

# MR. D'S NOTES ON LOTS OF OTHER THINGS



Rev. Stanley L. Derickson Ph.D.

MR. D'S NOTES ON A LOT OF OTHER THINGS  
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1996

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topic 00050

I was contacted on the internet in 1996 about a question concerning Adam's creation. The person asked if there was a difference between Adam's creation and formation. She also wanted to know if there was any significance that "motal woman was taken out of iysh and not out of Adam.

Gen 1.27 created = bara normally translated create. (Creator, choose, make, cut down, dispatch, done, make fat.) Both man and woman created - same word.

God created man [Adam] in 1.27 --- God formed man [Adam] in 2.7.

2.7 formed = yatsar translated form 26, potter 17, fashion 5, maker 4, frame 3, make 3, former 2, earthen 1, and purposed 1.

2.21 rib = tsela side 19, chamber 11, boards 2, corners 2, rib 2, another 1, beams 1, halting 1, leaves 1, and planks 1.

2.22 "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man (Adam), made he a woman...."

The rib was taken from Adam and the woman was made from the rib according to verse 22.

2.23 Adam speaks and states, "she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man (iysh).

God spoke of the rib being taken from Adam. Adam spoke of Woman being taken from iysh. Adam was giving woman a name which came from man's name. Adam being the name of the first man. Woman was named after man, not Adam. She was taken from a being, not a title.

"iysh" = BDB/Thayers: "contracted for 0582 [or perhaps rather from an unused root meaning to be extant]. Normally the term is translated man or men. (One, husband, any)

Is there a difference between creation of Adam and forming of Adam? Creation would be the

overall act of bringing Adam into existence, while formation may relate to a physical forming as a potter works with clay, though we aren't told that the Lord got his hands dirty.

I suspect that the whole of creation was brought into existence via the spoken word of the Lord (Jesus).

Is there significance that woman was taken from man. Man seems to indicate mankind or the maleness of the species, while woman the one taken from man is the other part.

Adam being the name of the male, and the male of the species being Adam.

Significance? More than this, I see none.

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TOPIC M00100

DIVORCE/REMARRIAGE

PRESUPPOSITIONS:

1. This is not to condemn anyone in any relationship.
2. This is to present the Scripture involved, and draw conclusions.
3. This is to reprimand the Church for its steady decline and slide toward the world in relation to this subject. The Churches divorce rates if about that of the world's.
4. This is to confront people in this situation with a head on look at what God says concerning the subject. Many today have accepted the norm for themselves, and have never looked into the Word to see what God has to say.
5. Malachi 2:15b, 16 States, "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

Note: God hates the putting away of the wife of your youth. If you do, you deal treacherously against her. This is the context that this study must be done in. All else that the Scripture states must be understood in light of the fact that God hates divorce, and that the person that does go ahead and divorce, is dealing treacherously with their spouse.

6. This is also a call to the church to commit itself to two items:

- a. Begin to properly teach the principles of marriage.
- b. That it begins to minister to those already in the divorce/remarried situation.

First I would like to present some of the views held today on the topic.

1. No divorce No remarriage
2. Div. OK in some cases No remarriage
3. Divorce OK Rem OK in case of fornication
4. Divorce OK Rem in case of fornication and  
desertion
5. Divorce OK Rem OK in all cases

One, three and four are held in conservative circles, although four is not widely held. Three is the past favorite. Two is fairly new and not too much is being done with it. One is very conservative but I believe that it is growing rapidly due to the rethinking of the old position of number three.

Most view death as grounds for remarriage though Paul indicates that staying single may be best (I Cor. 7). Paul hints that young widows probably ought to remarry in one of his epistles if they cannot handle the life of a single. (Which is hard for most young people that have lost a spouse via death. I Cor. 7:7-8 mentions it is better to marry than burn, however that is specifically in the context of single persons considering not marrying for the first time and widows. It has nothing to do with the divorcee's situation.)

Let us begin with a text that God set forth through Moses long before any of the texts that we will consider, were given.

Gen. 2:23-24, "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

May I add a New Testament passage also?

Matt 19:4-8, "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made [them]

at the beginning made them male and female,

"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

"They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?"

"He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

Most agree to this. Marriage is between two, and in the beginning, was for life.

"Leave" is imperative to a good marriage. The cleave is indicative of holding to one another and no one else, as in parents or friends (This is not the idea of moving away from parents, for the Old Testament concept was the family staying together. The one flesh is indicative of the unity of the marriage.

How can you divide one flesh? This is the dilemma that faces those that see divorce as an option. They just do not deal with it.

I might add immediately that a legal separation may be very wise and in some states divorce. This will provide legal protection in some cases for the person. **IT SHOULD NEVER BE SEEN AS A DIVISION IN THE MARRIAGE FOR THE LAW CANNOT DIVIDE FLESH. DEATH IS THE ONLY DIVISOR OF THE ONE FLESH OF A MARRIAGE.**

Let us look at the passages that seem to relate to the problem.

Exodus 20:14 "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The clear command of God in one of His ten big ones! He says that you shalt not do it!

Lev. 18:16 mentions that it is not right for a brother to uncover the nakedness of his brother's wife. This would be in the case of a brother with his presently married brother's wife I would assume.

Lev. 18:20 mentions that adultery defiles the man.

Leviticus 20:10 "And the man that committeth adultery with [another] man's wife, [even he] that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put

to death."

This passage is clear that death was the law's answer to the adulterous activities of the Israelites. Christ, living under that law, obeying that law and fulfilling that law would naturally have known of this passage. He would have had to be thinking of this when He announced the so-called exception for fornication. He knew that under the law, death was the answer to fornication, and there were no other cases whereby adultery was acceptable. It is not acceptable in the case of fornication, but is cause for death.

Let us look at the relationship of Christ to the law.

1. Christ was made of a woman under the law: Gal 4:4

2. Christ came to redeem those under the law: Gal 4:5

3. Christ came to fulfill the law: Matt 5:17-20

4. Christ would have to keep the law to fulfill it:

Matt 4:13-17 ("fulfill all righteousness")

5. Christ taught the keeping of the law: Matt 19:16-19

6. Christ did not come to destroy the law, nor to set it aside: Matt 5:17

In light of this it seems doubtful that the Lord was giving an exception for divorce, but rather He was stating there was no reason for divorce. Indeed, the reaction of the disciples indicates that they viewed marriage for life and not something that could be dissolved.

If Christ had such strong feelings about divorce/remarriage, why shouldn't the minister of God, why shouldn't the woman of God, why shouldn't the man of God abhor divorce/remarriage within the family of God?

Deuteronomy 5:18 "Neither shalt thou commit adultery." This is a repeat of the commandment.

Deuteronomy 24:1 We need to understand this text in light of the Malachi passage concerning God's hate for divorce, and realize that the New Testament mentions this was allowed because of the hardness of their hearts. (Matt 19:8)

1. "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

2. "And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife.
3. "And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;
4. "Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Some brief information on the words used: v 1 some = 1697 (from 1696) = "dabar (daw-baw) = twot 399a; relates to saying, speech, word, or business. uncleanness = 6172 (from 6168) = "ervah" (er-vaw) = twot 1692b; relates to nakedness and shame, or exposed. bill of divorcement = 3748 = "keriythuwth" (ker-ee-thooth) = twot 1048; means divorce or dismissal. v 4 defiled = 2930 = "tame" (taw-may') = twot 809; This tern relates to being unclean or impure. It can be sexually, ceremonially, or religiously.

The use of the word "dabar" would indicate that this uncleanness may be related to the spoken word. It could be cursing, or more to the point probably, would be the confession of some uncleanness. However, when you put this word with the word "ervah" you have a double term indicating other than the thought of uncleanness, but rather the thought of some spoken nakedness or exposure. This could relate to most any exposure of information that causes the man to decide he does not want this woman for a wife.

Many believe that this passage relates to the engagement period, before the actual marriage. It is something that the man finds out before the actual marriage ceremony and consummation of the marriage.

The term married = 1166 = "baal (bah'-al) = twot 262; Strong: "...to be master; hence...to marry:-have dominion (over), be husband, marry..." twot "possess, own, rule over, marry." Neither mention the thought of engagement period. This would indicate that they were indeed, married, however, since marriage is for life and the penalty for adultery is death, it seems right to assume that the text may well be speaking of the engagement period rather than an actual completed marriage.

Barne's Notes has a good comment which needs to be considered. (Cook, F.C., editor; "THE BIBLE COMMENTARY"; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; no copy, pp 315-316) The author mentions that these four verses are actually one sentence. "Moses neither institutes nor enjoins divorce. The exact spirit of the passage is given in our lord's words to the Jews; 'Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives' (Matt. xix. 8). Not only does the original institution of marriage as recorded by Moses (Gen. ii. 24) set forth the perpetuity of the bond, but the verses before us plainly intimate that divorce, whilst tolerated for the time, contravenes the order of nature and of God." He goes on to state, "Moses could not absolutely put an end to a practice which was traditional, and common to the Jews with other Oriental nations.

His aim is therefore to regulate and thus to mitigate an evil which he could not extirpate."

Since this is a text that we cannot really nail down as to meaning, it should be subjected to a proper level under the institution of marriage in Genesis and the thought that God hates divorce. The most you might conclude from this text would be there is something revealed that causes the problem. You should not assume that this is basis for the divorce rate we see today.

A New Testament illustration of this would be Matt 1:19 when Joseph considered putting Mary away before they had consummated and completed the marriage.

In an informal paper from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, OR, the faculty was trying to work through the issue of divorce/remarriage. They state of the Deut. 24 passage, "Divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was allowed but not ordered. What was commanded is this: if there were a divorce, the person being divorced must be given a bill of divorcement...." They go on to emphasize that the divorce was due to the hardness of their hearts.

It seems that the emphasis is not on allowing divorce, but that if you are going to be hard hearted enough to divorce then give a bill of divorcement.

The term defiled in v 4 is "become unclean" according to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. It is used in the following texts: Lev. 18:20 defiling a neighbor's wife; Ezek. 18:6 defiling a neighbor's wife; Num. 5:13,14,20,29; This is strong number 2930.

The first husband caused his wife trouble evidently because she went out and remarried.

NOTE: The 2nd divorce or idea that she is defiled to the point she is not able to be married without adding problems to the situation indicates that the defilement is permanent. Marriage is for life.

Divorce is only recognized in this text, and is not commanded. Divorce is not even condoned in this text. Divorce is only recognized as being in existence in this text.

The first husband and I would assume all others are not to marry this woman. She is defiled for life! The text does not state it but the second marriage is what defiled her. She is not to remarry.

If the husband divorces, he is to do the paperwork that is involved. This is all that this text is getting at.

The standard of the woman for marriage was: Being a virgin Deut. 22:13ff, Matt. 1:18ff; or a widow - Ruth and Boaz produced a child in the line of Christ.

The defilement of this woman was life long. Barne's Notes backs this line of thinking as well.

Conclusions:

This woman defiled herself when she married the second time.

This woman had caused problems in the marriage.

This woman would defile anyone that she married.

Thus the divorcee that remarries is defiled or unmarriageable for life. The second and succeeding spouses are defiled because of the marriage to the divorcee.

The defilement in the case of the divorcee is for life, while we aren't told of the second spouse. The indication of Lev. 22:7 is that the priest would be defiled. If there was a possibility of him removing that defilement the Bible is silent. I would assume that if he were to put her away, then his defilement would end.

Leviticus 21:7 "They shall not take a wife [that is] a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he [is] holy unto his God." (v 14 also)

The priest is not to marry a divorced woman because he is holy. This is very plain and the indications are very clear that the divorced woman would be a defilement to the priest.

An associated passage is Lev. 22:13. A priest's young childless - widowed or divorced daughter may live with the priest, but no strangers are to eat there. Since this text mentions the widowed, I would assume that the danger here is that some unwanted possibilities would exist if a stranger were to drop in for a period of time.

Conclusions from the Leviticus texts might run along this line. If a man marries a divorced woman he will become defiled or unholy.

It should be pointed out that 22:13 tells us that associating with the divorcee is not defiling. The divorcee needs to be ministered to and that is a real problem for the church. We have many divorcees going to churches that are inadequate doctrinally because they find acceptance there and they do not in our fundamental churches.

A word of warning: I think that a close relationship to a divorcee could well damage a good marriage, so there is a real danger in this. The divorcee can affect in a negative manner a happily married person to the point of damaging the marriage.

Some suggest many things from Deut. 22:13-21. There is a lot built on this text that is not really there. If you see comments on it be sure that you look very carefully. The context is a woman that is claiming to be a virgin and is trying to publicly get away with her lie. Note: If she is virgin the marriage bond is for life! Divorce in vs. 19 is literally "send her away." This is a problem that

arises before the marriage is consummated. (virgin)

It is of interest that Joseph (Mary's husband) knew this ruling. If he thought that Mary was a non-virgin He may have been showing a great love for her by trying to divorce her quietly. He didn't want to chance any harm for her and her baby.

Deut. 22:22 Remember for awhile, the fact that verse 22 mentions death as the punishment for adultery. Divorce is not in view here!

Deuteronomy 22:28, 29 is of interest while we are in the vicinity. It speaks of a single man and single woman that have relations. The point of the passage is marriage and payment of money to the father. The passage ends with a command, "...and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days. This idea is in v 19 as well. It seems Moses wanted to emphasis the point. Unless I am seriously wrong, this is a command that a marriage is for life. It would not seem logical to penalize these particular situations for life, so we should see it as general principle - marriage is for life. If there is divorce, the person is defiled when remarried.

Ezra 10:3,19 "Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

"And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and [being] guilty, [they offered] a ram of the flock for their trespass."

Chapter nine and Neh. 13:23-31 are also background for this text.

This speaks of putting foreign wives away, however there is no mention of divorce or bills of divorcement which Deut. required.

The most you can draw from this is that the Jews were allowed to separate themselves from foreign wives - not divorce. The term used here "put away" is "yasa" which means to go out from. (This is Strong's 3318 and twot's 893) This is not related to the terms for divorce in the Old Testament. This was a step to keep the Messianic line pure, and I have not found any that speak of this being for today.

Proverbs 6:32 "[But] whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he [that] doeth it destroyeth his own soul."

There are two things mentioned here. The adulterer lacketh understanding, and he destroyeth his own soul.

Just what the last item means is another thing. It would probably be readily accepted that this is

not talking about eternal things. It would seem that it speaks of the man's earthly life. The soul is the center of our world consciousness, thus the thought should relate to how the man relates to his world. Adultery certainly has been observed to seriously affect the mental and emotional side of people involved, and these two often can cause problems within the physical realm as well.

Thus the destruction probably relates to the life, or quality of life of the people involved. I once was told by an older woman of a part of her life. Her account relates to this point. She had divorced her first husband and had remarried. She began to look at the Bible and realized that she should not be married. She mentioned that she went through many years of guilt feelings because of her situation. She said that she was very relieved when her first husband died. She felt that she had been freed.

Jeremiah 3:1 "They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD."

God views the put away wife that remarries as an harlot, or as we've seen - defiled.

Jeremiah 3:8,9 "And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."

"And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks."

The whole tenor of the text should set the person contemplating adultery at odds with their straying desires.

Several things to note:

Israel committed adultery and was put away: This might indicate that the exception of the New Testament for fornication had Old Testament basis. This is God that did this.

It could better be said that it is an understandable picture that God gave to the Jews, and that He did not really give them a divorce - He just put them away for their spiritual adultery.

The thought of Israel being His wife is merely a picture, thus so would be a divorce from her. If you make the mistake of making this a real divorce then you have him married to Israel and divorcing her, while he is married to Judah. You might tack on the fact that Christ will marry the church one day. Bigamy on the part of God - not a tolerable teaching!

God gave a bill of divorce: Again this does not indicate an Old testament basis for the exception of the New Testament. Even if this is a true event of divorce on the part of God, it was for the

fear factor in others. He did it to salvage a relationship with Judah. Application of this might run along the line that any divorce in this age should be an example and a case to cause fear in other people's relationships. It is of interest, that if this is true, then the people of our day have done as Judah - feared not and played the harlot.

Conclusions from this text:

1. The thought of the text is that God was trying to set an example and salvage another relationship.

Those today that do not take the example of others divorcing are not fearing God and the party that is unfaithful is an HARLOT.

2. This text should be taken within the context of all prior Old Testament information on divorce, and putting away. The Jewish mind would have understood this terminology because of their background.

The thought that God actually issued a bill of divorcement should not be taken as a literal writing and delivering, nor should it be taken as an okay for man to do so.

I personally feel that it was a picture for Judah and that it was an illustration. as were the anthropomorphisms of the Psalmist. They picture an attribute or act of God. He merely saw their adultery and put them away because of it.

Verse one "they say" may refer to Deut. 24:1-4

The most you might come up with here is that the wife that plays the harlot, and continues in it for many years - not a one time act of adultery, may be put away. Remarriage is never an option here. However to view this as a basis for putting away, I believe that it would be stretching the text. Indeed, reconciliation is the thought of all that God does in the book of Jeremiah. He is always calling his people back to Himself. If you see divorce for adultery in this text, then you must also see no thought of remarriage to another, as well as the key thought of reconciliation. Note should be made that this adultery was over many years and even generations and God still wanted them to return to Him.

Some information on the words used: "committed" and "adultery" are one word: 5003 na'aph {naw-af} a primitive root; TWOT - 1273; It seems to mean to commit adultery. It is used of men/women/figuratively of idolatry. "her a bill": 5612 cepher {say'-fer} or (feminine) ciphrah (Psa. 56:8 [9]) {sif-raw'} from 5608; TWOT - 1540a,1540b; it has the idea of a book, document or legal document. "of divorce": 3748 k@riythuwth {ker-ee-thooth'} from 3772; TWOT - 1048a; simply refers to dismissal or divorce. "harlot": 2181 zanah {zaw-naw'} a primitive root [highly-fed and therefore wanton]; TWOT - 563; relates to commission of fornication, adultery, or harlotry.

Jeremiah 5:7 "How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by [them that are] no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses."

The spiritual adultery of Israel should let us know how God feels about it in the physical realm. Words like these should move the believer to refrain from the act, to abhor the act, and to teach against the act.

Jeremiah 7:9 "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;"

This use of adultery is speaking of physical and not spiritual adultery. Adultery is related to stealing, murder, lying, and idolatry. Are these things that a believer wants to involve themselves in? I fear in our "gray area" Christian society, believers feel free to be involved in these areas with no thought.

Jeremiah 23:14 "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah."

Again, how can the believer desire to have anything to do with adultery if God feels this way about it? Indeed, there may be a harsh message to the pastors and leaders of our day that give the idea that divorce/remarriage are correct methods of operation. Pastors have now, in some cases, decided it is acceptable for them to be divorced/remarried.

Jeremiah 29:23 "Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and [am] a witness, saith the LORD."

This passage would call the erring believer to realize that God is witness of what they do in the dark. He is also their judge, the judge with the perfect, truthful, and unfailing witness - Himself.

Ezekiel 16:32 "[But as] a wife that committeth adultery, [which] taketh strangers instead of her husband!" A bold, concise, and clear statement of what adultery is!

Ezekiel 23:37 "That they have committed adultery, and blood [is] in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through [the fire], to devour [them]."

This passage should wake some up to the effect their life style has on their children. God states that the adultery of the father may well be passed on to the family. Indeed, this is easily observed within the fabric of our society today.

Ezekiel 44:22 "Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before."

Hosea 2:2; Hosea 4:2; Hosea 4:13, 14.

Matthew 5:27 "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Christ related the wondering minds eye to the wondering physical eye. If you are involved mentally with one that is not your spouse, you are involved in adultery. Christ relates this new truth to the commandment that we have already seen in our study.

One might ask the question, if a person involved in pornography comes to know the Lord does that person need to remove his mind from the pornography? I think that the overwhelming answer would be YES! If the one involved in mental adultery needs to come out of their sin when they are saved, why shouldn't we teach that the physical adulterer should set aside their adultery when they become believers?

Matthew 5:32 "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

It is of interest to me that Christ assumes that the person will remarry. This is related to the society they were operating in. The woman would have no way of living without a husband, so would naturally look for another husband.

The statement is clear - If a man puts away his wife, he causes her to commit adultery. Further, if one marries her he also commits adultery. "committeth adultery" is a present tense verb which indicates that this is an ongoing adultery, not just a one time act.

Q. What is this adultery that is committed? Is remarriage equal to one act of adultery, or is remarriage equal to moving into a relationship of ongoing adultery? It seems logical that it is ongoing rather than a one time event. There is no logical basis to relate the act of marriage to the sin of adultery. Getting married does not make you an adulterer, the intimacy of marriage to one not your spouse makes you an adulterer.

Some might suggest that remarriage = adultery = one time = this is what Christ was saying = leaving the spouse. If this is true then the application of that concept is that any man stepping out on his wife the first time commits adultery - one time act, and then following occurrences of infidelity are not adultery. The adultery was the original leaving. Believing that the adultery is a one time sin that is forgiven once, is not a logical conclusion.

Context: The Jews and no one else. This is a group of instructions given to the Jews to prepare them for life in the Kingdom. This is a Jew talking to Jews, in a Jewish setting, in Jewish times, in a Jewish law discussion, in Jewish land, with Jewish leaders about a future Jewish age, under a Jewish ruler.

Most use this verse to show that divorce is okay in the case of fornication. Most relate fornication to the sin of adultery. By the way none I've read mentions in this context that the Old Testament penalty for adultery was death.

