls are mine**—Sin is man’s most dreadful enemy, for the Word says that the wages of sin is death. Sin separates us from God, and if not repented of, will send us to the bottomless pit of hell from which there can be no escape. This is the worst calamity that can possibly happen to anyone. Just think of being forever enveloped in the eternal flames of hell! The mere thoughts of such a fate should cause us to tremble in our shoes, so to speak. Dear Reader, if you are not ready to meet a just and righteous God, don’t put off your soul’s salvation another moment, but make peace with Him now. Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation; tomorrow may never come. Why will you die in your sins when the dear Lord has made every possible provision for your redemption? All you have to do is to repent of your sins, ask for forgiveness and believe that He does forgive, and the work is done, and you can go on your way rejoicing. Praise God. **John 8:21—Then said Jesus ... unto them**—If we have sin in our souls, we cannot go where Jesus is, for sin does separate us from God and all that is good. The Word tells us that he that committeth sin is of the devil, and I am sure that none of us want to belong to the devil and be his slaves; yet that is just what we are unless we have been born again, born of the Spirit of God. There are but two families in the world: the family of God and the family of Satan. If we are to continue in God’s family, we must keep His commandments, for we read in John 15:10, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.” Again, I want to remind you of the need of keeping close to God so that you may be better able to elude the snares of Satan. We must give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. Since every transgression and every disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? We shall not escape, for the Word of God is true and abideth forever.

## CONCLUSION

We have endeavored in the comments on this lesson to bring to your mind the danger of losing membership in the family of God. We have to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the more we are reminded of these great truths, the more likely we will be to hold out to the end. Let our delight be in the Word of God, and let us meditate therein day and night. If we will keep meek and lowly

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we will endure to the end. Paul says that if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

If there be anyone reading this who once walked with the Lord, but you have lost your way, gone back into sin, I would say to you, you do not have to remain in a backslidden condition. You can return to the Lord, and He invites you to do so. Do not allow your failures of the past to keep you in a defeated state. God loves you. He is willing to forgive you and accept you back into His family.

## FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is it necessary to worship God with our whole soul, mind, and strength?
2. What puts one out of the family of God?
3. How can we refute the doctrine of once saved, always saved?
4. What is the danger of grieving the Spirit of God?
5. How do you account for Saul’s losing out with God?
6. What is the best way to retain favor with God?
7. What is spiritual death?
8. What is your plan to retain your membership in the family of God? †

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## OUR REST

BY THE LATE L. K. MORGAN

“In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10). This prophecy brings to our attention a time when the Gentiles should seek a glorious rest through the root (Christ) of Jesse. It is evident that until that time the rest spoken of could not be given. “In that day there shall be ... an ensign of the people; and his rest shall be glorious [or glory].” There was rest (the keeping of a sabbath) for Israel, through whom this prophecy came, and there was glory in it, too; but that rest, together with other things of the law, pointed to a time when another rest should be provided through Christ. A standard would be set up—a standard, not for one nation alone, but for the people in general. This manifestly indicates that there was to come a change in times and in conditions, and that this change was to be accompanied with a more glorious rest than that of the former days. It is to this division of time, from the beginning of which a more glorious rest has been provided, that we call your attention.

## THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

Through sin man lost his righteousness, and immediately he began to cover his shame with the things of this world. “They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” This is just what the sinner today is doing. When one is void of righteousness, he gives heed to the allurements of this world, bedecks himself with all that he chooses, and, as in the case of Adam and Eve, hides himself amid the things of this world,

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until the grace of God through the gospel of Christ seeks him out and brings conviction to his soul, causing him to know that there is no rest outside of Christ. It is rest that the people of this world are seeking. They are endeavoring to gratify the longing of the heart with vain and temporal things, but their spirits, because of unrest, continue to cry out for peace. Adam knew that he was naked, and he tried to supply his needs. So it is with the sinner today. There is something lacking which no amount of personal effort can supply; no one but Christ can give the needed help.

When Christ found Adam and Eve trying to supply their needs with the things of this world and to hide among the trees of the garden, He manifested His love, which was still extended toward them (see John 3:16), and promised them a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15). Previously, however, He preached to them the first gospel sermon that this old world ever heard. "Where art thou?" He began. "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Adam responded with contrite heart. How could he do otherwise, since he saw that God still loved him? He acknowledged the facts as they were. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." This was Adam's honest confession. No minister can more faithfully point out sin, than did the Lord. No sinner can do more than confess and forsake sin, as did Adam. The Lord then turned to the woman. Note her confession: "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Could Eve have done more than that? Did she not confess facts as they were?