The contrast of "some say" and "I say" is of interest as well. Christ is not teaching on what "some say", but on what He says. This whole section seems to be His expansion and explanation of some of the Old Testament concepts, that indeed had been misinterpreted by the Jews of His day.

You might easily view this verse as stating that in the case of fornication the death penalty (Deut. 22:24) is to be carried out and there is no remarriage in that case for the person is dead. This was Christ, the one that lived the law perfectly, that is speaking, and this would certainly be His interpretation I would think. It is also to be noted that Christ is speaking of the Kingdom in which He will reign with a rod of iron and judgment of wrong will be immediate. This would mean the adulterous parties will not be around long enough to remarry!

In the case of divorce for any other reason the resulting remarriage is sin.

The term fornication is discussed at times but usually is related to adultery. Some miscellaneous information on some possibilities that have been presented. bestiality: the result was to be death, Lev. 20:16; Ex. 22:19; Homosexuality: Death, Lev. 20:13; These were sins of the people that God destroyed at the hand of Israel as they entered the land, Lev. 18:22-24

There is a study of the term "fornication" at the end of this paper. Basically the term is any sexual activity that is incorrect. In these cases it refers to adultery.

Some would suggest that the death for adultery was not being practiced in this time. The method of death was stoning. Stoning was yet present in Stephen's and Paul's time. John R.W. Stott in "DIVORCE" mentions that stoning continued until 40 A.D.

Matt 14:3-14; Mark 6:14ff (Herod)

John the Baptist had told Herod that it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife. Why? It would seem that his brother was still alive and he along with his wife were breaking the law. What law? The law of God that states that the man and woman are one flesh until death. Unger in his Bible Dictionary mentions that the Herod and Herodias eloped while both were still married.

John the Baptist was confident enough in His God to accuse even the king, of adultery, yet when a pastor suggests church discipline for the same thing in this generation, he is held up to ridicule.

Matt 19:3-12 We have here some questions and answers in this text. Question: v 3 "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Christ answers, Haven't you read: Christ refers to the Gen. 2 text.

Question: v 7 Why then did Moses "command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" THIS IS A MISREPRESENTATION OF MOSES! Christ corrects the comment, and tells them that it was because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses PERMITTED, not commanded it. BUT, This was not so from the beginning. Would Christ return to the beginning if He thought there were any basis for divorce or putting away? Not logical.

The term hardness of heart is used normally of unsaved and non believing. (Pharaoh; Mk. 16:14; 3:5; Rom. 2:5.) This may indicate that divorce is allowed in the unsaved world due to their unbelief and hardness, though I'm not sure you can even build that case.

Christ then goes to the thought of adultery for those involved in a second marriage after a divorce. No man in the text would include a husband. No man should cause separation!

The reaction of the disciples was of interest. They decided it would be better not to get married. (Matt 19:10, "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." The discussion that follows makes it clear that they were talking about not getting married. Their reaction can only give evidence that they felt marriage was for life and that there was no way out.

Matthew 19:18 "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,"

The Lord repeated all of the commandments except the sabbath, thus telling us they are still valid for today. Clear and concise - no adultery.

So, how can a believer be involved in divorce/remarriage? If they are they are openly before all that know, breaking one of God's commandments in an ongoing manner.

Q. How involved can someone in this position be in the local church? A good question! Today we have men pastoring in this situation. Would we have an active murderer teaching our youth group? Would we have an active thief teaching our beginners class? Probably not, so why do we have divorced/remarried people involved in these ministries?

I once spoke to a man that had recently divorced his first wife. They had both remarried and all four were singing in the church choir - an evangelical church - there was constant division because he felt that she and her husband should not be involved in the choir. WHAT A TESTIMONY FOR CHRIST!

Mark 10:2-12 This is similar to Matt 19, except for one very curious exception. The exception

clause of fornication is not mentioned. Now if the book of Mark was written for the edification of Gentiles it would seem that the exception clause would be explained for them, rather than not mentioned, if indeed there is an exception. Is Mark just applying the thought that death is the result of fornication and there are no exceptions? It would seem entirely possible. Christ is asked by the disciples again in private and Christ states clearly there is adultery in the case of ANY divorce - remarriage situation.

Some would submit that the reader would assume the exception clause due to their knowledge of the Matthew text. This is foolishness for the reader of Mark probably did not have the Matthew text to read. Mark was writing to specific people. Indeed, since this is true, the exception clause should have been present, if there was any case for remarriage without adultery being involved!

Some suggest that his leaving it out was to emphasize the concept of no divorce that the Scriptures set forth as the best. The fact that Matthew mentions the exception is because the Lord wanted to be in keeping with the letter of Deut. 24. Mark just eliminated it to emphasize the importance of lasting marriages. This to me seems to leave Mark in the position of being somewhat dishonest with his readers.

Some thoughts: Mark is probably the first Gospel written. He was presenting the message to a gentile audience that probably would never see Matthew. If he left out the exception, then he was dishonest and misled the readers. On the other hand, if he viewed Christ's "exception" as this paper indicates, as not really an exception but death to the adulterer, then we have Mark setting forth a proper and complete picture of what Christ said.

This text is even clearer that the divorce/remarriage is a sin based on the breaking of the original marriage. "committeth adultery against her," is clearly stating that his new marriage is against the original spouse - it is adultery against her. Can we ever delegate this to a one time act? I don't know how.

The divorce is not the adultery, nor is the remarriage. It is the divorce/remarriage that leaves a person in an adulterous relationship.

Can one that is divorced/remarried before salvation receive forgiveness for their sin when they accept Christ? YES! Does the wrong situation change because of salvation? NO. Does the first marriage suddenly disappear or become null and void? NO. Does the adulterous situation disappear or become null and void? NO.

The use of tenses in this text backs up the thinking presented here that the adultery is continuing. The verb for putting away is aorist (one time action), the verb marries is aorist (one time action), and the verb commits adultery is present (continuing action).

Verse 12 continues on, "And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." Again the married is aorist while the committeth adultery is present -

continuing.

This use of the present tense would indicate that the Lord and the three Gospel writers considered the adultery as an ongoing state of affair rather than a one time act. If this is an ongoing condition then the person that is divorced/remarried is living in open ongoing sin with no thought of ceasing from their activity.

Corinthians tells us that open, ongoing, unrepentant sin is cause for the removal of the person from the assembly. Someone asked me once what I would suggest for the divorced/remarried person. He asked if I would recommend divorce. When I said that this would put them closer to the thought of marriage (one for life) and that it would remove them from sin, he stated that he thought it was foolish of me to suggest divorce because it was sin. The man did not think that in God's eyes there is no second marriage, so there is nothing wrong with going through a secular, legal "divorce."

I would suggest a question in answer to this thought of suggesting a second divorce. What would we ask a Mormon with four wives to do if we led him to the Lord? Would we welcome all four wives and the husband into the membership of the church? No, we would teach them the Bible and pray that the Holy Spirit would lead them to do the right thing. Missionaries have faced similar problems on the field over the years and find that the men with multiple wives normally separate from all wives but the first and support all wives and children involved.

Luke 16:18 "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from [her] husband committeth adultery."

Notice that Luke also fails to mention the "exception." He was not writing to Jews either, so would present the complete picture of no divorce. Matthew on the other hand was writing to Jews. He would naturally comment to them from the Jewish background which included the thought of death to the adulterer. Since their question was based on Moses, Christ had to respond to the Old Testament information.

Luke 18:20 "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother." It doesn't sound like the Lord appreciated adultery.

John 8:3 "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act."

I would like to look at this text for a moment. It might be used as a proof text to show that the Old Testament death penalty was being set aside. Not so. Christ told them that were without sin, to cast the first stone. None of the men were without the same sin, so none cast a stone. Since Christ was not a witness to the act, nor was he in the position of judge, he would not be involved

in carrying out the command to stone. The scribes and Pharisees did not deal with the woman as they should have under their legal system. They should not have taken her to Christ.

Romans 2:22 "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?"

This passage encourages the one that condemns adultery to be sure that he does not fall into the sin which he condemns. This is a strong admonishment to the pastors and leaders of our churches. Some leaders are now doing what they have always condemned.

Romans 13:9 "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if [there be] any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Again, definitely in the church age, we have a clear statement of "Thou shalt not commit adultery..." We cannot have church leadership, nor even teachers that are committed to the open breaking of God's clear commandments.

1 Corinthians 7:10, 11 mentions a woman leaving her husband. Some state this allows her to divorce him. Not so. Divorce is not mentioned - only leaving. She is told to remain unmarried.

Galatians 5:19 "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,"

Adultery is mentioned as a work of the flesh. This passage is contrasting the works of the flesh with the works of the Spirit. It might well be pictured as the works of the lost contrasted with the life of the saved. The least we can draw from this text is that the believer should not be involved in the works of the flesh. If they are in an open manner, how can we allow them to minister in the church? We should not. Verse twenty mentions, strife and heresies. These are causes for church discipline and removal from the assembly, so why would we want someone living in open adultery actively ministering in our churches?

One might wonder why the church has left its strong stand of removal of divorced/remarried people from the assembly. The thought that the father that is in adultery, brings danger to his son in the same area, may well relate to why the Church today has the same divorce rate that the lost world has. Because a few divorces were tolerated they became more acceptable, etc. Some miscellaneous references containing "adultery": James 2:11; 2 Peter 2:14; Revelation 2:22.

Question: When is adultery, adultery? Each intimacy with one not your spouse is adultery. The life style would also be a life, or living in adultery. The key is that the adultery is an ongoing thing as long as there are intimate contacts.

This is illustrated for us in the spiritual adultery of Israel. They could have ceased their adultery at any point by leaving their "other gods" and returning to God. This by the way is also an illustration of the proper remedy for divorce/remarriage adultery in our own day in the physical realm. Leave the one that it not your spouse and return to your original spouse.

Question: Is there any sin whereby it is sin for the lost and not for the saved? Only one that I can think of and that being the rejection of Christ's finished work. All other sin is universally wrong, incorrect, and unacceptable to God.

Thus if adultery is deemed sin in any manner wouldn't it seem that it is sin in all manner? If it is sin for the unsaved, then being saved does not change it to non sin.

One closing thought concerning divorce/remarriage. Spiritual adultery is leaving God for other gods. The remedy is leaving the other gods and returning to God. In marriage adultery is leaving your spouse and going to other women. The only remedy is to leave the other women and returning to your spouse.

Conclusions to the study:

1. The most you can say from Scripture is:

a. Divorce for sexual a problem was tolerated for Jews because of the hardness of hearts in the time of Moses.

b. Divorce is not commanded in any circumstance. This leaves the thought of working it out as the option.

c. The Jews are the only people involved in this idea of divorce, even if you hold to the possibility of the adultery clause in the Gospels.

d. If you reject the Matthew text being to the Jews then you must do two things.

1.) Accept that divorce in the case of adultery is allowed - NOT COMMANDED NOR ENCOURAGED!

2.) You must prove that the stoning for adultery was set aside before the time of Christ.

e. You may, from I Corinthians 7, envision a separation but not remarriage.

f. Remarriage seems to be out even if you hold to an exception clause due to the defilement problem of the Old Testament. If you marry a divorcee then the defilement is transmitted to you as well.

g. The church, and parents are to blame for our divorce problems today among Christians! We have not been teaching proper ideas of marriage, and when trouble comes we are not teaching a Biblical concept of divorce and adultery that follows.

2. Notes of interest:

a. Lev. 21:7; 22:13 show that associating with divorcees does not defile you. However, beware of their possible negative influence on your own spiritual life and marriage.

b. A priest's daughter can be divorced without bringing change to the priest's status of holiness or position.

We need to apply this to the parents of today. A pastor or layman that has a divorced daughter need not have his status in the church changed. The divorce was an adult decision by the daughter and does not affect the father.

c. Jer. 3:1-8: God put up with generations of adultery with Israel. This is not permission to people to remarry, but is an illustration of God's longsuffering. Indeed, it shows that the spouse of a longtime adulterous partner can have the grace to look toward a reconciliation.

d. If God puts a couple together how can man do anything to tear it apart? The thought is foolishness. God put it together and there is nothing short of death that can change that fact.

3. The present tense indicates the adultery is of a continuing nature and not a one time act at the time of the remarriage. Matt 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18.

Some say these usages are a special use of the present tense which means that it was a one time adultery. I have asked several Greek scholars if there was a grammatical basis for saying this, and they said there is not.

4. The idea of the adulterous woman in John 8 is of interest. She was continuing in sin and was told to go and sin no more. She was forgiven of the past sin, but told to stop.

5. If the adultery of the divorcee is viewed as a one time sin, then all succeeding sexual relations are of no consequence. This seems to be illogical. The person that is married and has activity outside of his marriage is considered to be in adultery at each occurrence. Adultery is an intimate relation of a married person with a person not their spouse!

6. Some suggest that if a person was divorced and remarried before they were saved that they are not held accountable for what they did before they were saved. Let's think about that for a moment. If you murdered before you were saved are you not still a murderer after you are saved. Are you not liable for all consequences of the murder before you were saved? Salvation does not change our marital status nor does it negate the consequences of past sins.

7. Some ask what the person is to do. They suggest that a second divorce is wrong. The second divorce would be correcting the sin of the remarriage and is the only logical answer to the situation.

Indeed, is the second divorce a wrong. There is no second marriage in God's eyes, so the second divorce would be a legal tool to return to the situation that God wants them in. One that is divorced and remarried before salvation has this option open to them and should consider it. Yes, it would be very difficult! Yes, there would be hardship. But the Scriptures mention the consequences and hard ship that follows our sins!

The business man that is saved cannot just break contracts on bad deals because he becomes a Christian. The alcoholic that is saved is forgiven, but he has a life long problem facing alcoholism!

8. The problem we have today is twofold.

a. We have divorcees and people that have remarried in our churches! We must deal with these people as believers that need to be ministered to. We must attempt to minister to their needs. We do not have to condone their past actions, nor do we set aside the clear teaching of Scripture just to use them in the church. Timothy's clear command from Paul was that the elders were to be one woman type men, and that does not allow for divorcees and remarrieds.

b. The second problem is that we still aren't teaching our children and church people what proper marriage is, nor are we speaking out against divorce and remarriage.

We must minister the Word and allow people to be confronted with it even if they don't like it. God has spoken - that is what they will have to dislike!

9. How do we handle the already divorced and remarried?

a. Do not allow them to condemn themselves. God still loves them! Teach them the proper principles of marriage/divorce and allow the Holy Spirit to lead them to the correct conclusion.

b. Help them to understand that any restriction on their usability is not the leadership's fault but that it is the leaders responsibility from the Word.

c. Remember Abraham, David, Solomon and others. Bigamy is in the end, adultery and they were used greatly by God, however they did not have the indwelling Spirit of God as we do. Their short comings are more understandable. We will be held to a higher accountability due to our further revelation and the Holy Spirit's ministry to us.

10. It is a very hard subject for our day. There are multitudes of situations that are seen by some to be "special" or "different," but the fact remains that the Scriptures have made some very

specific demands of the believer. It is our responsibility to look at the Scriptures and then in light of them, view every situation.

11. Divorce is not the best course, nor is it desired, but may be the legal protection a spouse needs to protect themselves from high bills and problems. The divorce in this case is only a legal tool and cannot be viewed as changing the marriage bonds in any way. God has set the standard, not man.

The most liberal view that has any basis in scripture would be that divorce and remarriage is okay in view of adultery. Even if you ignored the above pages of proof against that position and believed it was okay, then you are still faced with the key thought of God waiting generations for his people to return from their adultery (That by the way is idolatry or leaving God for other gods.) and always desiring to have them come back to Him.

12. I Cor. 6:9-10 is a verse to consider.

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

Just how does this relate to our problem? A reading of vss. 9-11 will show that Paul is listing types of unsaved people. He uses this to contrast the proper living of the believer, or at least the hoped for living of the believer.

13. Perhaps some questions and answers would help to put some of this information into perspective.

Question: What is adultery? Adultery is a married person having relations with other than their spouse. In our society a single person having relations with a married person would also be considered in adultery, I would suspect, however the single person, Biblically, would probably be guilty of fornication.

Question: When is adultery adultery? Every time the sexual relations occur.

Question: Is adultery pre-salvation forgiven after the person is saved? Yes.

Question: Is adultery post-salvation forgiven because of the pre-salvation forgiveness? No. This sin can, and will be forgiven any time the person uses I John 1:9. Any blanket forgiveness post-salvation is not a Scriptural concept.

Question: How can adultery be considered as a one time act in the remarriage situation, but not continuing in the case of a man cheating on His wife? It cannot. Both MUST be the same. Both are ongoing.

Question: Can a continuing sin which stems from a pre-salvation remarriage be forgiven once for all because of the cross? No.

Question: Does not everything belong under the blood? This question is of recent consideration. I have not seen, read or heard it until recent years.

All sins - pre and post salvation - are or can be forgiven, however on a different basis. Pre-salvation sin is automatic in the acceptance/redemption process. Post-salvation sin is cared for only as the person seeks forgiveness, and attempts to rectify their improper action. If post-salvation sin were automatically cared for then license would be the result in our lives.

Question: Is there any indication that adultery is not sin each time sexual relations occur? No. Adultery of the mind is a one time act (aorist tense), yet it can be repeated and would be adultery each time as would actual relations.

Question: Is there a difference between continuing in the same sin week after week and being a person that has a different sin each week? Are not both people the same - in sin?

In God's eyes, yes, sin is sin, however there is a difference and I believe that God views the two people differently. The one that continues in the same sin is not changing as the idea of repentance and confession imply. The person that is in different types of sin is a person that deals with this week's sin and puts it behind them. When they find themselves in another sin they need to deal with it. This person is progressing in their spiritual life, whereas the other person is continuing in their sin with no attempt to correct their lives.

Question: If I am in a divorce/remarried situation, what are my alternatives?

1. Abstinence: This should be on the basis of mutual consent according to I Corinthians 7:5, however this will be a very hard alternative. This may sound terrible, and it would be a serious strain on the relationship, however many couples have continued through their life in marriages where one partner was unable to have sexual relations due to physical limitations.
2. If the remarriage has not yet occurred, then wait until the first spouse is dead. Many people that have found themselves divorced by their spouse have remained single until the spouse died.
3. Separation or divorce. This would be the step which corrected the problem. Again, a very hard alternative.
4. If you find yourself divorced, then do not allow yourself to enter into friendships that might

lead to a desire to get married.

5. Continue in your present situation. This is not a recommendation, but is a very real solution of many believers around the world. It can be observed that God continues to use the divorced/remarried person. The question is, just how much more the Lord could use them if they were not in this situation.

One item of information that has not been discussed in this paper and that I have never heard brought into the divorce/remarriage discussion is the item of vows. The wedding vows are promises that the people make to one another before man and God. A brief word study in the Old Testament concerning vows and God's view of them would be good for anyone considering divorce.

This paper is not designed to give all the answers to all the questions that might arise in the readers mind. It is, I trust an honest look at the Scripture as it relates to the topic.

To reject the conclusions of this paper cannot be a simple mental rejection of the conclusions. To reject you must find different conclusions based on the texts given. You must not fall into the temptation to spiritualize or allegorize. We believe in literal, plain, easy interpretation of Scripture and must practice it in ALL studies we do in the Word.

You must deal with the present tense verbs that the Gospel writers use. You must deal with the Malachi passage that tells us that God hates divorce and treachery. You must deal with the teaching of the Lord concerning the subject.

#### MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION ON RELATED WORDS:

##### ADULTERY

The Greek word "moichos" is the noun form of the word. It means according to Vine, "...denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another..." "moichalis" is the term for the woman, "an adulteress" according to Vine. ("moicheia" is the adjective form, "moichao" and "moicheuo" are the verb forms.) See complete word study in divorce/remarriage file.

##### FORNICATION

We need to consider for a moment the thought of fornication in the Gospels. Most, I have read and heard consider this to be adultery within the marriage. The Greek words are as follows: Noun forms, "porneia" and " pornos", Verb forms, "porneuo" and "ekporneuo."

Vine on the word:

"pornia": "...of illicit sexual intercourse...." It is also used metaphorically of idolatry. Vine

mentions that it includes adultery but can be distinguished from adultery. (Matt 15:19)

" pornos": "...denotes a man who indulges in fornication, a fornicator...."

" poneuo": "...to commit fornication...."

" ekporneuo": "...a strengthened form of No. I...to give oneself up to fornication, implying excessive indulgence...."

So fornication can be adultery, but may be other things as well.

Matt 15:19 states, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" The text goes on to state "These are the things which defile a man..." Not an activity that a believer ought to be involved in once, much less on an ongoing basis.

Adultery in the Matthew text is the Greek word " moicheia."

Fornication in the Matthew text is the Greek word " porneia."