When both had thus humbly confessed the circumstances connected with their sin and had repented toward God, the promise of a Savior, who in due time would die in their stead, and the curse placed upon the serpent was announced to them, it was clearly stated that they and their descendants should have trouble and conflict with evil, but by a promise they were assured that the serpent's head should be bruised through Christ.

## TWO EPOCHS DIVIDE THE AGES

Time from the days of Adam to the close of the present age may be divided into two epochs. Each of these epochs may be subdivided into periods. One epoch spans history from Adam to Christ; the second spans the time from Christ to the end of mortal history. In the first epoch the gospel was in promise. The gospel promise was made to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This promise, believed and acted upon by faith, brought to those who accepted it the assurance that they were children of God. This promise made to Adam was renewed (Genesis 6:18) to Noah, who believed it and prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Thus through Noah the human race was continued upon earth. Next we find Abraham entrusted with the same promise of God concerning a coming Savior. He believed this promise, and his faith was accounted unto him for righteousness.

## ISRAEL MADE THE REPOSITORY

Until the time of Abraham the gospel had not been committed to a family, race, or nation whom God

ordained should be the repository of His oracles and priests to the world. To Abraham and his posterity, however, this call was made, and to him was given the first sign, or seal, which separated him and his posterity from the people of the world. This was the seal of circumcision. His righteousness, however, was not more than that which Adam enjoyed after his repentance toward God, nor than what those enjoyed who lived godly from the time of Adam to Noah. Neither did his righteousness differ from that of those who believed the promise of God at any time during the law dispensation. All were saved by grace through faith in the promise—Christ, who was typified by their sacrifices—and looked forward to the time of the blessed privileges that we now enjoy.

When Abraham's descendants grew into a multitude, God made of them a nation, and to this nation He gave the law, having another sign, or seal—the sabbath, to be observed upon the seventh day of each week. The evidence of their righteousness was the keeping of this law, which Paul calls a schoolmaster leading them to, and preserving them in, a knowledge of the promise of Christ, "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made."

## CIRCUMCISION AND SABBATH-DAY TILL CHRIST

No one acquainted with the gospel will hold to circumcision as a necessary rite to the Christian's faith. Just so should it be with the law of Moses—sabbath-day included. Circumcision was a fleshly seal, or sign, of the righteous faith of Abraham. It served the same purpose for all of Israel's race, before the law was given at Sinai and after that, until the opening of the Christian era. Many, however, received their sign, but did not continue in righteousness. For this reason, we hear the Lord saying, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart," "and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father."—Deuteronomy 10:16; Matthew 3:9. Those who lived near to God recognized in Christ the fulfilment of all their types and shadows. Christ was the embodiment of rest typified by the sabbath of the Mosaic law. Those who received Christ into their hearts by faith, no longer needed the seal of circumcision—the sign of righteousness. Christ, received into the heart of believers, became their rest. Sabbath means rest—not physical rest, but spiritual rest. Any man, however much distressed in spirit, can rest from physical labor on one day in the week. The rest of soul was not given in its fulness to the children of Israel, nor could it be received until the fulfilment of the promise under the new covenant.

## THE NEW COVENANT

Christ's death brought in the new dispensation and fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah which says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall

be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” —Jeremiah 31:31-34.

To this covenant Paul refers in Hebrews 8:8-12 and teaches that it is now our privilege to enjoy the promised blessings. These are the blessings to which the sacrifice and the clothing made of skins in the Garden of Eden pointed. This is that which was so long deferred and which so many holy men of old longed to see. The receiving of the new covenant experience gives rest, and fills and satisfies one with the grace of God. It restores the divine nature, which Adam lost, and makes the things of God so attractive that one loses all pleasure in things of the world. In short, the soul enters into rest.

### THE NEW COVENANT REST

In Hebrews 3 and 4, Paul shows what the fulness of the new covenant rest is—the earnest of our inheritance—fulness of rest—that we receive in the blessing of sanctification. Our final reward comes after a life of faith and service. To illustrate the way by which we enter into it, he cites the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness and their passage over Jordan. “To whom swear he [God] that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Hebrews 3:18, 19). He then continues: “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his [God’s] rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it [the glad tidings, A.R.V.] was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua, margin] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Hebrews 4:1-11).

### A PRESENT PRECIOUS EXPERIENCE

There is a reward and rest awaiting all who love God; but righteousness, Christian perfection, the renewal of divine nature, and peaceful soul rest we may

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now enjoy. It is the purchase of the precious blood of Christ and may be our present experience. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4).