References that contain the term with some comments: 2 Chronicles 21:11; Isaiah 23:17; Ezekiel 16:29; Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9; John 8:41; Acts 15:20; Acts 15:29; Acts 21:25; Romans 1:29; Rom. 7:2-3 This is an illustration of the persons relation to the law. Under the law, it has dominion over you for life. Thus in marriage the vow has dominion over you all your life. Paul's clear statement is that the person that remarries while the spouse lives is an adulterer! His other clear statement is that death breaks that bond and that the person is free to remarry. In essence, because Christ died and fulfilled the law we are free to take Christ since the old bonds and dominion of the law are broken; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:13; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 7:2; I Cor. 7:10ff This is a series of orders. vs 10 the wife shouldn't leave husband/vs 11 the wife if leaves remains unmarried or reconciles/the husband is not to send her away/vs 15 if there is an unbelieving mate that leaves then let them go but live in peace. They are free from the need to keep the marriage together. Ezra 10 may relate to this. Vs. 39 the wife is bound to the husband as long as he is alive/free to marry when he dies --"IN THE LORD"! HOWEVER, Paul mentions she may be happier alone and not remarried. It is of interest that this may have been written before Matt. If this is true then was Paul not very remiss in not mentioning the exception clause if indeed it exists? The term bondage is never used in relation to divorce in the New Testament. Remarriage in the case of abandonment is not found in this text. The text is clear that marriage is for life; 1 Corinthians 10:8; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Eph. 5:21-33 The marriage relationship is used to illustrate the relationship of Christ to the church. If the marriage bond is separable then the bond between Christ the head and the church His body is also separable and this is unacceptable. Both bonds are permanent; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Jude 1:7; Revelation 2:14; Revelation 2:20; Revelation 9:21; Revelation 14:8; Revelation 17:2; Revelation 17:4; Revelation 18:3; Revelation 18:9; Revelation 19:2.

The term is not well defined by the passages. The fact that it is used allegorically of nations or kings fornicating with the great whore could lead us to believe that it is illicit relations, but whether it is among singles, or among a married and an unknown, is not clear.

It would seem easiest to understand the word to refer to literally, any improper sexual activity, and allegorically any improper relationship with those you should not be having relationships with.

Since the Gospel texts are in the context of married partners and new married partners, it would seem that fornication is adultery. Adultery would cover any improper activity outside of the marriage, which also fits into the definition and usage of fornication.

Two other Greek words that need to be mentioned:

Both of these terms are related to divorce. "apoluo" which is a term used in secular Greek for dismissal from the army, or from jail. It also is used of setting a debtor free. (From Wayne A. Detzler's book, "NEW TESTAMENT WORDS IN TODAY'S LANGUAGE"; Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986, p 124.) This is the term translated "put away" in the Gospels.

"apostasion" which is used of the bill of divorcement. The Septuigent writers used this tern to translate the word in Deut. 24:3. This is used in Matt 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4. This is also the term the Septuigent writers used in Jer. 3:8 for bill of divorcement.

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M00150

FIRST CHURCH

OF THE

MOST NORMAL

SANCTIFIED

BELIEVERS

IN THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA, REFORMED

REVITALIZED, REORGANIZED AND

MOST REVERENT BAPTIST  
CONGREGATIONAL  
SOUTHERN INDEPENDENT  
EIGHTH DAY, LATEST DAY, CHURCH  
OF THE ASSUMPTION WHICH  
CLARIFIES ALL DOUBT IN OUR  
SANITY CHAPEL  
WE MEET BUY YEARLY AT THE  
FIRST FULL MOON AFTER  
THE NEW YEAR IN THE  
NEAREST WATER WORLD.  
PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR  
SERVICES.

(please provide your own suit)

APPLICATION FOR A NO WHERE MINISTRY THAT PAYS LITTLE AND LEADS TO  
DISCOURAGEMENT AND DESPAIR.

We are an equal discriminatory organization, biased in every way, open only to men. (Wives are  
not accepted/divorce may be the option for you.)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(optional)

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(if you have one/if homeless, list where you sleep)

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(small towns don't interest us so lie if you need to)

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(confused won't be accepted)

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(we can't figure out where they got that name for the post office)

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(e.g. law, promise, etc.)

QUALIFICATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(e.g. tale bearing, back biter, etc.)

SCHOOLS AVOIDED: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(list them all - the more the better)

EXPERIENCE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(list emotional ones only - none of that work stuff)

DEGREES: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(list this in Celsius, please)

PAST POSITIONS: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(you know, prone, standing, etc.)

MEDICAL HISTORY: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(list all institutions where you have lived)

FAMILY SITUATION: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(divorcees, abusers etc. given priority)

ACHIEVEMENTS: \_\_\_ .

AFFILIATIONS: (check those appropriate)

ACLU DEMOCRATIC PARTY PEROT FOR PRESIDENT

(if none of the above apply, disregard this application.)

POSITION DESIRED: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(e.g. janitor [this requires a doctorate/10  
years experience], parking attendant)

REFERENCES: Please include one personal reference from each of the following categories:

PSYCHOLOGIST

PSYCHIATRIST

HOMELESS SHELTER DIRECTOR

AA DIRECTOR

I, by signing this application, do solemnly swear that all information is true, to the best of my beleaguered memory, caused by my dire frustration with the system within which I am forced to operate, even though I detest that system, and argue against it, at every opportunity. I further solemnly swear that I will disclose all hidden information as I may be forced to disclose in further investigations.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(please print, we haven't learned cursing yet)

WITNESS ONE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS TWO: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS THREE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS FOUR: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS FIVE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS SIX: \_\_\_\_\_ .

WITNESS SEVEN: \_\_\_\_\_ .

(Siamese twins will be counted as one signature)

NOTARY SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

GOVERNOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ .

Please include the following:

Financial statement (include the 1970-90 tax returns).

Copies of all transcripts.

Letters of reference from five bankers, and three stock brokers.

Statement of your net worth.

Proof that you are not a savings and loan officer.

Used car sales contracts. (Include lemons)

Rental contracts for the previous 15 years.

Newspaper subscriptions.

Parking ticket stubs.

McDonald gift certificates. (we are hungry)

Cash - always accepted. We do not take Visa - well we'd use your card.

Upon receipt of this application we will consider all of your qualifications carefully. If we feel that you are totally corrupt in all your manners, in accordance with Gal. 5:19-21, we will consider you to mislead our flock. We want you to know, however, that we will be considering 35 to 40 candidates in the first wave of prospects. All candidates are expected to provide their own transportation and housing. Please bring your own microscope if you desire to inspect the pay package.

Since the pay package is so small, we allow our pastor to go on deputation to raise support. We allow 25 years for this purpose. More time may be allowed if needed. If you would rather work outside the church, this would be possible. We feel that you should work no more than 75 hours outside the church.

PLEASE INCLUDE ONE VIDEO TAPE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

One sermon

One funeral

One pot luck

One wedding (Indoor preferred)

One fight with your wife

One counseling session

One Sunday School Class

Include any other information that you deem unnecessary.

If you have any further questions, please contact our ladies aide society, and they will be glad to tie things up for you.

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m00200

Concerning how to tell between the mysteries of the kingdom and the mystery that is now the church.

Mysteries of the kingdom are contained in Matt 13. Since Matt 12 records the rejection of the Messiah (12:24), I would think that the following chapter is concerning things to come. The fact that the Jews were not to understand these things would indicate this. (casual listeners - I'm sure the disciples had some idea of what Christ was speaking of {matt 13:51 states this} - at least as the church began to develop)

The church actually is not a new deal for God - it is in fact an extension of the kingdom - an unseen unknown part of the kingdom. The church is a portion of the eternal time line called God's plan. It is not a deviation from that line - it is an integrated part of it.

God is dealing through all of time with the kingdom in one form or another. The church is the Kingdom in mystery form - unknown till it came about.

The gospels are hard to interpret properly. Basically if you hold that Matt. 1-12 is for the Millennial kingdom that Christ was offering and 13 to the end as the church age you probably will do well.

A good harmony of the gospels then will let you see where the other gospels fall within this guideline.

Another good guide to what is kingdom and what is church is the fact that the Epistles and later Acts are definitely church so if something in these books is mentioned in the gospels, you can be sure that it is for the church age.

In interpreting the gospels you need to not interpret if you don't understand where it fits. Time, further study and commentaries may help. Many people take all of the gospels for today - dangerous. All are for application but not all are for today.

Topic 07900 of my systematic theology has more on interpretation of the gospels.

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m00250

TITLE: TO QUOTE A FEW CHILDREN I'VE HEARD, "MINE!"

OUTLINE:

I. BASIS OF THE WORK

II. DESIRE OF THE WORK

III. NATURE OF THE WORK

Several years ago we took our daughter and grand daughter to Nebraska to see some relatives of Faith's. We had noticed and mentioned earlier that our grand daughter had not used the "mine!" word in her short little life.

When we arrived at our relatives, it was not long before grand daughter and the relatives little children began playing together. The children of the relatives were very grabby, picky, noisy, and selfish. It was about five minutes before our grand daughter used that term "MINE!" for the first time.

She learned very quickly that to keep in that house, is to holler MINE!

In our text this \_\_\_\_\_ we find that church leaders are to have a prerequisite, even before they are examined to see if they are qualified.

Let us turn to I Timothy 3:1.

1 "This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

2 "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

3 "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

4 "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

6 "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Notice in that first verse that the church leader is to desire the office that he holds. We want to delve into this idea of desiring the office of elder this \_\_\_\_\_ .

"There is a story about a proud young man who came to Socrates asking for knowledge. He walked up to the muscular philosopher and said, O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge. Socrates recognized a pompous numbskull when he saw one. He led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, What do you want? Knowledge, O wise Socrates, said the young man with a smile. Socrates put his strong hands on the man's shoulders and pushed him under. Thirty seconds later Socrates let him up. What do you want? he asked again. Wisdom, the young man sputtered, O great and wise Socrates. Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed, thirty-five. Forty. Socrates let him up. The man was gasping. What do you want, young man? Between heavy, heaving breaths the fellow wheezed, Knowledge, O wise and wonderful... Socrates jammed him under again Forty seconds passed. Fifty. What do you want? Air! he screeched. I need air! When you want knowledge as you have just wanted air, then you will have knowledge." (M. Littleton in Moody Monthly, June, 1989, p. 29)

The church leader should be able to look at his position and say, "MINE!".

Now, understand what I am saying. I am not saying that church leaders are to act like little children!

I am saying however, that a man should not be in church leadership unless he has considered the ramifications of this verse.

Once he is convinced in his own heart and mind that he desires the office, he should then be examined to see if he is qualified according to the rest of the text as well as the list in Titus.

You may be saying to yourself why consider the desire of an elder. I personally have not heard a message on the subject, and as I went looking for commentary information, I discovered that many do not discuss the thought when commenting on this passage. I want to comment on it in this study because to me it is a new problem facing the church. In years past I think most people that were in office were there because they enjoyed that ministry, but I'm not sure all officers today are there because of a desire to serve.

Many are the men that I have run across in positions in the church that are qualified, but who are not totally committed to their work and ministry. These men are doing a good work and are sincere in their effort, however they are not the men that God wants in that position - they don't desire the work. God will call men to the work and give them the desire to fulfill that position by prayer and the Word not by being voted in.

I have also come in contact with men that desire to lead the church and do some of the preaching, but are not comfortable with the other aspects of today's concept of pastoring. These men are not serving in the position that they should because of their churches traditional concept of pastoring. They have the desire but not the opportunity.

It is of interest that God might well call a man and give him the desire, long before he is qualified. That would indicate that training and discipleship are required in some cases. There might also be a man that has been in a church for many years, highly qualified, and is called later in life that is fully qualified.

The text is not limiting to a set pattern, but rather is limiting to a set list of qualifications. A call, a desire, and a life that is fitting the office that is desired.

We need also to point out that not all men should desire the office. There are more that will not desire it than those who do. God only needs a few to oversee the flock. You might say that God is like the Marines, He needs a few good men.

We want to take a look at the terms that are used in this verse, and then we will look at the implications of the text.

#### WORD STUDY:

"This [is] a true" This term is closely related to the word that is normally translated faith.

This term is used of someone that shows themselves faithful in business transaction/is used of a person that follows orders/is used of person that is worthy of trust/is used of a person that can be relied upon. It is also used of God being faithful (I Cor. 10.13; II Cor. 1.18).

The term is used of a person having faith in Christ's resurrection and His Messiahship. "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke 7:50) It is the term that Luke

used of Stephen in Acts 6.8, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."

Barnes mentions of the word, "...means assuredly true; it was that which might be depended on, or on which reliance might be placed. (Barnes p 122)

"saying" This is the same word that is used to describe Christ as the Word, Logos. It is also the same word that is used to describe God's Word the Bible. It has the idea of something that is spoken or said. It seems to be a general term which takes on special meaning when related to Christ and/or the Bible.

A Greek philosopher named Heraclitus first used the term Logos around 600 B.C. to designate the divine reason or plan which coordinates a changing universe. This word was well suited to John's purpose in John 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1) (Online Bible)

"If a man" The term seems to indicate that any and all men are open to have this desire, yet only those so burdened, gifted and called would have the desire. If any man desires, is the idea. This presupposes salvation - the man must be a believer.

"desire" The Online Bible states: "to stretch oneself out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something" They also list as a usage, "to give oneself up to the love of money" Picture a greedy person - their desire for money - the man desiring to be a church leader should be so desirous.

Vinzant vol. 3 mentions "Originally to stretch forth, to reach after. Here it implies not only desiring but seeking after. The word implies eagerness...."

The term is a verb and the construction indicates continuing action that the person has involved himself in. He is actively desiring.

I Tim 6.10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." The term coveted is the term we are looking at.

Heb 11.16 "But now they desire a better [country], that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

"the office of a bishop" This seems to indicate the office or name of the position that is desired. (Lu. 19.44; Acts 1.20; I Tim. 3.1; I Pet. 2.12.) The term elder or shepherd pictures the ministry of the one in that office.

The idea of investigation and inspection seen in the term. These terms are used in the thought

that as a church leader, the person would inspect the church constantly and determine what needs to be done and set into motion the work to accomplish this.

The shepherd does this constantly in the field with the sheep.

"he desireth" The idea seems to be to long for, or to desire. Since the word is translated lust and covet also, we must assume that this longing or desire is quite strong, indeed, strong enough I assume, to move the person to act upon that desire by seeking the office.

Christ used this word for a man's lust for a woman in Matt 5.28.

Luke used the term to describe the desire of a hungry beggar wanting the crumbs from the rich man's table: "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." (Luke 16:21)

"a good" There are many terms listed in the Online Bible to describe this term. Beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, precious, admirable and magnificent, to list some.

It is used of good works, of good fruit, good ground etc., indicating that this work that is desired is a GOOD DEAL. Something quite acceptable and good.

"work" This is a word that simply means that which occupies our time as we do things. Work normally indicates effort and exertion.

It is used of the works that believers have done which will be tried by fire at the judgment seat of Christ. I Cor. 3.13-15

"good work" might also be translated a good office, or good ministry. Paul is telling Timothy to find men that desire to be involved in the oversight of believers. He is then to look at their overall character and find if they qualify according to the list that is set forth in the coming verses.

The Darby version seems to put it quite nicely: DBY 1. "The word [is] faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, he desires a good work."

To put it into the thought of our word study you might try this. "It is true to say, if a man really desires to oversee the church, he is seeking a good ministry." (sld)

"Faithful is the saying" in the King James indicates that this is just a saying that is true. The Darby indicates that this is the Word of God that is faithful. A saying in the Word elsewhere dealing with this subject or the Word itself. Which case is correct? If we had a passage in the Old Testament or writings of the New Testament that predated I Timothy, we could suggest that the Darby translation was correct. If not then the King James would be correct.

The literal translation of the verse states, "Faithful is the word" which does not indicate if it is just a saying or The Word. I do not find any previous reference to a person desiring the oversight of believers. There are a few references which mention that God is in the business of overseeing His people - Jer. 31.28; 44.27 for example. Luke 2.8 mentions of shepherds, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." This illustrates our text. A shepherd desires to oversee the flock as does a church leader. However, no ref. to indicate previous mention of men desiring to oversee.

I think the King James is probably the closer to what Paul had in mind. I really do not see any indication that the Bible was in his mind.

## I. BASIS OF THE WORK

The true saying is that if you desire the work, you desire a good work. Now, if there is any other desire, or if there is no desire, then the saying is not true of you.

The desire is for the work and nothing else! If there is anything else involved then you no longer have a true description of yourself.

Let's consider some of the possible wrong desires. I would like to just list three possibles and read a verse for each.

### IN THE NEGATIVE:

A. Not for money - I Tim 3.3, "Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;"

Many are the stories that I could tell you of pastors that are more interested in the "pay package" than they are in God leading them into or out of a work.

Let one account suffice. One of our chapel speakers was a camp director in Montana. He told us of a pastor that had told him that he was changing churches because he needed more money. Up front - that is no reason to change churches. The camp director asked the pastor how much he was getting at his present church. The pastor replied, "Only \$40,000."

B. Not for pride - I Tim 3.7, "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Most feel that the snare of the devil was his pride.

C. Not for self - I John 2.15-17,

15 "Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 "For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

IN THE POSITIVE:

I would like to submit three references and just list some of the positive aspects of this work.

A. THE CARING: Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." WATCHING AND FEEDING.

This work is done for the Holy Spirit because it is done at his command and call. I don't know about you, but I've been in a number of meetings where people were almost railroaded into office by a congregation that needed someone to fill a position. This is not the desire of the Lord.

It relates to the oversight of the church.

It relates to the spiritual feeding of the people of that church.

It is done for those that Christ died for.

It is of note to me that in this great passage, given to the elders of the churches there is no mention of all the things that we feel a pastor is to do. Visitation, marriages, mowing, cleaning, funerals, community projects etc. Not that these things are bad, but they are not a Biblical job description for a pastor.

The pastor is to be involved in feeding and watching for the people.

B. THE PREPARING: Eph. 4.11-16

11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

13 "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 "That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every

wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

15 "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ:

16 "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Note: Christ = Head Leadership of the body.

For the perfecting of the saints.

For the edification of the saints.

For the protection of the saints

For body increase.

For the work of the ministry. (Both the ministers and saints.)

C. THE SENDING: II Cor. 5.18,19; Matt. 28.18-20; Acts 1.8

I would like to read the II Cor. passage. The others are probably familiar to you - if not take time to read them later.

18 "And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

We are to be spreading the message of reconciliation to the world.

**THAT IS MISSIONS!**

All too often our leaders teach the people, and maybe even care for the people, but few churches send their people. The number of mission minded churches is on the drastic decrease today.

When on deputation, I ran into a church in Washington that had sent out over fifteen couples to the mission field. That is a church that takes time to teach its people about the Lord's command to go.

We want to move on now to the desire of the work.

## II. DESIRE OF THE WORK

The man that is spoken of in this text is one that is somewhat consumed by what he wants to do.

I am reminded of people that I have seen that are involved in car racing. Their every moment is geared toward the next race and getting the car ready for that race.

Their money quite often is committed to the car, their time is committed to the car, their thought life is committed to the car and all else that they have is committed to the car.

So, the man that desires to oversee the church should commit himself, his time, his resources and his effort to doing the work of God.

If he is still in the seeking stage of his desire and not qualified then all should be committed to assuring that his life measures up to the standard that follows in I Timothy.

The man should want to do it.

The man should want to do it well.

The man should want to do it well for Christ.

The man should want to do it well for Christ only.

His total focus should be on the work that he is attempting to do for Christ and Christ alone. The work is not for his benefit, but for the benefit of Christ and Christ's people.

And now the nature of the work. A GOOD WORK. Not one that brings shame or division to the church or Christ. A GOOD WORK!

## III. NATURE OF THE WORK

A. It should be a work that glorifies God. There is no other logical reason to labor for God.

"[Even] every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." (Isaiah 43:7)

B. It should be a work that increases Christ's body.

The whole concept of the Body of Christ is the growth, maturing and the working together of the members.

If we are afraid of growth in our churches, we are afraid of what God wants. This is not uncommon today. Many are afraid their apple cart will be bothered, thus don't like the thought of growth.

We were in a church that was interviewing a candidate. The man wanted to do some new things to see if he could bring about some growth in the very stagnant church. The people became nervous and asked all kinds of questions about why he wanted growth etc. They did not call the man. It was of interest to us that the man they called had similar ideas about growth but didn't tell them about his ideas. They called him and he brought about growth in the church. GOD WILL HAVE HIS WAY, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

The whole idea of evangelism is growth in case you haven't noticed. If we are leading people to Christ, then the body will be growing.

By the way, this is the problem today. We aren't leading people to Christ fast enough to replace those that the Lord takes home. We either need to get out and begin evangelizing or ask the Lord to let the Christians live longer.

C. It should be a work that flows from the Holy Spirit.

Any labor that is not directed by the Holy Spirit,

any labor that is not empowered by the Holy Spirit,

any labor that is not centered in the Holy Spirit cannot be a work that is from God.

As a church there should be much prayer concerning all facets of the ministry. As church leadership meets to plan the future of the church, prayer should be the prime force behind their action.

We ought not move without orders from God.

APPLICATION:

1. FOR THE CHURCH LEADERS:

Do you leaders measure up? I see few churches holding leaders to this standard in I Tim. three.

I have seen a few men of this caliber in my life. I met one a number of years ago. He was a very busy man in his own life, yet he desired to do the work of the Lord. He was working long hours at work and yet he spent many hours in church work.

He was not interested in glory or recognition, indeed, oft times he would do things and the pastor

would take the credit - it didn't matter to the man.

He was involved in ushering, he was a board member, he was involved in the missions committee, he was involved in visitation, and he was involved in other areas of the churches ministry.

He desired the work and he did it when given the opportunity.

## 2. FOR THE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

It is your responsibility to hold your church leaders to this standard.

NOT YOUR STANDARD,

NOT A PAST STANDARD,

NOT A FALSE STANDARD,

BUT GOD'S STANDARD!

In closing I would like to read four verses which show the balance of leadership in the church. We have Christ the Head, we have the leaders, and we have the people. There should be a balance between the three.

Acts 20.28 mentions the ministry of the overseer as well as Christ the provider of salvation.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

I Timothy 3.1 mentions that the overseer should desire to do the work that he is entrusted with, and then the following verses tell us of his qualifications.

"This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

Heb. 13.7 mentions that teaching is part of their ministry, as well as living a good example before man.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation."

Heb. 13.17 tells the congregation that they are to obey the overseer. The congregation is also to submit to the overseer. The clear teaching of this verse is that the overseer must give account of his sheep.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you."

I might be quick to point out that these last two verses do not teach that the pastor is in total power, and that he makes all decisions for the church. This is a false line of thinking that is being spread through the midwest by a Bible College in Missouri.

Illustration: We started going to a church that as we found out later had no board, the pastor controlled all aspects of the church's life and program. He had come in and eliminated the board over time and was in total control of the church. His belief was that the people were there to do his bidding and he was to tell them what to do. If they did not follow him they were standing against the Lord's anointed.

Thus, we see that Christ is the provider of our salvation and head of the church. He directs the church via prayer through all the saints. The overseers are to set the tone of the church for the congregation, and the congregation is to obey and submit to the ministry of the overseer.

There is one item that has not been covered. Who makes sure that the overseer lives up to the qualifications? This should be the responsibility of all believers in that church. I assume that the elders will do much of the work with the person desiring the position, but the congregation should also be involved. They are the people that know the candidate the best.

So, we come to the end. The man that desires to be an elder, is to desire that ministry with a Godly desire. The congregation in turn with, and through the present elders will assure that the man is qualified according to God's standard.

Before I close, I must warn you. There is a danger in what I have told you. **IF YOU HOLD YOUR CHURCH LEADERS TO THIS STANDARD, THEY ONE DAY WILL, AS THEY SHOULD, HOLD YOU TO THE SAME STANDARD.** All except one of the qualifications for the elder are restated elsewhere in Scripture for all believers. The "apt to teach" is not for all believers.

In our churches, we should be holding the leaders to this standard, and they should be holding us to the same standard. **THINK OF IT - church purity in action!**

When in Bible College in Denver we knew a graduate student that was pastoring a church, was a student and was working near full time in the electronics industry.

He was quite busy in his life and was doing quite well in school, and the church he was pastoring was growing.

They had two children but one had been in poor health. They finally found a specialist that told

them that the child had a serious long term expensive problem. The couple had no health insurance and did not know what to do. The man asked the student body to pray for his family.

A few days later the man's boss called him in and asked him to transfer to a larger facility out of state, as management. It would include all moving expenses, a very large increase in salary and full benefits with the company, which included complete health insurance.

You see the dilemma. Leave the pastorate of the church and have all the financial security they needed and move up the corporate ladder or pass up a good promotion and face the thousands of dollars in upcoming medical expenses.

He again asked the student body to pray. In a few days he announced that he had decided that the pastorate was much more important to him, his family and His Lord, and that he had already turned the employer down.

That man desired the office of bishop.

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m00300

TITLE: ONE ANOTHER PEOPLE

We attended a large church for a number of years. We found that for the most part people wanted their own little world to remain intact with no invasion of privacy by other church people.

They would have socials and services, but very little contact outside of the church structure.

They did little with one another.

They did little for one another.

They did little for new comers, over and above surface welcome and that wasn't always forthcoming.

They were what I call a "me" church.

They oriented themselves around "me" and "my" little world.

The Scripture contrasts this attitude with a very different type of people.

Not "me" people, but one another people. I want to talk in this study about the one another people of Scripture. By the way the one another people of the Bible are supposed to be you and I.

There are a number of Scripture references that refer to different things that we as believers are to

do and be to "ONE ANOTHER."

Some recently have referred to this teaching as the fact that we are to be "ONE ANOTHER PEOPLE!" We are to be a special people for the Lord.

One of the most prominent items that the Lord Himself, when He was on earth emphasized, was the love that we were to have for the brethren.

I am not, nor never will be one that emphasizes the "LOVE OF GOD" over other attributes or qualities.

It is very true that Love is a great part of God, yet in our world and society I think that we have much to tell the lost world before we can tell them with understanding of God's love.

In this study we will take a brief look at the "ONE ANOTHER" texts and see if we can't find something that we aren't doing for one another that we can put to work in our lives.

The most prominent thing that we are to do has already been mentioned. We are to LOVE ONE ANOTHER!

There are six verses that are directly telling us to love one another and a seventh that is very close to it.

A passage that I like is Jn 15.12-14 - READ IT.

If I do as Christ requests, I can be His friend! Chew on that this week.

LOVE:

Ro. 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another:"

Love in honor prefers one another:

Is it easy to prefer that person that is not really lovely or personable? No, and no one would try to make us believe it is, Yet, the Lord through Paul tells us to do it. By loving that person - yes we can do right by them - Yes, we can prefer them.

Ro. 13:8, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Love fulfills the law: THE LAW SAYS DON'T! THE LOVE SAYS I WON'T!

I saw a hat the other day that spoke to the thought of lending money. It read something like this, "I gave up loaning money - it broke up too many friendships."

Owe nothing except to love. Love you will always owe as long as you draw breath.

Ga 5:13, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

Love serves even when we don't have to:

I have the liberty as a believer to do as I please! I also have the liberty as a believer to love the brethren and serve them.

What are some ways that we can serve each other?

Helping with the church clean up, be it the big jobs or the monthly cleaning or maybe even just cleaning up after yourself and/or your class when you are finished.

The church leadership and those that work around the church are really serving. Making the bulletin, playing the piano, picking up the sanctuary, teaching a class, etc.

Helping outside the church. Fix up around an old person's home. Giving rides - etc.

I Thes. 3:12, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you,"

Love increases and abounds: TO ONE ANOTHER AND! TOWARD ALL MEN!

We are to abound in our love to others!

The church should be a thanksgiving of love all the time!

A Christian neighbor knew we had purchased a new Japanese car. She said to Faith, "I don't have respect for anyone that buys anything from the Japs."

1. She was showing a lack of love for us - her neighbors in talking that way.
2. She certainly had some bigotry problem.
3. She didn't realize it was built in Tennessee by Americans.
4. She didn't realize it is the only car we could afford.

5. She didn't realize we purposely bought "American" in 81 and drove loaner cars more than our own the first three months.

6. Her gravest error was speaking ill of a nation of God's creatures. The Japanese are made of the same human thread that runs back to Adam as she.

I Thes. 4:9, "But, as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

Love is natural if we walk with God. It is not something someone should be preaching about constantly trying to get us to do but a natural outgrowth of our walk with God.

If we would think of that for a moment we would have known it. We talk of the fact that we are to allow God to live His life out and through us. If God is love then surely as He lives through us we will naturally love!

Heb 10:24, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."

Love provokes others to love and good works. When is the last time someone provoked you to GOOD WORKS? Isn't it usually that someone provokes you to not so nice works of the mind?

I Pet. 3:8-9 "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous," "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, blessing, knowing that ye are called to this, that ye should inherit a blessing."

Love is of one mind.

Now we know what is missing in a church that is having problems and strife.

Love as brethren indicates that we should love as if we were truly brothers in blood. Indeed, in a sense we are, for it is because of Christ's blood that we are called brethren and are adopted by the Father, etc.

Love has pity.

I have been very concerned at the callousness of the American public to tragedy. We have had the news media in the middle of some of these disasters and we have little feeling for the lives that are lost nor for the souls that may have slipped into hell.

During one of the latest tragedies they mentioned the thousands killed in China's great earthquake. I realized that I had heard of the earthquake but had completely missed feeling for the thousands that had died.

Once I heard a news cast that had just left the story of the 47 sailors killed on the USS Iowa and mentioned the mud slides in Russia. The commentary went something like this, "It was reported that the mud entombed a whole busload of people. And on the economic scene today we ....."

May we wake up to the world around us.

Indeed, you probably wouldn't have to go further than a block or two to find tragedy in your own neighborhood where you could minister to hurting people.

Love is courteous.

When we were on deputation, I called a fairly large number of pastors that did not practice this one.

I would introduce myself and ask if they would be interested in having us come to present our ministry. Some were just plain rude in their answers.

Love doesn't render evil for evil.

Being the super saint that I am I did not become rude to them. I usually quietly hung up and after a few would become discouraged enough to stop telephoning for a while.

Love doesn't render railing for railing.

Love is blessing.

Love is our calling.

We all want to know what God wants us to do with our life and here we have something that will take a great amount of our time.

Love will be blessed.

I Jn 3:23, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

Love is commanded.

Maybe we should consider if we should do it. NO! IT IS COMMANDED! One of the kids gave me a pin a few years ago that mentions that the ten commandments are not multiple choice.

I Jn 4:7, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." agapao

Love is of God.

Love is a sign of salvation.

Love comes from knowing God.

This passage makes you wonder about those people that call themselves Christians and yet they can show no love to anyone.

Can you be truly born again and yet not find love for people?

I Jn 4:11, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." agapao

Love should be our response to God's love.

We are dealing with our Father's children. We should love them as such if for no other reason.

I Jn 4:12, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." (agapao)

Love is perfected in us by God.

Love bringeth the indwelling God (via salvation).

II Jn. 5, "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." agapao

Love is not a new commandment.

With this heavy emphasis on love we must consider that all we do to and for one another is to be done in love.

We must also consider that the love we have for one another allows us to do all these things - even when we are down, or when we don't feel like being friendly to other believers etc.

Love can allow us to do as we are to do in any situation!

When I introduce the next study, I usually ask if everyone really believes in the literal interpretation of the scripture. When everyone has committed themselves I ask them if they believe that it is up to them to follow and do all that the Bible tells them to do.

When all are committed to this I then like to read the following phrase, "Greet one another with an holy kiss."

Now we all know that that is not something that would be acceptable in our culture and that we don't practice this, however shouldn't the love that moves one to greet with a holy kiss be there as we greet one another with a hand shake? YES! WE OUGHT TO GREET ONE ANOTHER BASED UPON THE GREAT LOVE THAT WE SHOULD HAVE FOR ONE ANOTHER!

We went to visit our son at Bible camp where he was ministering in 1989 and there was a group of black clothed, bearded men and women - only the men were bearded - they were very conservative in dress. I think he called them Dunkards.

I watched some of the men saying goodbye. Several embraced and kissed one another on the cheek. Their concern seemed to be willing to act.

I was amazed to find out that this little phrase is mentioned in four different passages in four different books.

KISS:

Ro. 16:16, "Greet one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you."

I Cor. 16:20, "All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss."

II Cor. 13:12, "Greet one another with an holy kiss."

I Pet. 5:14, "Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen."

Since we have such a clear basis of loving one another it seems obvious that love will allow us to do all that we are told to do.

You can get along - with love.

You can settle difficulties - with love.

You can have unity - with love.

You can serve one another - with love.

You can put up with quirks of personality - with love.

We now move into a section of general ONE ANOTHER texts that will help us find ways of being the people that God wants us to be.

I really think that you could take a full lesson on each of the points and not overdo the topic.

Ro. 12:16, "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

Love has no social barriers. The high stoop to meet the low.

Love has no conceit.

Ro. 15:5, gives the same thought of being like-minded "Now the god of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus,"

I Tim 5:21, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

This is a charge before God and the heavenly host not to be partial!

That should really sink in just how important the Lord thinks this item is!

We also notice love moves the brethren to think in similar directions.

This is very important when the church comes to make some important decisions. You should have some sort of consensus of opinion one way or another.

We had a very sticky situation come up at the school where I taught. The faculty had to deal with this situation and we all really dreaded it.

As we began talking through the problem, I think that some of us thought that there would be disagreement and friction. As the talking progressed it was quite obvious that we were of one mind on the subject even before we began working through the problems. God had been working in us as individuals long before we came together as a group on the subject.

Ro. 14:13, "Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this, rather: that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

Love does not judge one another.

Love does not give occasion to stumble.

If we know a believer has a certain conviction then love will keep you from pushing, or tempting him on that conviction.

I was confronted with a question a short time ago that is answerable from this text. A man approached me and mentioned that he did business with a man that had been a character witness for a homosexual in a child molestation case. One of the others in the church asked him to stop

doing business with the person.

Now, both parties need to read this verse. The one that does the business should stop if it is going to be a stumbling block for the other believer. The other believer on the other hand has judged his brother in the area of his business dealings.

Ro. 15:7, "Wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

Love accepts others.

Even when they rub us the wrong way.

Even when they are of another color.

Even when they are of another social class.

Even when they have an old car.

Even when they don't think like you do.

Even when they \_\_\_\_\_. You fill in the blank with the problem that person you don't care for has.

Ro. 15:14, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

Love is full of knowledge.

This knowledge is to lead to the admonishment that follows.

Love admonishes one another.

Now, you must link this with the knowledge that was mentioned. The knowledge enables you to admonish. Don't get that process backwards!

This is one that we don't really like to use in the church today.

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

Notice where the basis of admonishment comes from. The Word of Christ, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with GRACE!

Love is full of goodness.

I Cor. 4:6, "...that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."

Love is not puffed up.

Love is not one against another. Remember the "be of one mind" we just mentioned.

Remember the no social or class or color distinctions?

Don't be puffed up or proud of what or who you are!

We will see a verse later that tells us that God resisteth the proud!

I was raised in a Christian brand church. Half of the congregation called another pastor. Both halves and two pastors coexisted for a time. Pride in who was right caused a split.

Pride keeps from reconciliation after church problems at times.

I Cor. 6:7, "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather allow yourselves to be defrauded?"

Love overlooks wrong and fraud instead of going to law with a brother.

This is not to say that you accept wrong or fraud as normal Christian living. You handle it among the brethren in accordance with church discipline procedures.

You go to the one that has wronged. If no change, take witnesses. If no change, bring the matter before the congregation.

However, even if this doesn't work - the law is not an answer - suffer the wrong or fraud.

When we were first married, someone had made deductions for tax and social security, but had not turned it into the government. Tax time came and no W-2. Called and he told me he wouldn't be sending one. It cost us several hundred dollars, but we felt God wanted us to take the loss for the Lord.

I Cor. 11:33, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." (Lord's table context.)

Love is courteous at the Lord's table.

This is one that is not usually a problem in churches. Even if you transfer this to the wider idea of a love feast or potluck with a Lord's table you have very little problem.

One must wonder if it is that we realize that this is the Lord that saved us all, and we come to the table with a proper Christian spirit.

I personally feel that there is something about gathering around a table for food that brings us all to a common denominator. The table seems to clear away spiritual maturity differences, it seems to clear away social differences and at times even clears away personal differences.

NOW THAT WE HAVE LAID A SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATION FOR HAVING POTLUCKS WE NEED TO MOVE ON!

I Cor. 12:25, "That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another."

Love brings equality of care of all believers.

We shouldn't REALLY care for brother X when he is out of work and ignore sister Y when she is out of work.

Indeed, if you want to develop a schism in a church let the pastor show more concern about family X than family Y and you will have schism with a capital S.

Ga. 5:15, "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

Love does not bite and devour the brethren with the tongue.

We knew of a Christian woman that spread vicious rumors all over town about different people. She was not being consumed by the other peoples tongues but by her own. They have had to leave their church and find another because the people will not accept their actions any longer.

The only thing that can happen if we begin to backbite is that we will consume one another - back bite till all are gone and nothing left.

Ga. 5:26, "Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another."

Love does not seek glory.

Glory is so worthless! It is only good for such a short time. The Lord will come one day and any amount of glory that we might be able to muster will not be visible when it is set along side the glory of Christ!

Glory is certainly not worth misusing or mistreating the brethren for!

Love does not provoke one another.

Love does not envy.

That is a mouthful for some of us! The poor tend always to look at the rich and desire to have all the benefits.

The person that desires leadership and has none often looks with envy at those that have roles of leadership.

Eph. 4:25, "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another."

Col. 3:9, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."

Love does not lie.

Why, because we are one. We are all members of one body. Imagine you lying to one of your members.

Look here arm, you aren't doing enough work. The other arm is doing much more than you!

Why, because that is part of the old way of self and we have put it away!

Eph. 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

Love is kind. Love is tenderhearted. Love is forgiving.

Col 3:13, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

It is the Christian thing to do in light of what Christ did for us!

Love is also forbearing. I'd say this has to do with putting up with one another and forgiving for the way we are to one another at times.

Love is based on God's love for us!

Eph. 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Love is submitting too each other. If we don't then it would seem that the Lord will intercede. The fear of the Lord is involved to be sure.

I Thes.. 4:18, "Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

We are to comfort one another in times of being down. The context of this text is the coming of the Lord - FOR US!

These thoughts should encourage us in any situation. No matter how bad things get - we can take comfort in the promise that God is going to send Christ for us one day.

I Thes. 5:11, "Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."

Not only can we comfort in this area but we can build up or edify as well. This is neat to think about!

Heb 3:13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

The encourage to exhort is to keep the sinning saint from hardness.

As we work on sin in our lives if we allow it to continue it will ultimately harden us to it's effects and quite often lead us into other sin.

This is true of the body as well. As a church allows small sins to continue on in their people the body becomes used to it to the point of ignoring it. The sin gets worse and the church gets harder and colder.

Church discipline is not fun, it is not easy, and it is not pleasant, YET it is so very necessary!

Heb 10:25, "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."

In light of the coming day of the Lord - EXHORT ONE ANOTHER!

NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY!

Run that one by your excuses for not attending on Sunday evening and Wednesday night!

Are you the some that forsakes the assembly or are you the part that assembles.

A church we ministered in for a time had care groups. They had trouble getting people to sign up

for care groups. I told Faith that those not signing up didn't know it but that they were forming their own care group called the I don't care group.

Jas. 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

This one clear back in James and I thought we might not get to it and save ourselves from talking about it. To bad we got to it.

MUMBLE. We want to talk about confessing faults to one another.

NOW THAT TAKES LOVE!

It is of interest to note that this is in the context of a sick person calling the elders to him for prayer and anointing.

The sick seems to be sick possibly because of sin or wrong in the life if you look at the whole context.

How often do we as believers lower ourselves to confess our faults to one another? Not to often usually.

I Pet. 4:9, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

We ministered in a church in northern Wyoming for a couple of months on and off. One couple always had us over for lunch. They loved their ministry. They desired that others in the church would do some of the entertaining but no one wanted to get involved with it.

These folks that we ate with could certainly have been entertaining with a grudge toward the other believers, but they did not.

They viewed it as their gain for they enjoyed doing for people.

I Pet. 4:10, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

This is the same context of hospitality.

We see that the use of our gift is being a good steward!

If you have the gift of teaching are you using it?

If you have the gift of encouragement are you using it?

If you have the gift of giving are you using it?

The gifts are essential to the proper operation of the local assembly.

It is a gift and an investment by the Lord in us. How do we use and give return on that investment?

Concerning gifts there are many a pastor that jumps up and down for his people to use their gifts yet the same pastor and his leadership will not allow the people to use their gifts. There are men that have the gift of administration but aren't given opportunity to use it because someone might become more important than someone else.

There is a dual responsibility in the area of gifts. The believers should use their gifts yet the leadership should allow them opportunity to use them.

I Pet. 5:5, "In like manner, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

Submit to the elder.

Submit to one another.

Be clothed with humility.

Because God resisteth the proud.

Can you envision God resisting your labors? What a total frustration He would cause you.

Submitting to the elder is bad enough but to one another - that is asking an awful lot Lord!

When you think about these things, it really makes one think that we are really going to have to change our operating procedures in our churches.

Submission to the elder is not nice for the younger - yet the Bible states it is to be so. We need to listen to the elder men of our church and evaluate very carefully what they say.

They may be slow to act. They may procrastinate - yet they have a life time of wisdom to share with you.

I ask my Christian Education of youth and adult class to list the major historical events that they had lived through. I then listed some of the ones that I had lived through. My list was at least twice as long as theirs. I then listed what my father lived through. It was twice as long as my list.

I told them to look at these lists for a moment then said, "And you are going to go out and tell a class of adult men and women how much you know."

They received the point very well.

Many of our elder people today lived through the second world war and all of the troubles since plus they have seen many many world leaders pass from the scene.

They may have something to contribute to the church!

I Jn 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Our fellowship is dependant on our walking in the light.

If we aren't walking with God and having a proper relation to him then we cannot have proper relations with one another!

CONCLUSION:

The contrast of the above needs to be understood in light of what we were before as non-believers.

Then and only then can we sit back and glory at what God has been able to bring about in our lives!

Tit. 3:3, "For we ourselves also were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lust and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Do we have something to think about today?

Don't we have enough to think about for a month or two?

ONE ANOTHER!

God has asked us to be His people.

God has asked us to be HIS ONE ANOTHER PEOPLE!

Let us this week seek ways to be one another people wherever we gather as believers!

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m00350

Reform theology leading to anti-Semitism (Predestination of some to hell is the basis for this thought.)

This is some information that I have assembled for the student to start with. I have not done a good study on this topic. Some in the 90's are teaching this it seems. Anti-Semitism is wrong no matter where it is coming from and we should attempt to stay clear of such things in our lives.

One of the mainline denominations recently declared that they were going to attempt to evangelize the Mormons and Jews. Well, the last time I read the great commission it said the world, not small segments of it. To evangelize the Mormons or the Jews is not wrong, but to name them as targets seems a bit out of Christian character - then again looking at history it isn't uncommon, sad to say.

Predestination, in Christian theology, the teaching that the eternal destiny of a person is predetermined by God's unchangeable decree. Predestination does not necessarily imply a denial of free will, however. Most exponents of the doctrine have maintained that it is only the individual's final destiny that is predetermined, not the individual's actions, which remain free. The doctrine customarily takes one of two forms: single predestination or double predestination.