You will notice that these texts refer to a present experience and privilege. The divine nature is not something to be looked for in the future and that can not now be enjoyed. Today we have the privilege of escaping the corruption that is in the world through the lust of the carnal heart. If we delay entering in, we shall suffer loss just as certainly as did the Jews that entered not into Canaan because of unbelief. Paul thus admonished the Ephesian brethren: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:23, 24). It is by the receiving of a new spirit that we put on the new man—the experience of complete present salvation. Those Jews who believed the promise looked forward in hope to the time when this experience for us would be accomplished through Christ, they knowing that it meant salvation for them also. Into this deeper, richer, sweeter experience to be found in the blessing of holiness, we who live in the present dispensation may enter through the blood of Christ.

This is the promised rest. It was preached first in the Garden of Eden, and it has been preached from that time forward. This is the rest of the gospel—a rest which all may enjoy. “We which have believed do enter into rest.” Through Him who calmed the raging storm and said, “Peace, be still,” we find this rest that gives quietness and assurance forever. Isaiah prophesied concerning it, saying, “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.” This refers to our spiritual rest, this never-ending sabbath of the gospel. It was never fully enjoyed under the law. Under the law the gospel was by promise, but now it is our privilege to enter in, to enjoy all the gospel benefits. The seers of old who prophesied concerning the gospel never enjoyed its blessings. Paul says, “If Jesus [Joshua] had given them [Israel] rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.” The sabbath rest provided for in the law of Moses typifies a certain day, limited to the time when the gospel in its fulness should be ushered in. That day is now ours through the gospel. It is a never-ending experience. No longer need we look forward, as did the prophets of old, and desire the blessings of rest and Christian perfection; Christ is now ours in all the fulness of His love. †

—Reprinted from September 1991 issue

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## OUT OF BOX 88

Dear *Way of Truth* Staff,

Thank you for sending the magazine each month. I am blessed when I receive it. I’m sending a small offering. †

—M. B., Mississippi

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# THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ELECT

By the late H. R. Matthews

“For this cause I bow my knees unto to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14, 15).

An assembly is “a group of people that are assembled together.”—*Webster*. These assemblies gather together for numerous reasons. Some form as lodges that espouse various agendas; others form purely for entertainment, while others are formed for educational purposes. We have legislative assemblies in our state houses and in our federal Capitol building which gather together for the purpose of legislating laws to govern our state and federal governments.

There are many religious assemblies that are distinguished from one another by the spirit that fathered them, by various names that designate them, and by the religious doctrine they espouse.

As you have noticed, the title of our lesson is “The Assembly of the Elect.” This is the religious assembly that the apostle Paul is speaking of in the opening scripture text. The apostle Paul spoke of this religious assembly in the following manner: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14, 15). In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 20, verse 28, Paul further speaks of this assembly, calling it a flock and distinguishing it from all other religious assemblies by designating it the Church of God which Jesus purchased with His own blood.

Becoming members of other religious assemblies is accomplished by many unscriptural means, but becoming a member of the Church of God can only be accomplished through the new birth.

The Church of God, in its universal nature, would be considered an invisible assembly since it is widely geographically divided but bound together by the same Spirit, the Spirit of God. The visible aspect of the Church of God would be the local assembly of the elect, i.e., a local congregation of the Church of God that assembles together in divine worship services. It is the local congregations that are being addressed by the Hebrew writer: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). This verse does not give support to the assembling together of sectarian, denominational churches. (This statement will be more fully scripturally documented as we proceed.)

There are religious professors who misinterpret I John 2:27, which says, “And ye need not that any man teach you.” If you examine the context in which this verse is written, you will find that it is speaking of avoiding the teaching of false prophets. The Holy Spirit imparts the gifts of prophesy and teaching for the purpose of instructing the saints of God in the finer points of Christian living. This is one of the reasons that we are commanded to “forsake not the assembling ourselves together.” Not only so, but this verse also instructs us to “exhort [strongly urge] one another as

we see the day [last] approaching.” Children of God must have the love and encouragement we receive from the fellowship of the saints with whom we assemble. This assembling of the children of God also brings us into the unity of the Spirit and the unity of the faith. It has been said, “I need not assemble with the church, for I can worship God as I walk along the beach.” Hebrews 10:25 is not optional. If it is neglected, true fellowship cannot be achieved. It is true, we can worship God at all hours of the day or night wherever we may happen to be, but not at the expense of disobeying God’s Word.

The biblical command to “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together” is not without many examples throughout the scriptures. After the children of Israel returned to Jerusalem from the seventy years of captivity in Persia, they assembled together in an open area to hear the reading from the book of the law. “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with the understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (Nehemiah 8:1-3).