### Single Predestination

Single predestination is the less severe form of the teaching. It is based on the experience of the presence of God and his love, and on the concurrent understanding that God grants the gift of his presence as an act of sheer grace. In order to emphasize that God's gift is independently willed by him and is in no sense a response to some human act, some Christians have asserted that their relation to God depends only on God and on God's eternal decree established before the foundation of the world.

This point of view is implied only twice in the New Testament, in Romans 8 and Ephesians 1. "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. . . And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified" (Romans 8:29-30). These verses imply single predestination, because they concern only predestination to life with God.

### Double Predestination

Double predestination is a conclusion deduced from single predestination. If some are to enjoy God's presence by his eternal decree, others must then be eternally separated from God, also by his decree. Because salvation and glory are predestined, it follows that condemnation and destruction must also be predestined. The first theologian to enunciate a doctrine of double predestination was St. Augustine in the 5th century. He has not, however, had many successors. The best-known exponent of double predestination was the Swiss reformer John Calvin: "We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined within himself what he willed to

become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others" (Institutes 3. 21. 5).

After Augustine, Roman Catholic theologians rejected double predestination, insisting that no predestination to evil exists and that those who suffer damnation bear full responsibility for it. Anglicans have also adhered to a doctrine of single predestination. In the 17th century, the Dutch Protestant theologian Arminius, whose teachings inspired the movement called Arminianism, criticized the injustice of Calvin's doctrine of predestination and formulated a modified version of it that allowed for human free will. Liberal Protestant theologians have tended to ignore or deny predestination in either the single or double form. The most influential restatement of the doctrine of single predestination was made by the 20th-century Swiss theologian Karl Barth, who claimed that God's will is revealed in Jesus Christ, and all are elect through him. In this form the doctrine of predestination is virtually universalist-that is, all are promised salvation.

Contributed by: Charles P. Price

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22. There is another species of fear and trembling, which, so far from impairing the security of faith, tends rather to establish it; namely, when believers, reflecting that the examples of the divine vengeance on the ungodly are a kind of beacons warning them not to provoke the wrath of God by similar wickedness keep anxious watch, or, taking a view of their own inherent wretchedness, learn their entire dependence on God, without whom they feel themselves to be fleeting and evanescent as the wind. For when the Apostle sets before the Corinthians the scourges which the Lord in ancient times inflicted on the people of Israel, that they might be afraid of subjecting themselves to similar calamities, he does not in any degree destroy the ground of their confidence; he only shakes off their carnal torpor which suppresses faith, but does not strengthen it. Nor when he takes occasion from the case of the Israelites to exhort, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (1 Corinthians 10:12,) he does not bid us waver, as if we had no security for our steadfastness: he only removes arrogance and rash confidence in our strength, telling the Gentiles not to presume because the Jews had been cast off, and they had been admitted to their place, (Romans 11:20.) In that passage, indeed, he is not addressing believers only, but also comprehends hypocrites, who gloried merely in external appearance; nor is he addressing individuals, but contrasting the Jews and Gentiles, he first shows that the rejection of the former was a just punishment of their ingratitude and unbelief, and then exhorts the latter to beware lest pride and presumption deprive them of the grace of adoption which had lately been transferred to them. For as in that rejection of the Jews there still remained some who were not excluded from the covenant of adoptions so there might be some among the Gentiles who, possessing no true faith, were only puffed up with vain carnal confidence, and so abused the goodness of God to their own destruction. But though you should hold that the words were addressed to elect believers, no inconsistency will follow. It is one thing, in order to prevent believers from indulging vain confidence, to repress the temerity which, from the remains of the

flesh, sometimes gains upon them, and it is another thing to strike terror into their consciences, and prevent them from feeling secure in the mercy of God.

(Calvin/institutes/page 665-666)

13. Why, then, while bestowing grace on the one, does he pass by the other? In regard to the former, Luke gives the reason, Because they "were ordained to eternal life," (Acts 13:48.) What, then, shall we think of the latter, but that they are vessels of wrath unto dishonor? Wherefore, let us not decline to say with Augustine, "God could change the will of the wicked into good, because he is omnipotent. Clearly he could. Why, then, does he not do it? Because he is unwilling. Why he is unwilling remains with himself," (August. de Genes. ad Lit. Lib. 2.) We should not attempt to be wise above what is meet, and it is much better to take Augustine's explanation, than to quibble with Chrysostom, "that he draws him who is willing, and stretching forth his hand," (Chrysost. Hom. de Convers. Pauli,) lest the difference should seem to lie in the judgment of God, and not in the mere will of man. So far is it, indeed, from being placed in the mere will of man, that we may add, that even the pious, and those who fear God, need this special inspiration of the Spirit. Lydia, a seller of purple, feared God, and yet it was necessary that her heart should be opened, that she might attend to the doctrine of Paul, and profit in it, (Acts 16:14.) This was not said of one woman only but to teach us that all progress in piety is the secret work of the Spirit. Nor can it be questioned, that God sends his word to many whose blindness he is pleased to aggravate. For why does he order so many messages to be taken to Pharaoh? Was it because he hoped that he might be softened by the repetition? Nay, before he began he both knew and had foretold the result: "The Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he will not let the people go," (Exodus 4:21.) So when he raises up Ezekiel, he forewarns him, "I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me." "Be not afraid of their words." "Thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which has eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not," (Ezekiel 2:3, 6; 12:2.) Thus he foretells to Jeremiah that the effect of his doctrine would be, "to root out, and pull down, and to destroy," (Jeremiah 1:10.) But the prophecy of Isaiah presses still more closely; for he is thus commissioned by the Lord, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed," (Isaiah 6:9,10.) Here he directs his voice to them, but it is that they may turn a deaf ear; he kindles a light, but it is that they may become more blind; he produces a doctrine, but it is that they may be more stupid; he employs a remedy, but it is that they may not be cured. And John, referring to this prophecy, declares that the Jews could not believe the doctrine of Christ, because this curse from God lay upon them. It is also incontrovertible, that to those whom God is not pleased to illumine, he delivers his doctrine wrapt up in enigmas, so that they may not profit by it, but be given over to greater blindness. Hence our Savior declares that the parables in which he had spoken to the multitude he expounded to the Apostles only, "because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," (Matthew 13:11.) What, you will ask, does our

Lord mean, by teaching those by whom he is careful not to be understood? Consider where the fault lies, and then cease to ask. How obscure soever the word may be, there is always sufficient light in it to convince the consciences of the ungodly.

(Calvin/institutes/page 1089-1090)

The doctrine of predestination has long been associated with Calvin, though Luther also accepted a form of it. Calvin's "double" predestination means that God determines who shall be saved and who shall be damned. The severity of this teaching prompted disagreements among Reformed groups. The most serious challenge to double predestination was raised by the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, who asserted that God does not willingly reject anyone. His views were condemned by the Dutch Reformed churches in 1618-19, but they were later adopted by John Wesley, founder of Methodism.

Like the Lutherans, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics, the Reformed churches use established liturgies, or forms of worship. The emphasis is on preaching and the sacraments, though in many congregations the Lord's Supper is celebrated less frequently than once a week. The singing of Psalms became an early feature of worship, and many congregations still reject all other hymns and use the Psalms exclusively (Excerpted from Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia Copyright c 1993, 1994 Compton's NewMedia, Inc.)

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m00400

TITLE: "Life Isn't a Bowl of Cherries Right Now But It Isn't the pits Either!"

TEXT: II COR. 4:5-10

OUTLINE:

Introduction

I. Between the Rock and the Hard Spot.

II. Second thoughts? BUNCHES! Change of mind? NEVER!

III. The Devil's after me but my Father is going to clobber him!

III. I've got one foot in the grave and the other is on

ball bearings but I'm not in the grave yet.

V. Conclusion

If you can find a copy of a book at the library, you will enjoy it as an introduction to the study. For those that can't find the book *ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY* is a children's story that describes the day in the life of a little boy that finds that nothing is going right in his life and he concludes several times in the day that it is a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

Read II Cor. 4.8-9

### I. Between A Rock and a Hard Spot.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;"

This term troubled is also translated suffer tribulation and afflicted. Paul is indicating some strong trouble of some sort. This seems to be a play on words in the Greek, in that the term troubled can be translated narrow while the term distressed has the idea of being crowded "into a narrow space".

When I was in the hospital, a number of years ago I had a kidney stone and they could not get it to move so it looked like an operation but the doctor hadn't said one way or another yet. That morning the doctor came in and with a smile on his face mentioned "that stone has us in a hard spot. What a sick pun!

You may be in a narrow spot but you could be crowded into a narrower spot. Could we say, "between the rock and a hard spot", but not stuck in concrete?

Matthew uses this term "narrow" in a very interesting place, indeed, one must wonder if it doesn't allow us some insight into Paul's usage here in our text this morning.

"Because narrow is the gate, and hard is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." One must wonder, if Matthew's comments were referring to the trouble as well as to the width of the path?

Indeed, this is a narrow spot that Paul is speaking of but with Gods assistance we will never be crowded to a point where we can't pass.

No matter how far the Lord allows the devil to push, we always have room to maneuver. We always have room to fight!

Lenski comments on this phrase, "Troubled... yet not distressed" fails to bring out the underlying metaphor, which seems to be that of a combatant who gives his opponent little room for action, but is nevertheless unable to drive him into a corner where no movement is possible." (P 73 of his comm. on II Cor.)

You've seen this in the movies - the two knights are battling it out with swords - the bad guy has just knocked the Good guys sword out of his hand and he makes the final lunge with the sword - THE HERO IS GOING TO DIE! - NO! HE ROLLS OUT OF THE WAY AT THE LAST MOMENT AND STABS THE BAD GUY WITH HIS DAGGER.

GOD ALWAYS LEAVES AN OUT! NO MATTER HOW HARD SATAN PUSHES!

We need to set the context of these trials and troubles that Paul has brought to light in his life. "We are troubled on every side" is the phrase that he uses. As near as I can tell the idea is from the area surrounding you or as Strong defines it, "near" or "from beside" or "vicinity of". In other words the area around him was the source of his troubles.

I think if you will think about the source of your own troubles that you will realize that this is normally the case. As believers we can expect troubles to come from sources nearest our own being. This normally includes many believers and indeed, many of your problems and trials will come from other believers.

This is a devastating realization too many Christians for they assume that just because we are Christian we will function like a Christian. However the reality of the facts is that at times Christians function just like a lost person functions.

This is not to be unexpected for believers around you are also sinners saved by grace and we all have tendencies to slip into areas of sin now and then, just like you do.

We need to be aware of the fact that believers will give us problems so that we aren't surprised when they do.

This is not the only source of troubles and I'm sure that you are acquainted with this as well. You will receive problems from your car, your housing, your family, your neighbors, your mechanic, your tv repairman and everyone else that you have dealings with.

Troubles and trials will appear on your sunny horizon every now and then to give you those cloudy days. Indeed, you may at times feel that you are living in the tropics when the monsoon rains are upon you -

BUT

May I remind you that you have a very effective umbrella that can care for every drop of your trouble if you will allow Him to.

Paul in these two verses gives us a tremendous declaration that no matter how bad it gets there is always God that will suffice in your every need.

## II. Second thoughts? BUNCHES Change of mind? NEVER!

"We are perplexed, but not in despair;"

The term translated "perplexed" in our text is normally translated "doubt" and this seems to be the significance of the term here as well. Paul is in doubt, but not in despair.

"doubt" according to Webster means "to lack confidence in: distrust" An archaic idea of the term is to "fear"

The term "doubt" comes from a root that means twice or the idea is to think twice about something. (Word Origins p 323.)

The term translated "despair" appears only here and in II Cor. 1:8 where Paul makes the statement that he and his comrades "despaired even of life."

"despair" according to Webster means "utter loss of hope"

The term despair has the idea of giving up or without hope.

Our term "desperado" comes from the idea that the outlaws of the frontier days, were without hope in their actions and lives.

Paul seems to be saying, "We are thinking things over carefully and rethinking them but we aren't without hope - we WILL find the answer!"

The interesting part of this phrase is that the Greek sets it apart as different from the other three phrases. The other phrases are actions and activities that are outside the control of the Apostle. Actions which Paul has no control over. While the idea of this phrase is that Paul is involved in the occurrences and actions mentioned.

Paul may be thinking over his situation very carefully however he has placed his confidence in God that there is no reason to give up.

This is the hope of all Christians. We need to think things through very carefully but not to give up if we don't have the answer immediately. We have a God that has all the answers and He desires to give them to us. We aren't as the world - looking for answers but never finding them.

We need to consciously commit ourselves to knowing God will provide. I must wonder if this is part of what the author of Hebrews had in mind when we are informed we are to "diligently seek Him" (11:6).

III. The Devil's after me but my Father is going to clobber him.

"Persecuted, but not forsaken;"

The term translated "persecuted" is a term which Paul uses in Phil. 3:14 where he declares, "I PRESS toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul was doing everything in his power to please God. His usage of the term of an athlete straining for the victory indicates the tremendous strain of persecution that he was under. Paul is pressed in his situation but not "forsaken."

This term forsaken is used also by Matt. in 27:46 in a very very familiar text. "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Paul in all the pressing that God had allowed realized that God HAD NOT FORSAKEN HIM!

III. I've got one foot in the grave and the other is on ball bearings but I'm not in the grave yet.

"cast down, but not destroyed;"

Heb. 6:1 uses this term cast down in speaking of a foundation, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation"

A foundation is something that is really set down solid into the ground. You dig a hole in the ground and usually are sure that the ground in the bottom is packed and then you lay the foundation.

When we lived in Hawaii, we noticed that the road building was so very slow. They would lay down the road bed and it would sit for weeks on end before they would do any further work. Finally I ask one of our Hawaiian neighbors why they took so long to build roads. He told me that the earth there is so very unstable and slow to settle that they must put the road bed down and let it settle for long periods of time and then return to fill in more dirt until all settling is complete. They needed a good foundation before they could lay the blacktop.

It is something that you really put down. You don't expect it to get up someday. You don't expect it to climb out of the ground to say hi someday! Really put down to the ground.

Indeed, Paul is telling us that he was really put away, beaten down into the ground! Yet as a strong foundation will endure even after the weight of the house is placed upon it is not destroyed.

The designer of the house plans on what the foundation needs to be and plants it accordingly. So God prepares us for the task that we will face in the days ahead.

We have just the foundation we are to have, for the ministry that He is preparing for us.

"destroy" has an interesting formulation. It means to ruin a structure. The term comes from a french term meaning structure with the "de" prefix which means to take apart the structure.

God is in the process of laying your foundations here at FSB so that your structure will not be destroyed when you get out into the world and placed under the pressures of the ministry.

Remember that I told you that the phrases were activities that were beyond Paul's control. Apply that to yourself today. The pressures and pressing that you are under right now are pressures and pressings that **ALMIGHTY GOD HAS ORDERED FOR YOUR PREPARATION FOR HIS MINISTRY FOR YOU!**

How great a thought that is! HE is preparing us and we only have to go through the time that He has placed before us to enter into that preparation! Now there are other preparations that YOU must go through, that you must become involved in such as moral behavior, studies, learning and living but

**HE IS THE ONE THAT BUILDS IN THE STRESS FACTOR - THAT WHICH WE NEED TO FACE THE TROUBLES AHEAD!**

I worked for Monroe Shock Absorber factory for a time when Faith and I were first married. In that factory we had a large machine that took up an area about the size of a small office. It was in the factory for only one reason. That was to harden the steel rods that take the shock of the road bumps and jolts. The machine prepared the rods for the stresses and strains of the road. This machine caused great heat in the rod as it was nearing the end of its process which caused great hardness. Without this hardening there would not be enough strength to go through the life of the shock without being bent beyond use.

**GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF HARDENING US FOR LIFE'S BUMPS AND JOLTS!**

**WITHOUT GOD TO GIVE US THIS HARDENING THERE WOULD BE NO USE IN OUR GOING OUT INTO THE WORLD TO MINISTER!**

**THIS HARDENING PROCESS IS A MUST! IT IS NOT AN EASY PROCESS BUT IT IS A NECESSARY PROCESS!**

**OUR EMPHASIS IS TO BE ON THE CONFIDENCE THAT WE PLACE IN HIM TO CARRY US THROUGH!!**

If you are going through some very hard times, you can be assured that the Lord is preparing you for situations that will require great stress handling capabilities.

To sum up Tasker mentions that we have in these two verses "four humiliating circumstances" that are contrasted with the "divine power which redeems them and makes them occasions for further manifestations of God's glory."(P 73)

How can we treat our trials and tribulations with less confidence than that? Paul seems to say that no matter how bad it was he knew it was God that had, and would provide the victory!

I have mentioned Lenski's comment concerning the first phrase but I would like to reread it for you once more. This wording "fails to bring out the underlying metaphor, which seems to be that of a combatant who gives his opponent little room for action, but is nevertheless unable to drive him into a corner where no movement is possible."

The devil may have you in a corner, however God always gives us room to maneuver and to find an opening in the opponent's offense to gain the victory.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." I Cor. 10:13

The term used here is translated "temptation" however the term is also translated trial in the New Testament. ("temptation" = Strong's number 3986)

Paul uses this same term in Gal. 4:14 to describe physical problems. The New Scofield uses the term trial. In the book of Hebrews the term is used of the wandering in the wilderness and the idea of trial is more prevalent and again the New Scofield uses trial. I Pet. 1:6 also uses the term which indicates trials are the subject. Again the New Scofield uses "trial". Indeed, in I Pet. 4:12 Peter uses the term again and the King James uses the term trial. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." I Pet. 4:12,13

If nothing else, when we are in trials we are usually tempted to lay blame, or frustration at God's feet. He is the one that can provide us the victory - we shouldn't lay the blame to Him. It is our being, that falters in that we do not rely upon Him when the trials come and as a result we falter.

As we face His trials for us He will provide a way out - a way to face it with victory! However. We, as Paul must make a conscious commitment to place our trust in God. Trust that He will have the victory! A conscious commitment - I will not give up! God has given me the victory!

I'm going to hang in there even if it's only by the very tips of my claws like the cat in the poster.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion we want to see that the apostle Paul had his down times just as we do. He had trials that were heavy on his mind. He knew however, there was always an up no matter how down he would get. No matter how far the Lord allowed Satan to shove him down, Paul always knew that it could get worse! He also knew that the Lord would make it better!

"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life;" II Cor. 1:8

1. It isn't sin to be down! If you give up it is sin! If you stay down it is sin! If you enjoy being down it is sin! In fact it's not natural! If you drag others down with you, it is sin! If you don't look to the Lord for help it is sin! BUT To be down is not sin. Just don't make it your lifestyle!

2. "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us"

Dare I be so bold as to apply this to us today? Dare I cause waves on the calm sea of the church? Dare I suggest that we should share our problems with other believers?

Paul did so - I firmly believe we MUST!

How many times have you been in prayer meeting when they were asking for requests when you were breaking inside because of problems and trials that you just knew you could not share?

How many times have you been asked how you are and you say something generic like "Oh, pretty good I guess." hoping they will respond so that you can share your problems with them, but instead they walk away with a "That's good."

To this type of believer - they feel ignorance is bliss - for a believer not to respond to minister to another is sin not bliss.

**WE DO NOT SHARE WITH ONE ANOTHER TODAY!**

If you are in a group where you do not hear requests for prayer concerning personal trials you are in a group where, I believe, the people do not feel free to share personal trials with the others.

Paul says that he doesn't want them to be ignorant - he wanted them to know of his troubles. I believe that many today want to be ignorant of your problems. They do not want to become involved in your life enough to hurt with you and to pray with you!

The term ignorant is "agnoeo" and is translated "understand not," "knew not," "not knowing," "know not, unknown," "understand not" and "ignorant."

Those that do not know of your personal problems probably chose not to know. Paul says, we

don't want you to be ignorant of our troubles. Today we may as well say WE DEMAND TO BE IGNORANT OF YOUR TROUBLES! WE DON'T WANT TO KNOW! WE DON'T REALLY CARE! WE HAVE OUR OWN PROBLEMS!

HOW MANY OF YOU WOULD JUST LIKE TO SIT DOWN AND SHARE SOMETHING WITH AN INTERESTED EAR TO LISTEN AND PRAY?

Some suggest the problem here is Pride. To a point yes it is pride. Of a certainty we don't want to expose ourselves because many times when we share a problem we are having, it ends up that we are viewed as unspiritual and that does HURT with a capital HURT!

It is also that in some circles when a prayer request is shared it will go unprayed for. It is also that in some circles we just do not talk about our problems.

As our final thought let's combine some of the things that we have mentioned into one.

Paul the apostle had his hard times and he has tried through this text to say there is always a light at the end of the tunnel! God always is our way and strength through trials when they come and He brings them to us so that He can prepare us for things to come.

Some of the strength that God provides for us should be, but all too often isn't, coming through our sharing with the saints so that they can encourage and pray with us.

"Four humiliating circumstances" that are contrasted to the "divine power which redeems them and makes them occasions for further manifestations of God's glory."

May I leave you with one question?

Christian: WHAT CIRCUMSTANCE DOES GOD HAVE YOU IN THAT YOU CAN FIND VICTORY IN?

Non Christian - you don't have the hope presented here in this study! God is not obligated to assist you when you are in trouble! Only by accepting Him do you come under His protection. I might add that non-Christians often come into very pressing times so that they are open to the Spirit's work in their life.

If you haven't accepted Christ and your life is a mess you might find out why by turning to God!

I trust that this following paraphrase isn't too far afield of the thought of the text. I have gone over the text many times and believe that the following will give a very good view of the text.

"From every conceivable source we are receiving TROUBLE yet we are not CORNERED; The trials have caused us to RETHINK OUR SITUATION, but we WON'T GIVE UP; We are

PERSECUTED, but we are not being FORSAKEN; We are being PUTDOWN, but we are not being TORN DOWN." (sld)

In short I think we could say life is the pits however I'm still enjoying the flavor of the cherries and I know the pits will spring forth into life and bear fruit for our Lord one day!"

WHEN TRIALS FACE US HOW CAN WE HOPE FOR A BETTER PROMISE THAN THIS - THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE US AN OPTION!

He is in the business of training and preparing you - your responsibility is to live through that which He has called you to!

HE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE VICTORY IF WE BUT GO THROUGH WHAT HE HATH SET BEFORE US!

II Cor. 4.8-9 "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;"

Remember, even in Australia (where the little boy in the story kept threatening to go) you will have bad days. You will have trials but you also have God. Remember, when you're having a TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY Don't be distressed - don't be in despair - you won't be forsaken - you won't be destroyed!

Even if you have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad month. You won't be forsaken - you won't be destroyed!

If you commit yourself - I will not give up. I will rely on God.

From Spurgeon's Devotional book Morning and Evening p 136

"God's people have their trials. It was never designed by God, when He chose His people, that they should be an untried people. They were chosen in the furnace of affliction; they were never chosen to worldly peace and earthly joy. Freedom from sickness and the pains of mortality was never promised them; but when their Lord drew up the charter of privileges, He included chastisements among the things to which they should inevitably be heirs. Trials are a part of our lot; they were predestinated for us in God's solemn decrees, and bequeathed us in Christ's last legacy. So surely as the stars are fashioned by his hands, and their orbits fixed by Him, so surely are our trials allotted to us: He has ordained their season and their place, their intensity and the effect they shall have upon us. Good men must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they will be disappointed, for none of their predecessors have been without them."

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL by Spafford

"When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

"Though Satan should buffet, tho trials should come let this blest assurance control, that Christ has regarded my helpless estate and hath shed His own blood for my soul.

"My sin - Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin - not in part, but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

"And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, even so - it is well with my soul."

"It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul."

This speaks of a lost sinner coming to know the peace of God. If you are lost this morning - come to Him that can give you peace! Jesus Christ.

Christian, hang onto this passage - it is your promise of victory amid trials - claim it.

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M00450

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Years ago my father had a brown 39 Chevy four door. It was quite a car in 39. As a little kid I used to get in the car when it was in the driveway and sit in the driver's seat and steer away. I would screech around corners and speed down the streets. What an imagination I must have had.

The point I think I want to make is that I could steer all day, but there was absolutely no progress forward, backward, or to the side.

A few years later - I was still quite small - Dad went hunting with a friend. The friend and my brother went down along the river, but my father being crippled could not walk and hunt. He set me on a box in the car and started the car idling along in the pasture along the fence. He got out on the running board [explain running boards] and was hunting. I was on the box steering away FOR REAL. I just followed the fence row and was doing great.

After awhile I looked over and saw the friend and my brother and being excited I swerved the car toward them to give them a ride - the problem was that I didn't realize that they were near the river. It also threw my father off balance and he struggled to hang on. Well to close the story, my father finally scrambled into the car and shut it off to stop our trip to the river.

Come to think of it I didn't get to drive again till I had a learner's permit.

Come to think of it, that was the last time my father went hunting.

The point? Only when the car was moving did anything happen. You can steer a car all you want, but unless you start it moving, that steering has no effect.

Let us consider this line of thinking in relation to God and His leading of us as individuals or as a church body. Unless we are moving forward, we cannot expect God to lead or steer us in the way He would have us go.

Please turn to Joshua three for our thoughts in this study.

READ Joshua 3.1-8

The Israelites are at the East Side of the Jordan River awaiting the order to enter the land to begin the long war with the people of the land.

THE FIRST THING WE SEE IS THAT THE PEOPLE WERE TO FOLLOW: verses 2-4 Follow God's commands as they are given. It is of interest that it was the Priests and Levites that were leading the armies into the land, not the generals or the soldiers, but the Priests and Levites.

Do you get the idea that spiritual leadership is the important item when we begin to move forward for God?

There are two items of application in this thought.

1. Leaders are for leading.
2. Followers are for following.

This may seem a little too simple to bring up, but many there are of the follower class that attempt to lead in the church today.

Also, sadly to say, many leaders there are that allow the followers to run the store.

We had a missionary tell us once that the main problem missionaries have on the field is that there are too many chiefs and not enough Indians. The point being that all missionaries are graduates of Bible College or Seminary and are trained to lead. Put all leaders in one area and they all desire and attempt to lead.

The solution is a hierarchy of leadership. Corporations have to do it. The military has to do it and the Church must do it.

The hierarchy is seen in verse three in that the commanders went throughout the people telling

them of the instructions.

You have the leaders, you have the commanders and you have the people. ALL ARE INVOLVED, ALL ARE IMPORTANT, BUT ALL HAVE THEIR PLACE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE OVERALL PLAN OF GOD.

I once read an account of two men that met while building one of the great cathedrals of Europe. One man was the architect that had designed the massive building and the other was a common laborer. The moral of the story was that they both realized that they were co-laborers in the project and that the beautiful cathedral could not have been built without the labors of both men.

So it is with war, without the generals and without the privates nothing can be accomplished. The generals could never have seen victory without the soldiers that did the work.

So it is with the church, without church leaders and without the laborers nothing can be accomplished.

NEXT WE SEE THE PEOPLE WERE TO SANCTIFY THEMSELVES: verse 5 - Sanctify yourself as an individual - not others, and God will do wonders. NOTE that sequence. Sanctify and then God will do wonders. It might leave you wondering if we don't sanctify ourselves will God do wonders? Many times this is the case.

May we inspect ourselves in the area of sin and wrong doing to see if we might have problems that we need to deal with?

The term "sanctify" has the thought of to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate or BE HALLOWED! It is the term kaw-dash' (6942) This term is very closely related to the term Kadesh Barnea where Kadesh means holy.

MAKE YOURSELVES HOLY AND WE WILL SEE GOD DOING WONDERFUL THINGS!

Notice that the wonderful work is not in the battle, not in the river, not on the other side, but AMONG YOU! YOU SANCTIFY YOURSELF AND HE WILL WORK AMONG YOU.

Possibly we need to think of sanctifying ourselves for a moment.

Syrus a mime, writer and freed slave of the first century B.C. wrote of sanctification: "Those who have never tried the experiment of a holy life measure the laws of God, not by their intrinsically goodness, but by the reluctancy and opposition which they find in their hearts." (Excerpted from "Complete Speaker's and Toastmaster's Library" Copyright © 1993, 1994 Compton's New Media Inc.)

Let me repeat that for you. "Those who have never tried the experiment of a holy life measure the

laws of God, not by their intrinsic goodness, but by the reluctancy and opposition which they find in their hearts."

Smith's Bible Dictionary tells us OF SANCTIFY: "Consecration of a person to God...to make holy, or to set apart for God...."

The first reference to sanctification in the Bible is in Gen 2.3 where it mentions that God set the seventh day apart unto Himself.

1. Consider your own spiritual life - not mine - not your spouses - not your friends - YOURS.

Now, "consider" means that you stop - take time to think through your recent days of life and ask yourself:

Have I sinned?

Have I wronged someone?

Have I lived ethically?

Have I been honest in business?

Have I followed all that God has asked me to do?

Have I been living a GOOD Christian life?

Are you willing to do as the Lord leads?

2. If you don't find anything that you need to take before the Lord in confession then you should be sanctified. You should be set apart for God's use.

If you find yourself lacking, confess your sin and commit yourself to Him! It is time to take steps before God to correct your area of problem.

This thought of consciously considering your life is very important. A friend of mine was pastoring a church - I was his co-pastor and the church instituted a new constitution. It was a constitution that required all existing and new church leaders to go through a qualification process.

The pastor and I made ourselves available with two other people to REALLY consider whether we were qualified to serve.

Pastor and I had more the idea of we will lead the other two through the process - thinking we

were qualified and that there were no problems. As we considered each qualification over time, I realized that I had one area where I did not feel I was qualified. We met to talk one day and he mentioned, you know Stan there is one area in my life that I am just not satisfied that I am qualified in. As he spoke, he mentioned the same area I felt unqualified in. As we talked, we both knew that disqualification was the next step. That is just what we did. The next year we both moved forward with official church leadership.

I would like to read some comments from an article that I recently ran across. It is a little lengthy, but I think that it might remind us of some things that we know, but may have put on the back burner. (Comments by A.W. Tozer taken from an article on the Internet at acts17-11.com)

The thought of the article was a comparison of the real, New Testament cross and what the author called the nerf cross.

"The old cross is a symbol of death. God salvages the individual by liquidating him and then raising him again in newness of life. God offers life, but not an improved old life. The life He offers is life out of death."

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"Why do we build our churches upon human flesh? For we teach men not to die with Christ but to live in the strength of their dying manhood. . . If I see aright, the cross of popular evangelicalism is not the cross of the New Testament. It is, rather, a new bright ornament upon the bosom of a self-assured and carnal Christianity. The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it."

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"All unannounced, and almost undetected, there has come in modern times a new cross into popular evangelical circles. . . The old cross would have no truck with the world. For Adam's proud flesh it meant the end of the journey. The new cross, if understood aright, is the source of oceans of good clean fun and innocent enjoyment. It let's Adam live without interference. His life motivation is unchanged; he still lives for his own pleasure.

"That this world is a playground rather than a battleground has now been accepted in practice by the vast majority of fundamentalist Christians. They are facing both ways, enjoying Christ and the world too."

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"The new cross does not slay the sinner, it redirects him. It gears him into a cleaner and jollier way of living and saves his self-respect. . . Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have

fun in His name. . . We want to be saved but we insist Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Mansoul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility."

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"The man who is crucified is facing only one direction. . . He [cannot] look back. The crucified man on the cross is looking only one direction and that is the direction of God, and Christ and the Holy Ghost. . . The man on the cross . . . has no further plans of his own. . . Somebody else made his plans for him, and when they nailed him up there all his plans disappeared. . . When you go out to die on the cross you bid good-bye - you are not going back!

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"If we would preach more of this and stop trying to make the Christian life so easy it's contemptible - we would have more converts that would last. Get a man converted who knows that if he joins Jesus Christ he's finished, and that while he's going to come up and live anew, as far as this world is concerned he is not going back - then you have a real Christian indeed."

NEXT WE SEE THE PEOPLE IN JOSHUA WERE TO HAVE LEADERSHIP: verse 6-8  
Notice the sequence. The priests picked up the Ark and began moving and THEN God began to raise up the Godly leadership - Joshua. Godly leadership raised up by God not themselves and only after the people are ready to move if not moving - indeed, the raising up of Joshua as leader was to be accomplished during the day thus the people would have been on the move.

It is also of note that Joshua did not raise himself up, God raised him up in God's own time.

While at orientation in Pennsylvania with BMW we were assigned at times to do work around the mission headquarters. We did a lot of the cleaning and one day we were to re-coat the driveway and do some cleanup on the back lot.

We were told to put a lot of trash in a trailer. We rolled the trailer over to the area and began loading. We really cleaned that place out. In fact the trailer was full and we had to hook it up to the vehicle to have it towed to the dump.

As we attempted to hook the trailer to the car we found that we had to lift one corner of the trailer to get a block out. It was a cement block. The eight or so of us could not budge the trailer because it was so heavy. We stood around trying to figure out what we were going to do.

As time went along it was evident that no one was going to do anything unless someone took charge. Being the up-front person I am I did not take charge.

One person suggested we break the cement block so some began beating on it trying to break it. Impossible with the tools at hand.

Finally after about an hour Stan the man said, "Look let's get organized here." Let's take this old pipe and lay it under the trailer - block it up with this old lumber and pry the trailer up using the pipe as a lever - see I wasn't asleep in Physics class.

We laid the lumber down, inserted the pipe and two of us pressed down enough to lift the trailer and out came the tattered cement block.

With all leading, little was done. HOWEVER under my SUPERIOR LEADERSHIP we were able to accomplish much.

Actually had anyone taken leadership it would have worked just as well.

YOU SANCTIFY YOURSELVES - YOU ACT - THEN GOD WILL DO WONDERS - GOD WILL RAISE UP LEADERSHIP.

The term “magnify” has the simple thought of making important or making into the leader he needed to be - to show the people God was with this man Joshua.

This might be something to look for in a new pastor or in a new church leader. Wait to see if God is showing this man to be a leader. Does he allow God to magnify him or does he magnify himself?

NEXT WE SEE THE PEOPLE WERE TO HAVE PURPOSE: verse 9-11 - Godly goal clearly in mind.

It was their responsibility to purify themselves.

It was their responsibility to go forward.

It was God's responsibility to do wondrous things.

It was God's responsibility to raise up a Godly leader.

Note that when they took that step THEN God moved. When they were on the move He began to work.

He did not just roll back the water, but he dried it out. Have you ever been in a river and dug your toes into the mud at the bottom and brought your foot up to see that black slime that is usually all over your foot. God dried up that soggy mess at the bottom of most rivers. DRY LAND!

The people moved and God gave them the victory.

That first step was a step of:

FAITH - Marching through a flowing river is not all that easy especially with the weapons that they would be carrying.

COURAGE - Big battles facing them on the other side of the river.

FORWARD PROGRESS - It was taking a step in the direction that God had directed them.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD - they were doing what God had said. That always has to be good.

I believe there is one further observation that we should make. I am not sure what all is to be learned from this observation, but it is significant.

The ark was to lead the people over Jordan. The priests themselves were to carry the ark at this time. The position of the ark is also significantly different than normal. In the camped position of the people it was in the center of the camp. When the people were on the move, it was in the middle of the column.

Here we see that the ark is in the front of the people. The people were to remain about a mile from the ark as they began to move, thus giving all an unobstructed view of the leader.

Indeed, I assume the significance of all this is that the pillar of smoke - the pre-incarnate Christ was to be the sole leader of the people as they entered into this battle for the land that God had promised them.

God Himself was leading them into battle - He didn't just send them into battle.

And so to what application might we come via our study?

APPLICATION:

1. AT YOUR CHURCH ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MOVING?

(PAUSE and consider that for a moment.)

Some time ago I put out a questionnaire to all members of a small church. I received only two sheets back and one person verbally shared some thoughts along the line of the questionnaire. Three out of seven.

One of the questions was "Why do you think that the church should continue to exist?"

The answers:

One person said for the Lord.

One person stated, "There are still lost people to be won to Christ, believers in need of encouragement, a need for the sound teaching and preaching of the Word of God, missionaries in need of financial and prayer support. AMEN!"

And one person said there was a real need for a church just like ours in this neighborhood. AMEN!

Now, what am I to say after that? Not much. I think those three comments said it all.

DOING ALL WE DO FOR GOD IN THE AREA OF

EVANGELISM

ENCOURAGEMENT

TEACHING

PREACHING

PRAYING

AND GIVING IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND WORLD!

I would like to interject a comment on one of the other questions at this point. I also asked what they felt was the one worst thing that they felt a newcomer would encounter at the church.

Two responded, "The lack of people." I had to agree with these observations, but as I thought about it for a few days I began to refocus on the thought. I would like to share an illustration.

A shoe salesman in the 1800's was sent to Africa to sell shoes. When he stepped off of the ship, he encountered hundreds of people without shoes on. He telegraphed his company and said, "The people here do not wear shoes so I'm coming home."

Another shoe company had also sent a shoe salesman to Africa to sell shoes. When he arrived he also was met by hundreds of people without shoes. He telegraphed his company and said, "The people here do not wear shoes so send lots more shoes."

You see the lack of people can be a real positive if the perspective is right. Personally that should be a good selling point for an interested pastor. What an opportunity!

I personally see potential in small churches. We need to see the empty pews as our opportunity to serve God. We need to see the empty pews as God's opportunity to do great things in our midst.

Yes, I know that it may be a draw back, but all churches start small.

I trust if you do not have a burden for your neighborhood and surrounding area that you begin to pray concerning it.

A church must have a focus as the children of Israel had. We don't have the ark, but we certainly have God to focus on.

The ark was their focus. THE PEOPLE WERE TO HAVE A UNIFIED FOCUS AS THEY MOVED FORWARD. They were not to be close to the Ark as it moved forward. Have you ever been close to something you were trying to follow? It is not easy. You have a better perspective if you are away from the item that you are following.

2. At your church what is the purpose? Do you know what the purpose is? Are you moving toward that purpose? Should you be doing more to achieve that purpose?

In any size church there must be a focus and a set of plans to achieve that focus.

SOME ITEMS THAT COME FROM MY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE THAT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER IN YOUR CHURCH.

a. Many church constitutions could use some updating or at least evaluation. Is it really up to the stress and strain of the new millennium? Is it really indicative of what you want to present to prospective members?

b. Many church doctrinal statements are quite lacking in detail in light of all of the false teaching that surrounds us. Possibly some updating and reinforcing are needed.

c. It would be good to evaluate and set down on paper what you want your mission policy to be.

What kind of missionaries would you like to support?

What kind of mission agencies would you like to deal with?

What criteria of evaluation should you have to evaluate the missionaries continued support from term to term?

These people are your representatives to the world. Are they representing what you believe - what you stand for - values you want to present to the world?

d. You might like to set down some standards for leadership in the church.

What standards might you want to set for your pastor?

What standards might you want to set for your deacons?

What standards might you want to set for your Sunday school teachers?

e. Most churches could use some church clean up, repair and updating. I am not detracting from all that has been done, and is being done in churches, but I think if you look around you can see some things that might be better improved upon.

f. You might consider Sunday school curriculum and youth curriculum for future use.

You might think of your personal needs as well:

1. Personal commitment to prayer.
2. Personal commitment to further service.

What more can you as an individual do to help the church?

What more can you suggest for the rest of the congregation to do to help the church?

Now, don't just dwell on the second question in that series!

3. Personal commitment to further exercise your spiritual gifts.

Are you exercising your gift?

Why not?

Any person that knows what their gift is and is not active in the church with it is not doing what God wants them to do.

I read somewhere recently that if you are in a church and not using your gift, then there are things that are not happening in that church that will never happen for all of eternity, because you are inactive.

I personally believe that this is true. It is also true that God can intervene and bring someone else in to do those things that are necessary for His plan, but you have failed God in that area of your life and stewardship.

PERSONALLY I THINK THAT IS AN AWESOME TRUTH TO HAVE TO CONSIDER.

SUMMATION:

FOLLOW IF THAT IS YOUR PLACE TO BE

SANCTIFY YOURSELF

WATCH FOR GOD TO DO WONDERFUL THINGS

LEAD IF THAT IS YOUR PLACE TO BE

AIM TOWARD THE PURPOSE AT ALL TIMES

ABOVE ALL WE MUST BE MOVING FOR GOD TO GUIDE US.

We have the promise of God that He will assist us in all things we attempt for Him. We have the promise of God the Holy Spirit that He will empower us in all that we attempt for Him.

So why don't be attempt more for Him?

A pastor mentioned once that while he was traveling down a gravel road he rounded a corner and in the field was a large bulldozer lazily rumbling around the field tearing up the ground. He stopped to watch the machine do its work for a moment and noticed another man watching. The pastor walked over to the other man and asked how long he had been watching the dozer. His reply was "ever since I fell of the thing"

All that power at hand with no direction.

I trust that your church will use the power it has available to do what God might have you do.

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m00500

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

I. HIS CONFRONTATION 6:1-4

II. HIS CONFESSION 6:5-7

### III. HIS COMMITMENT 6:8

### IV. HIS COMMISSION 6:9-13

We have an animal in our house that is called a dog. I have my doubts as to the intelligence of this animal.

When it comes to begging for food, he knows all of the tricks, yet when it comes to obeying there is a whole new side to his nature. When it comes to obedience, his nature borders on that of total ignorance. He has improved to some extent in some areas but still has his own mind.

The "dog" and I, have had in the past, numerous confrontations concerning his digging of holes. He would dig them and I would fill them. This went on for some months.

When I would tell him, he was a bad dog for digging he would respond by digging.

Confrontation after confrontation and he still wanted to dig. He would never confess that he was doing wrong - only cower when he saw me coming.

Faith finally checked a book at the library and found a cure for digging dogs.

The book suggested filling the hole with water and sticking the dog's nose and mouth in the water until he thought he was going to drown. You do this for six days straight. **NOW THAT IS CONFRONTATION!**

By the way does this sound like God's dealings with believers at times?

God oft times has to get us to the point that we think we are drowning before we will submit to the fact that we are His and He is our master.

God confronts us at times to gain our attention.

He wants us to realize that we are sinners saved by grace and as such we ought to desire to commit ourselves and our lives to Him.

Then and only then will God begin to lead and direct our steps for His Purpose.

### ISAIAH THE MAN

His name has the idea of "Yahweh is Salvation" or "God is Salvation." Dr. Scofield lists the meaning as "Salvation of the Lord." To shorten the thought to its briefest form you could say "Yahweh saves" or "Jehovah saves." Indeed, this is one of the major, if not THE major theme of the book of Isa.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT THE MAN:

1. He was a citizen of Jerusalem and some believe he was born there as well.
2. He was the son of a man named Amoz.
3. He was probably from a high social family. This is based on his access to the king in chapter 7, and his closeness with the priest in 8:2. Tradition tells us that he was a cousin of King Uzziah.
4. He was a family man and had two sons.