The Levites and others that were among the people explained to them what Ezra was reading out of the book of the law: “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8).

Since the book of the law had been forsaken, the people were gathered together there to hear from the book of the law and to repent of the forsaking of the same. Men ordained of God were there to give the people the understanding of the reading so that they might understand what they must do to return to the law of God. What a spiritual tragedy it would have been had there not been this assembling together of these people.

The assembling together of God’s people, as far as the command was concerned under the New Covenant, had a very significant aspect, for as Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week, Sunday, so also this became the day set aside for the assembling together of the saints for divine worship. The special day set aside for divine worship was no longer the last day of the week but the first day of the week. This is a beautiful type of putting God first. Of course, we put God first every day and we worship the Holy Trinity every day, but on the first day of the week many secular activities are set aside that we may place special emphasis on the command to assemble and worship as one man. This day became known as the Lord’s day. While the apostle John was on the Isle of Patmos where he received the Revelation from the Lord Jesus, he said, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Revelation 1:10). It was on the first day of the week when the 120 were assembled in the upper room when the Holy Spirit baptism took place.

Following the healing of the lame man by Peter and John, as they were preaching Christ among the people, they were taken into custody by the Jewish leaders and were threatened and warned not to preach any more in that name. Upon being released, they immediately assembled with their own company of saints. After they rehearsed all that had happened, they went to prayer. What we want to emphasize here is that one of the greatest prayer meetings ever held was when the saints were assembled together in one assembly.

When the angel freed Peter from prison, he went immediately to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. It was here where the saints had assembled together to pray for Peter's release from prison.

Further presentation of examples of the early saints assembling together is unnecessary, even though there are numbers of biblical examples of the early saints assembling together at various times and places.

This practice has existed to this day among true believers in Christ Jesus. Let us give a little detailed exploration into why this practice is so necessary. True believers in Christ Jesus continue this practice of assembling together because:

1. God commanded in His Word to do so. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

2. When one member of the body is missing the body is not complete. "For the body is not one member, but many" (I Corinthians 12:14). "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body" (I Corinthians 12:18-20). "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care for one another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:25-27).

3. Power and faith are multiplied when true believers in Christ Jesus assemble together. "And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight" (Leviticus 26:8). "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19, 20). "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. 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. 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" (Acts 4:23; 29-31).

4. As Jesus stood on the shore of Galilee, He called to His fisherman disciples, saying, "Come and dine." This was to feed the natural man, but more importantly, the spiritual man must also be fed. For the most part

this is accomplished as true believers in Christ assemble together to feed from Father's table. "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

5. Perfect love between saints is greatly aided by the sweet fellowship which is accomplished by their assembling together in worship services. Praise the Lord for love divine that binds us all together!

Let us look at a few of Satan's devices to thwart God's command of not forsaking ourselves together. These are just a few:

1. I will not be able to attend divine worship services because of unfinished chores.

2. I cannot attend divine worship services because of hypocrites in the church.

3. I cannot attend divine worship services today because this is the only day of the week when I can sleep in.

4. I cannot attend divine worship services today because this is the only day of the week that my companion and I can spend together.

5. I cannot attend divine worship services because I am not on speaking terms with Bro. So-and-So.

6. I cannot attend divine worship services because the pastor did not shake my hand the last time I attended.

How can I obey the command of "not forsaking ourselves together" since I live in an area where there is no assembly of true believers in Christ Jesus? God understands your situation and does not hold you responsible when it is not possible for you to carry out this command. However, you might try to locate other true believers in Christ Jesus in your isolated area and assemble together in your homes for divine worship and fellowship. God bless you as you endeavor to worship him in Spirit and in truth. †

### 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 #1759 Continue in the Work—Brian Richards
- \_\_\_ CD #1760 Identifying Good Counsel—Doug Shenberger
- \_\_\_ CD #1761 Thankfulness & Gratefulness—Thomas Harris
- \_\_\_ CD #1762 Hope of the Gospel—Gary Alwell
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- \_\_\_ CD #1765 Minding Our Business—Rebecca Bland
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- \_\_\_ CD #1767 Living Without Sin—Brian Richards
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**COMING MEETINGS**

**HONDURAS FELLOWSHIP MEETING**

Coxen Hole, Roatan, Honduras

September 22-27, 2026, Lord willing

Bro. Lee Jeffries, Pastor



**2026 INTERNATIONAL  
CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION**

12819 Point Salem Rd.

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

June 30-July 5, 2026, Lord willing

Bro. Doug Shenberger, Host 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**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