Shear-jashub which means "a remnant shall return" (7:3)

Maher-shalal-hash-baz meaning "hasting to the spoil, hurrying to the prey." (8:3)

Can you imagine calling those two for supper?

5. He ministered to Jerusalem and Judah. (1:1; 8:18)
6. He ministered approximately 739-700 B.C. He lived during the lives of four kings. 6:1 shows he is called at about the time of Uzziah's death.
7. Tradition tells us that Isaiah was killed by Hezekiah's son Manasseh. The terms "sawn asunder" are used. Some link this with Heb. 11:37 where it is stated, "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tested were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." They believe Isa. is the one mentioned as sawn asunder in Heb.

There is no actual proof to substantiate this claim, but it is quite possible.

8. He lived during the reign of four kings. (1:1)

KINGS OF JUDAH: Uzziah (783-742 B.C.) Took the throne at 16 years of age. Jotham "(750-742 as regent and 742-735 as king)" according to Leupold. He was the Son of Uzziah - took the throne at age 25. Ahaz (735-715) Son of Jotham. Hezekiah (715-687) A godly king and son of Ahaz

KINGS OF ASSYRIA: Tiglath-pileser (744-727 B.C.); Shalmanezar (726-722); Sargon II (721-705); Sennacherib (704-681).

I. HIS CONFRONTATION 6:1-4: What an impressive sight. Even in a day of multi-million dollar movies I don't think that man could equal such a scene.

In the first place the term "Holy" leaves anything that we might imagine out in left field.

What a vision of God. This is probably the same scene which Ezekiel saw in Ezek. chapter one and John saw in Revelation chapter four.

Some would dispute this on the basis that the seraphim and cherubim are different creatures, however the term Seraphim means fire and thus may be a descriptive term for the Cherubim and the term Cherubim would be the name of the creatures. This seems to fit better with our descriptions of the throne scene of God as it is recorded in the Word.

This is the very throne of God and the area surrounding that throne. These men were privileged to view the residence of God! That is some confrontation!

The question is this: Would we respond as these three men did to this vision of the throne of God? Or would we be so cold to the things of the Lord that we would be more interested in what is on TV this afternoon. Some Christians regulate their schedule around the television set. We were in a church in Oregon one Sunday when one of the women walked into the nursery with a portable tv so she could watch some play offs.

**WE ARE SO TIED UP IN THE WORLD THAT I REALLY WONDER IF THE SIGHT OF THE THRONE OF GOD WOULD EXCITE SOME OF US!!!**

If it doesn't work on the VCR and TV then it isn't really worth watching. I wonder how a video of God's throne scene would fair in the Christian community. Would they be interested enough to rent it?

Whom shall I send and who will go for us is a true question. There is a construction that would allow for a more mater of fact communication. God could have made it more obvious that He wanted Isaiah to offer his availability, but He chose to simply ask the simple question, who will go for us. I think this points out to me that God is not in the business of being a big bully about getting His will accomplished in our lives.

He is in the business of saving us and leaving the service up to us. The point being, if we really grasp what He has done for us, we most certainly should give ourselves to Him for His use in this life.

Here am I send me = has the thought of a command. It is the same construction as saying, Go up to the city.

Here we have a man of God that has just declared that he was undone because of what he has seen and he is telling - indeed commanding God to send him.

How many people do you see in the Christian community that are so eager to go serve God? How

many command God to send them? How many even declare that they are undone before God?

Undone is translated in a number of ways. "bring to silence" "destroy" "cut down" or "perish." Isaiah had really come to grips with himself and his true humanity before God and he commands God to send him.

Brave as well as bold and committed. We need to see our humanity in comparison to His divinity to know who we really are. Most of us compare ourselves to other humans and get an inflated image of ourselves.

II. HIS CONFESSION 6:5-7: Many there are in America today that view themselves as righteous when they are full of sin of every sort. We need to meet God face to face to realize that we are really sinners even though we have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

We need to realize that we are dependant upon God for our forgiveness.

Many after they are saved will go off as though there is no more connection between them and God. Indeed, there is a vital connection and He desires that we walk with Him on a continuing basis.

Can we really admit that God is our strength? Can we really admit that we depend on God? Can we really admit that we are sinful beings? We are so caught up in who we are that we forget God.

John in first John lists "the pride of life" as part of the world, yet so many today are proud of who and what they are, or are proud of what they have been able to accomplish. How foolish for a man or woman to think themselves important.

Think of the greatest person that has ever lived and then consider them standing beside God.  
**WHO IS SIGNIFICANT? WHO HAS MEANING? WHO HAS IMPORTANCE? WHO DESERVES OUR ATTENTION? WHO STANDS OUT AS THE CENTER OF ATTENTION? ONLY GOD!!**

III. HIS COMMITMENT 6:8: When we have realized that in God we find our purpose, we will naturally lay ourselves open for His service wherever He wants us to labor.

I once saw a picture that was quite effective. It pictured a young man with his hand on the back of a young woman just ahead of him. The caption is, "Here am I, Send my sister. How often this is the attitude of believers. How often do we say "Here am I send by neighbor," or "my son," or "my sister" or anyone else - anyone but me!

**GOD IS INTERESTED IN EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US!! HE DESIRES THAT EACH ONE OF US PRESENT OURSELVES TO HIM FOR ORDERS!**

Is this not what Romans 12:1 is speaking of? "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,"

Have you presented yourself for orders before God, or have you presented your orders to God?

I have often thought about my spiritual upbringing. I was not saved until about 17, but when I accepted the Lord my mind set was immediately "Do as He wants - Serve God."

I did not have to be told about Rom. 12:1 -- I knew I should serve God to the best of my ability!

IV. HIS COMMISSION 6:9-13: His commission was to a people that would not listen to him. He was told to minister to deaf ears. How many today must feel that this is what they have been called to do.

I have talked to pastor after pastor that are in dead churches filled with believers that have no desire to know or relate to the God they were saved by.

These men are ministering to people that have "heavy ears." They might hear the words but they never relate them to their own lives.

Indeed, anyone that witnesses of their Lord today must wonder if we aren't ministering to "heavy ears."

The average nonbeliever has no desire to listen to what a believer has to say. We are told to witness and minister, but God will care for the persons "heavy ears."

I have spoken in churches on missions and wondered how the people could be so cold. I would give a strong challenge to missions and tell them of the millions on their way to hell and they would be reading the bulletin, looking out the window, or playing with their children!

Yes, American Christians have "HEAVY EARS!"

CONCLUSION:

Where are you this morning in this process which God passed Isaiah through?

Are you in the confrontation phase, are you in the confession phase, are you in the commitment phase, or are you in the commissioned phase? All of us are in one phase or another! We are all going through, or are through this sequence of events in our lives.

CONFRONTATION

If you are in this phase of your Christian life you are being confronted with almighty God in a

way that can bring you to realize your worthlessness and His worthiness of your service.

I quoted a verse earlier but left out one phrase. Rom. 12:1 exhorts us to move into a sacrificial relationship with God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE."

In light of what Christ has done, In light of what the Holy Spirit is doing, in light of what God will do, in light of eternity and it's glories --- serving him is a reasonable response!

I worked with a man in Denver years ago that shared his testimony with me one afternoon. He had a thriving business in Phoenix many years ago. God had been speaking to him about serving Him on not a full time basis, but as a layman investing his time in other believers. Wrapped up in all this was the feeling that God wanted him to sell his business and move to Denver.

He told me that he had been fighting the Lord on this for many months and really did not want to submit. He knew God wanted him to sell his business and spend more time in the local church teaching and working.

He one day found himself in the hospital facing death via pneumonia. Even then he was unwilling to submit to the Lord's clear leading in his life. Finally when he was faced with clear evidence that he was about to die, he submitted to the Lord and prayed that he would sell his business and serve the Lord as best he could.

He sold his business shortly after and moved to Denver, where I might add he had a large impact in my life.

We might also mention the apostle Paul when the Lord confronted him on the road and struck him blind.

God takes great steps to secure the services of those he desires to serve Him, especially if they are hesitant.

## CONFESSION

If God has moved in your life to the point that you realize who and what you are in relation to Who and What He is, then you will naturally move into a place of confession. Confessing that you are a sinner saved by grace and that you owe your very existence to Him.

If this is your state then you will naturally move onto the next phase.

In relation to confession, if you have opportunity to read any of the Diary of David Brainard, you will know what confession is. This man knew that he was man and that God was God and that

there was a wide gulf between.

I will just give you a small taste of his prayer life. "Spent this day alone in the woods, in fasting and prayer; underwent the most dreadful conflicts in my soul. I saw myself so vile that I was ready to say, 'I shall now perish by the hand of Saul.' I thought that I had no power to stand for the cause of God, but was almost afraid of the shaking of a leaf. Spent almost the whole day in prayer, incessantly. I could not bear to think of Christians showing me any respect. I almost despaired of doing any service in the world: I could not feel any hope or comfort respecting the heathen, which used to afford me some refreshment in the darkest hours of this nature. I spend the day in bitterness of soul. Near night I felt a little better; and afterward enjoyed some sweetness in secret prayer." (From the Diary of David Brainard)

## COMMITMENT

Your natural reaction to realizing the previous phase as a reality is to commit yourself to His service in any way that He can use you.

This may be on the foreign field as a missionary or a support worker. This may mean as a pastor in this country or it may mean as a person doing what you are doing right now.

The important thing is that HE is the one that decides what you are going to do with your life. He may very well leave you right where you are, doing exactly what you are doing or he may send you a completely different direction. LET HIM MAKE THE CHOICE!

I had the privilege of meeting an older couple a number of years ago in Ireland. They had served the Lord in Holland, and had moved to Ireland. They had just cashed in their retirement investments which wasn't much and had purchased an old farm house. They were remodeling the house to retire in. Their home was very meager in relation to most American homes. They had a living room and kitchen on the main floor and two small bedrooms in the upstairs. They are still very active in the church planting ministry in Ireland. Retirement? Not really. They view serving God as a life time experience, not just till age 65.

## COMMISSION

When you have allowed God to make the choice of your life's direction then He will direct you into that life.

It will not be a secret. It will not be something that you need to hunt and seek after for months on end. It will be information that He will be glad to give to you through prayer and the Word.

God does not commission directly today, but He certainly makes His will very clear to His people.

This story comes from the personal testimony of a young mother of five children just prior to the death of the entire family in a plane crash in Nepal. They were on their way to the field for their first term in Tibet.

She had shared of their life leading to this point in which she mentioned that God had been dealing with them concerning missions for some time.

"Two weeks later we were invited to a missions conference in a church in the city. We went and in the sermon the missionary was preaching, he was a missionary to Brazil, he was talking about all of the souls dying and going to hell because they have never heard. And the Lord said, "Tanna, I called you to the mission field, I want you to go." So, I said, "okay, Lord, I'll go. I promised when I was thirteen and I am giving my life again to you." So I pulled on Joe's coat sleeve after the service and went down during the invitation and we gave our lives to the Lord for anything. I didn't know, but in the service the Lord had dealt with Joe about China. I didn't know that and it is probably a good thing I didn't.

"The next evening Joe was sitting on the couch and I was picking up toys and he said, "I think the Lord wants us in China, Tanna." I just kind of stood there and said, "China is communist," and he said, "You said you would go anywhere." And I said, "But it's communist, Joe. We can't go to China." And he said, "Pray about it and if it's the Lord's will He will deal with you, too." All week I fought the Lord. Really, I knew China was where He wanted us, that is where He told Joe He wanted us, that is where He wanted me. But I fought the Lord, I dreamed China, I ate China, slept China, (everything they are doing in China). And I said, "Well, let's get some books from the library." So Joe went and got some books and in the books was a book on Tibet. He brought the book home, and I am not one for library books on just countries, but I just couldn't get away from that book. I read the whole thing even religion about Buddhism."

Tanna, after giving the Lord all the reasons that she couldn't go to China and God giving her reasons why she could, she followed her Lord and husband to prepare for the mission field. (p 22-23; Aug. 1996; Russian Fundamental Baptist Mission paper.)

God does not make us go, He makes us willing to go - He makes us want to go.

## THIS MORNING

For those that might not know the Lord as their Savior I would encourage you to consider the claims of Christ. He said that He came to take away the sin of the world. He died for you! He was God and the only Holy perfect sacrifice that could possibly pay for your sins.

The call of the Gospel is to accept Him as YOUR sacrifice for YOUR sin before it is too late and you find yourself facing Him in judgment on your way to eternal torment.

This process of CONFRONTATION, CONFESSION, COMMITMENT AND COMMISSION is

a process that God desires EVERY believer to go through.

Many have not proceeded through this process because they have not been open before the Lord to do it. God reveals Himself to each one of us and it is our response which determines whether we continue or not in the process.

Some are stuck in the confrontation phase. They have been confronted and refuse to go further.

Some are stuck in the confession phase because they do not want to admit that they are dependant upon God. This is one of the reasons that material blessing is such a detriment to the Christian life. We in America are so self sufficient we do not need God.

Some are stuck in the commitment phase. They will not give their life back to God for His service.

Some are stuck in the commission phase because they have been told what God wants them to do and they have said, "NO." They are rebelling against what they know God wants them to do.

If you are stuck in the process, I would encourage you to get on with the step that is before you. You are the only one that can move on in the process.

If you have not been confronted with God's desire to work with you in this process, you have been today. You are now responsible to seek after God and His will for your life!

You have been confronted with God's desire for your commitment to Him so He is awaiting your response.

May we all say with Isaiah "Here am I, send me."

May we all commit ourselves to our "Reasonable Service" of giving ourselves as a living sacrifice!

Reasonable service is of interest. Reasonable is the Greek word logikos - from which we gain our term logic. In America one problem is the fact we have trouble committing to God, because we don't value logic anymore.

**SERVING GOD IS OUR LOGICAL SERVICE. IT IS THE ONLY LOGICAL THING TO DO!**

Service is "latreia" or service. It is translated divine service in Heb 9.1 where the Bible speaks of the old covenant or the Old Testament law which had "ordinances of divine service." It has the thought of "the service and worship of God according to the requirements" according to Thayer. Robertson mentions it as our rational service, and ties it closely to worship.

Logic is the "science dealing with the principles of valid reasoning and argument. The study of logic is the effort to determine the conditions under which one is justified in passing from given statements, called premises, to a conclusion that is claimed to follow from them. Logical validity is a relationship between the premises and the conclusion such that if the premises are true then the conclusion is true." (From Encarta Encyclopedia by Micro Soft)

Based on the facts it is logical for us to serve God.

Not other course is logical! Are you logical today? Are you doing ALL YOU CAN TO SERVE GOD?

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m00550

### A THEOLOGIANS LAST WISH

Please read Ps. 119:25-26 and II Tim 4:9-13

An ancestor of David Livingstone named David Livingstone said in Power magazine in Sept. of 1996 that his philosophy at one time was to live fast, die early and be a good-looking corpse.

"A young news reporter once visited an elderly man on his 99th birthday to interview him about his longevity. The interview over, the reporter said to the elderly man, as he was about to leave 'I hope to see you again, sir, on your 100th birthday.' The old gentleman carefully looked the young reporter over and then said, 'I can't see any reason why you shouldn't, young man, you look healthy enough to me.'" (Pulpit Helps Magazine/May 89)

The widow of the man that started the Winchester Rifle Company became concerned about dying. She became so concerned that she contacted a spiritist to see what he could tell her. The spiritualist told her that as long as she was working on the house she was in the process of building, she would not die.

She proceeded to build a mansion containing 13 bathrooms, 2000 doors, 47 fireplaces and 10,000 windows. She spent over 5 million dollars on her house in a day when laborers worked for 50 cents a day.

This information came from a devotional I read many years ago. The devotional was to encourage the believer as they face death as opposed to this futile attempt to avoid death on the part of a nonbeliever.

Dr. Grounds ends his devotional with this paragraph. "Because Jesus died for us and rose from the grave, our fear of death can be changed to hope. That happens when we receive Him as our personal Savior. That's the best way to face our inevitable appointment with death."

Even in this paragraph designed to encourage the reader, I am not sure that the author has really done a good job of dispelling the fear of the onslaught of death.

I would like to consider the saint that must look forward to eventual death. Yes, I realize that the Lord may well come before that time in our lives, but as a person ages, that hope becomes more of a hope, but less of a probability.

In this study we will be concentrating on the person that knows death is coming, yet we need to realize that we may not have this privilege. Death can come at anytime. This was seared into my mind one-day years ago when I read an account in the newspaper. In 1992 (Oklahoma) a funeral procession was proceeding to the cemetery to bury a man. The car in which the widow and other relatives were riding was hit by a pickup. The widow of the man and other relatives were killed in the crash. Now, who would expect to be killed on the way to a cemetery in a funeral procession? There doesn't seem to be a less likely place to die than that. We know not when we will be called upon to breath our last.

This study is for the person that has time to contemplate his coming death. Even young people can gain insight into death and how older people react to it from this study.

#### SETTING OF THE TEXT:

Paul is in prison in Rome for the second time. Most agree that he felt his death was coming in the near future. He mentions in 4.6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." He could have sensed impending death from the government, or He may have had physical problems that he was knowledgeable of (Dr. Luke was with him). The term offered would indicate he might have been under sentence of death from the Roman government.

From the Daily Bread: "The apostle Paul sat alone in a Roman prison facing his final weeks on earth. The wet cold of the dungeon must have pierced his bones as he penned a letter to his young friend Timothy, urging him to come before winter. (4.21)"

The urging to come before winter probably relates to his feeling that he was soon to die. Winter would probably have meant delay in travel. The fact that the prison was probably cold may relate to the urgency as well. I suspect that the Romans weren't supplying many electric blankets to their prisoners.

The Peoples New Testament states, "Second Timothy, being written after he had again been confined at Rome and shortly before his death. It was somewhere about AD 66-68 that his busy career ended, and that he received the crown of martyrdom in Rome.

#### DETAILS OF THE TEXT:

CLOAK: Paul requests his cloak. The cloak seems to be an outer garment of some sort, surmised

by most to be to help him keep warm in the prison.

The specifics of the cloak are not clear. This is the only appearance of this Greek term (phelones). Easton's dictionary has some detail relating to the garment. "was the Roman paenula, a thick upper garment used chiefly in traveling as a protection from the weather. Some, however, have supposed that what Paul meant was a traveling-bag. In the Syriac version the word used means a bookcase." This is also mentioned by Chrysostom.

Vine suggests that it is an outer garment for protection against the weather, but he also suggests it may have been a light dust cover or carrying case for the books and parchments.

My thought is that if a man is looking toward death he probably wouldn't be that concerned about protecting the books. Also if there was a cover for his books and parchments anyone that had known him would know that they were carried that way and would naturally bring it with the books - there would be no need to mention it separately.

CARPUS: Carpus may have been Paul's host when at Troas. He is mentioned no other time in the Bible. His name means fruit.

TROAS: "Troas a city on the coast of Mysia in the northeast of Asia Minor," (Easton's dictionary) The city was named after the destroyed city of Troy which was a few miles north of Troas.

Now, I want to take a side trail here for a moment. Here we sit nearing the turn of the millennium, with computers, modems, satellite dishes, automated sewing machines, cars that are being developed to drive themselves and we read of the apostle Paul when he asks for books and parchments.

I don't think that we really comprehend the differences between Paul and us.

As I was preparing this sermon, I started my computer, I double clicked on the Bible icon and my Bible opened up. Within a couple of hours I had checked two or three Bible dictionaries, a couple lexicons, two or three commentaries, an illustration database I have developed, a couple of encyclopedias AND I HAVEN'T GOTTEN OUT OF MY CHAIR OR LEFT MY COMPUTER, NOR HAVE I TURNED A PAGE. Not only had I done all of this I had the bare bones and most of the thoughts to fully develop this sermon.

Now, let's imagine Paul preparing for a sermon. He would see if he could find something to write with, something to write on, then hope that the light was bright enough to see. He would probably have to get up and move around a little to warm up enough to get to work. I do that in the winter myself - some things never change. Then he would sit down and recollect the best he could what Isaiah or Jeremiah had said, then begin to develop thoughts for his message. No Bible dictionaries, no lexicons (of course he knew the original languages so he had one advantage over me), no illustration listings, no encyclopedias, and worst of all he would have to sit there and try

to write with those miserable quills or whatever they used. And finally he would only set down the bare elements because he only had two pieces of parchment.

Can you now get the picture of why he wanted his parchments and books? No matter what they were, they were very important to him for his life's work.

BOOKS: biblion = normally translated book = probably a scroll - written document. What the books were is purely speculation, yet some suggestions might give some idea of their content. Robert's Word Pictures mentions the possibility that they were his own writings or possibly just books that he liked to read and use. He also mentions the possibilities that they contained the writings of Luke or others relating to the words of Christ (Lu 1.1-4).

PARCHMENTS: membrana = only occurrence = made of dressed skins. The parchment material was more expensive than papyrus, so would have contained something more important probably. The usual thought is that they were copies of portions of the Old Testament.

Easton's mentions of pergamum, "Parchment was first made here, and was called by the Greeks pergamene, from the name of the city."

Vine mentions, "The writing material was prepared from the skin of the sheep or goat. The skins were first soaked in lime for the purpose of removing the hair, and then shaved, washed, dried, stretched and ground or smoothed with fine chalk or lime and pumice-stone. The finest kind is called vellum, and is made from the skins of calves or kids."

It has been suggested that the parchments were Old Testament portions. The fact that II Timothy is lacking in Old Testament quotes when compared to Paul's other writings may suggest that this is true.

In this study I would like to look at the following items:

- I. THE DIGNITY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH
- II. THE CONSISTENCY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH
- III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH

I. THE DIGNITY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: Attachment to material items at the ending of ones life is not uncommon as we know if we know anything of dying people. This is not unnatural I don't believe. The material things that we have acquired are things that we like and have been with for many years. Our homes actually depict a little bit about who we are and we feel VERY VERY COMFORTABLE at home. I do not think this is abnormal.

Now, if you are like one of Faith's relatives that wanted an asbestos coffin so he could take it with him, I think you are a little too attached to your material possessions.

In the apostle Paul it is of great interest to me to see what was important to him. He was a man that took everything that he had in this world with him wherever he went, yet he is interested in a cloak and some writings.

My brother had very little in the last years of his life. He moved a couple of times and did it in a seabag, duffel bag and two cardboard boxes. HE WAS HAPPY! Basically all he had was clothes, a small tape player, a nice camera with lots of pictures and a Bible.

By way of application from Paul's desires, can we not suggest that the people we know facing death should be given as much of their familiar - material surroundings as possible? Most people that I have known that were dying wanted to be at home as much as possible. This is normal and we should do what we can to accommodate them. It is not possible in some cases and we should not feel guilty for not doing what was impossible!

I may upset some with the following statement, but I feel that it is true and I feel that many believers are living with a false image of facing death.

The normal opinion is usually that the believer is to face death with poise, confidence, peace and all other items that one can imagine when thinking of a tranquil transition from life to death.

This concept is normally based on the fact that the believer is to be looking forward to being with the Lord, that the believer is to live in the fruit of the Spirit one of which is peace, and that the believer is to submit to the Will of the Father.

NOW! All of these things are true and I accept these, yet there is also a built in aspect to our nature to oppose change, to oppose leaving people we love, oppose leaving responsibilities undone and oppose quitting, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY FACING THINGS WE'VE NEVER FACED BEFORE - YOU KNOW LIKE DYING!

For Paul to have requested books and parchments as well as personal company, one must assume that he was not ready to die. He had things he wanted to do, things he wanted to read and things he wanted to write. The very fact that he wrote II Timothy shows that he was continuing on doing as he always had done.

To die in complete peace is fine for some people, but don't be entirely surprised if you run across a believer that struggles to hang onto life as hard as they can. It is not that they are unspiritual, it is not that they are refusing God's will, and it is not that they are inferior.

One other aspect of this is the fact that death is an enemy according to Paul. In I Cor. 15.26 he mentions, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." This is in the context of Christ putting all things to a final conclusion at the end of this age. Death is an enemy even unto the end of time - God will have to bring it to its knees before the eternal state can begin.

Not all people can face an enemy with peace and tranquility. What soldier would be held in high esteem if he laid down peacefully in front of his enemy to be killed?

II. THE CONSISTENCY OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: A further application is the fact that believers follow through with their beliefs - even unto the end. If those beliefs are real and true to the believer, then the coming death of the person will not change any aspect of the life of belief.

Matthew Henry follows this thought when he states, "As this was a private epistle written to St. Paul's most intimate friend, under the miseries of imprisonment, and in the near prospect of death, it shows the temper and character of the apostle, and contains convincing proofs that he sincerely believed the doctrines he preached."

A number of years ago when my wife's father was terminally ill, I was interested in observing his reaction to his situation. In life he had become somewhat cold to spiritual things for many reasons. Upon hearing that he was in serious condition his spiritual eyes were readjusted almost immediately. He talked many times of the different people that he had not taken time to witness to.

He fought death. He tried every option to beat the cancer. His time fighting cancer was also a time of fighting his enemy, the devil. He took every opportunity to talk to people about the spiritual lives. He had opportunity to witness to people as they came to visit him in the hospital.

Faith and I were considering going with a mission in Colorado that he was very interested in. As we discussed it one evening Paul told me, "Stan if you and Faith decide to go with the mission Esther and I will support you X\$ per month. He had every intention of continuing to live for some time, even though he knew that wasn't probable.

His reactions at near death was to hold onto life - personally I think part of that drive was the hope of being able to tell others of His Lord.

As the apostle Paul continued on with the ministry as is shown by his desire for Mark to come and to have the books and parchments to assist him, so we as we face death should desire to continue on serving God in our lives until the end is met.

III. THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE BELIEVER FACING DEATH: There seems a distinct possibility that some of these books were just plain books of interest to Paul - indeed, I would assume from his life they would be theological in nature. The Daily Bread had a quote that I would like to share with you. "A famous French author has written, 'The wise men who have written before our time are travelers who have preceded us in the paths of misfortune, and who reach out to us their hands to invite us to join their society when all others have abandoned us. A good book is a good friend.'"

I personally feel that the men that have written in the past often have a lot to say to us in this time. Yes, they are out of date at times, yet they are right on target at times.

I have been greatly encouraged to see that there were many in the past that felt the same frustrations with their age as I have suffered with mine. They see the worldliness and sin around them and wonder if it can get worse.

Yep, it can and most assuredly has.

Yep, it can and most likely will.

It is most likely that some of these items were copies of the Scriptures as well. The longing of the apostle for these is probably a universal desire of believers as they face the final enemy - death.

When discouraged with situation or life most believers will turn to the Word for some note of encouragement. I personally quite often turn to the Psalms and am encouraged by the positive aspect of what I have read or the knowledge that David or one of the other Psalmists have faced the same trouble I am then facing.

The believer can find encouragement, the believer can find strength and the believer can find guidance in the Word as they face death.

Even when a person is alone, there is a closeness that can be gained by reading the Word. It brings the believer closer to the Lord and supplies spiritual nourishment and encouragement.

Just a bit of a sidelight - this is one of the purposes of the church - encouraging those that are in need of encouragement.

### III. SO WHAT?

In my theology classes I often would lecture and then stop, pause, and say SO WHAT? What can we use all that knowledge for?

There is a fourth point this morning that I would like to add by way of application.

When you find you are going to die, know that it is God's will and that you are satisfying His will in the most complete way.

This quote is from Spurgeon's devotional Morning and Evening.

The devotional is based on John 17.24 "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am."

"Death! why dost thou touch the tree beneath whose spreading branches weariness hath rest?"

Why dost thou snatch away the excellent of the earth, in whom is all our delight? If thou must use thine axe, use it upon the trees which yield no fruit; thou mightst be thanked then. But why wilt thou fell the goodly cedars of Lebanon? O stay thine axe, and spare the righteous. But no, it must not be; death smites the goodliest of our friends; the most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. And why? It is through Jesus' prevailing prayer -- 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' It is that which bears them on eagle's wings to heaven. Every time a believer mounts from this earth to paradise, it is an answer to Christ's prayer. A good old divine remarks, 'Many times Jesus and His people pull against one another in prayer. You bend your knee in prayer and say, 'Father, I will that Thy saints be with me where I am;' Christ says, 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.'" Thus the disciple is at cross-purposes with his Lord. The soul cannot be in both places: the beloved one cannot be with Christ and with you too. Now, which pleader shall win the day? If you had your choice; if the King should step from His throne, and say, 'Here are two supplicants praying in opposition to one another, which shall be answered?' Oh! I am sure, though it were agony, you would start from your feet, and say, 'Jesus, not my will, but Thine be done.' You would give up your prayer for your loved one's life, if you could realize the thought that Christ is praying in the opposite direction -- 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.' Lord, Thou shalt have them. By faith we let them go."

Spurgeon said, "By faith we let them go."  
I think we could also say, "By faith be ready to go."

Enjoy your material surrounding, but continue on serving Him as best you can until the end.

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m00600

TITLE: WHO'S WEARING THE WHITE HATS?

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

I. THE BAD GUYS

II. THE GOOD GUYS

III. THE FALL GUYS

CONCLUSION

We have a time when the king of Syria was having his plans foiled by Elisha. Each time the king would make plans, Elisha would tell the king of Israel. The king of Syria is upset and so is

sending a force to take care of Elisha, and this is where we pick up the story. READ II Ki. 6:15-23

#### INTRODUCTION:

In 1990 we were in a fundamental Bible church to fill the pulpit. We were in the adult Sunday school class which consisted of a video that was more entertaining than edifying. Not that the speaker was bad, indeed he was very good. The problem was that his story telling outweighed any truth that he might have given.

The point to all this is that the teacher stood after the video and was talking about some management seminars that he had attended. The seminar leaders were from Harvard and other Ivy league schools back east. One of the seminars that was very interesting to him was the one that concerned our ora.

Now I'm not sure what "ora" meant to the seminar leader, but they were talking about pairing up the people and sending them off to separate rooms and allowing them to get in touch with one another's ora. An ora is supposed to be a glow around your head.

The indications were that you could communicate and gain knowledge from one another through being in touch with each others ora.

The Sunday School teacher ended his comments by saying that the people can have a 90% accuracy with this ora melding, and that he didn't know what to think about it, or where the ora came from.

Now I don't want to step on anyone's toes today, and I trust that none of you are into one another's ora, but I think that Sunday School teacher needs a good dose of knowing who the good guys and the bad guys are in this present world. He doesn't even recognize false philosophy when it circles his head!

Now I don't know what these "ora" are either, but I know that they aren't hallos! I may not know what they are, but I certainly know where the philosophy behind them came from, and I don't think that I would term it heavenly!

We Christians today in America are so prone to accepting anything and everything that we are basically accepting most anything that the Devil puts in our path!

We had seen a movie on television that depicted a nun that was living in the old west. She was a good woman and did many nice things for people in the movie. One of the women in our church was describing this good Christian movie that she had seen on television. It was the nun movie. The woman declared that this was a movie about this beautiful Christian woman doing all these great things.

I was recently in a meeting of Christian leaders and one of the men mentioned that a certain movie was going to be on that evening. I had nothing to do that evening so sat down to watch this movie that had been so highly recommended. I was a bit shocked to say the least. The movie was about ghosts telling people what to do in the first place, and in the second place, the swearing was so bad that we turned it off before it had gone very far.

I don't know what that Christian leader would classify as a movie that should not be viewed, but I feel anyone that fills their minds intentionally with language of that sort has some spiritual problems, or soon will if he doesn't.

We cannot fill our minds with garbage and expect roses to come out in our lives!

We recently found out that someone was upset with a television show that we were watching. The problem was that a man had shot a woman. Now that is really something to be concerned about in this day and age in television viewing. The same person by the way watches shows that have extensive swearing in them. The person was so upset with that show that we were watching that they began using swear words to describe it. Now isn't that just consistent as all get out! Degrade a TV show by swearing about it.

COME ON CHRISTIAN!

## I. THE BAD GUYS

As we begin our study, I would like to let you know where I'm going, just in case I'm able to get there. If I get there it will really impress you. If I don't get there you will probably be so confused that you won't care.

We want to look at the "BAD GUYS" or the Devil and the demons, then we want to look at the "GOOD GUYS," or the Angelic host, and finally we want to look at the "FALL GUYS" - that's us believers that don't know the good guys from the bad guys.

The demonic host is in conflict with the angelic host in the spirit world, even today. We don't know about this conflict much for we don't get 5:00 o'clock news on the battles like we did on the Viet-Nam war.

We don't know of the battles because they rage on a spiritual plain, with spiritual armies.

Now if all this is sounding bizarre, weird, and like science fiction, please hold onto your negative thoughts against your church leadership for asking me to speak this morning, and allow me time to dig my self out of this hole and look into the scripture with you for a few minutes to see what the Lord says on the subject.

Let us take a look at the bad guys.

We all know that when Lucifer rebelled against God, he had many followers that fell with him. The fallen angels appear to be the demons that the Bible mentions so often.

We also all know that the demons are active in making life miserable for people in the Gospels. The demon activity seems to be very intense in the Gospels, and most believe this intensity was due to the Devil's intense efforts to thwart God's plan of redemption.

These demons were active before the time of Christ, and are still active to this day. The Scripture does not give much mention to this activity, I believe, due to the fact that the Lord was showing in the Gospels that The Lord Jesus Christ had power over the demons. He could command them at will. This was a part of the verification that this Jesus was really and truly The Messiah-God.

We know that the demons can cause many many physical and mental problems for the unbeliever, indeed one must wonder how many of the sick crimes of our own day are caused by demon activity.

I recently saw a news cast of a woman that had been beaten for several minutes and then stabbed a number of times. One of her attackers yelled at his friend that this one wouldn't die. He kept on beating her. Both her arms were smashed and her head severely beaten.

The detective that interviewed the woman said that he had been told that the woman described the man and ended by stating that when she looked into the man's eyes she saw pure evil staring back. Later they found the young men were involved in Satan worship.

We don't hear much about demon activity here in America, because the Devil is not outward with his activity here.

If you talk to missionaries from Haiti or the Netherland Antilles you will find that demon activity is great even today.

HOWEVER, here in the United States the Devil is much more laid back.

He uses much more subtle tools in our laid back, accepting American society. He uses things that even we Christians accept as okay in our homes. He uses the:

Television set - You know that thing with the on/off switch on it, that never sees the off position.

Magazine ads - Some of the ads I see today, I must turn away from without reading because of the trash they contain.

I do not even look at Playboy and such magazines, yet when I pick up some catalogs that used to be available to the family, I am forced to quickly turn pages because of the same things that Playboy carries. We are throwing away many of those catalogs without looking at them.

Videos - you know the movies that we wouldn't think of going to a theater to see. Or the "Christian" video series that are on the market to tickle our ears. We have seen some that have absolutely no Scripture in them.

Self help books - you know, the ones that tell you how to take care of your family, the books that give you all the answers of the world, and seldom answers from the Word of God. I read an article by someone that had done a very extensive study of Christian literature and found that 87% of the Christian books on the market are of the make me feel good type. The self help - the Christian novels - the get in touch with yourself "Bible" studies - etc.

Even the Charismatic movement has seen the psychological junk the "Christian psychologists" have been feeding us! I fear most evangelicals are still wallowing in it.

**WE HAVE ONE SELF HELP BOOK! IT COMES IN A PLAIN BLACK COVER FOLKS!**

Sports - You know, the common expression years ago concerning car racing was that people liked it and went to the races because they wanted to see the wrecks. Today, I wonder how many watch football, baseball, and basketball to see the fights and the slugfests.

We have talked to good Christians that have rented motel rooms while on a trip to watch a Nebraska game. They watch the game and leave.

Radio - I might take an hour or two on secular radio, but I won't, I will just mention some of the trash on the "Christian" radio stations. We were listening one bright sunny Sunday morning and the preacher was boldly preaching the insecurity of the believer. In fact he preached that if you don't attend church properly you will lose your salvation.

The saddest part of Christian radio and television is that good fundamental believers are helping support the false teaching that is going out to pollute the airwaves and peoples minds.

I Timothy mentions that we are to avoid false teaching, not listen to it and support it's spread!

Enough commentary! END HOBBY HORSE! Let's get down to business.

Deut. 34.1-6.

"And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

"And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

"And the Negev, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

"And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over there.

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

Now you are sitting there thinking, "Why did this character take us to that passage to show us the bad guys?" Turn with me to Jude 9 and I will show you.

Jude gives us a word of commentary concerning the Deut. passage.

"Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses..."

Now we don't want to get into all the ramifications of this text, but we can note that there was a dispute between the devil and Michael the angel over the body of Moses. We know from Deut. that Michael was victorious because it tells us God buried Moses.

The lesson we want to see is that there are conflicts on the spiritual plain. There are things going on that we are completely unaware of.

Let's look at another text which will show us the same principle.

Dan 10:10-21 I would like to read verses 12, 13 for you. The prophet Daniel had desired to understand a vision and the Lord had sent an angel to him with the information.

The angel has just arrived and is speaking.

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

"But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me...."

Michael gets into all sorts of problems doesn't he! What a battle - 21 days - but God's forces were victorious! We aren't told the specifics of this withstanding, but it is quite evident that there was a spiritual confrontation.

Michael is also mentioned in Dan 12.1, where it tells that he will stand one day for the nation of Israel. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince who standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

Another account which shows angelic intervention into man's world. Herod in this account is trying to disrupt things, but God again sees the victory! Acts 12.6-10 carries the account of the release of Peter from prison by an angel. This release seems to have been in response to the prayers of the saints. Vs. 5 mentions, "...prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him."

Paul relates this conflict to the security of the believer in relation to God's love, in Rom 8:38, a very familiar passage to you, I'm sure. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God..."

Paul also relates to the church at Ephesus the truth that there are powers in the heavens. Eph. 3.10, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places..."

Another text which shows the conflict is Ps 107.2, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

We won't take time to look at Luke 8.4-15 where the parable of the sower relates that the Devil can take the word out of the heart of the listener.

And now to our final text for this section let us look at Eph 6:12 for a moment. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Folks we are involved in this same conflict in this life as we go about our daily routine today.

We are involved, whether we want to be or not!

We are involved, whether we know it or not!

We are involved, whether we want to recognize it or not!

How involved, depends on your proximity to God. If you are walking with Him there will be more spiritual conflict. If you are walking away from Him there will be less spiritual conflict. Satan won't bother a sleeping saint - except to rock his cradle!

## II. THE GOOD GUYS

The fact that there are good guys is seen in the vast army of the Lord that is mentioned in Ps 68.17. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."

Angels are mentioned over 300 times in the scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. The term means simply "messenger."

They are created beings: Ps. 148.2-5; Col. 1.16; Jn. 1.1-3.

It would seem that they were created primarily to praise and serve God. Ps 148.2-5; Heb. 1.6.

They are spirit beings: Heb. 1.13,14

They are powerful: II Thes 1.7; II Pet 2.11; Ps 103.20.

There are many of them: Dan 7.10 mentions there were 10,000 times 10,000 which is 100 million at one function, and then Heb 12.22 mentions that they are innumerable. A WHOLE BIG BUNCH OF THEM!

To the point of them being the good guys.

a. They seem to minister to the believer in some manner. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Heb 1.14 "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones [children]; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, who is in heaven." Mat. 18.10

b. They serve God: They guarded the gate to the garden of Eden after Adam and Eve went out for lunch at the thistle labor café. Gen 3:22-24

c. We have already seen that in the conflict in the spiritual realm, that they are those that oppose Satan's forces.

d. They are involved in the after death experience of the believer in some manner. They are mentioned in the death of Moses as well as the death of Lazarus in Lu 16.22.

It is of interest that the Lord would send ministering spirits to minister to us at what is usually the most feared time of our earthly existence.

e. They carry out God's judgments: This is seen in Revelation as well as in Acts 12.23 where it mentions that an angel smote Herod with a great affliction.

We might draw some conclusions about the angelic host.

1. They serve God willingly.
2. They minister to man at times.
3. They are involved in the great spiritual conflict that is going on.

It is my personal opinion that they are involved in the rise and fall of nations. The fact that Daniel was closely tied to angels, as well as to his prophecies of the rise and fall of nations, seems to indicate it to me. Michael standing for Israel in the end time may also indicate the working with the nations.

At times there are things that go on in the nations that are really unexplainable in normal terms.

Many have wondered just why the Allies won WW II. The war was not going all that well, and most realize that the hand of God was upon the allies in some manner. Hitler was developing weapons that could have turned the war his way, indeed probably would have won it for him.

During one of the battles between Israel and the Arabs a number of years ago the enemy had missiles aimed at all of the major Israeli installations and armies. They had to do nothing but press the button and the missiles would have done their work. The soldiers saw the Israeli armies advancing and all panicked and left their stations without pressing the button. The Israelis walked in and took over.

Even the events of 1989-90 in the communist world smack of supernatural intervention.

The Kuwait crisis that appeared almost over night has seen most of the world come against one nation.

4. There is one more passage that indicates that we may well be involved with angels in this life in ways that we may never know. Heb. 13 1-2, "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

I'm not sure what that means, but I'm careful to read literally, and assume some strangers may be angels.

One late cold winter night in Colorado as we topped a mountain pass in a near blinding blizzard we saw an old dilapidated pickup on the side of the road with the hood up. We were going slow due to the weather and as we passed by the truck I noticed someone under the hood - literally he was sitting on the radiator with one leg on each side of the engine.

I pulled over immediately to see if I could help the poor man.

The snow was very wet and blowing almost horizontally. As I reached the truck the old

unshaven, unkept man grinned and began thanking me over and over for stopping. He told me several times that he did not know what he was going to do. He said that he had been there for some time and no one had even passed by.

I had taken a flashlight with me and fortunate I was for the man had no light, and he was using paper matches in the driving wind and wet snow to try to see what was wrong with the truck. As he described the problem I assumed that his distributor had gotten wet. I had him hold the flashlight and I opened it to drain the melted snow from within.

We dried it out the best we could and put it back together. The truck started immediately. As I closed the hood of the truck he came to the front with tears in his eyes again thanking me over and over for taking time to stop for him.

Was this a man or angel? I have no idea, but as I drove off down the interstate the later fit the situation best. There was no one out on the road that night except the foolish Derickson family and an old stranger in an old pick up.

The whole situation seemed so out of character to any reality I wondered if that were angel.

### III. THE FALL GUYS

Well we have identified the bad guys and the good guys, and now we want to get onto the third group in our outline, the fall guys.

That's us folks!

We seem to fall for all the garbage that the Devil and his world system feed us.

We fall for the lies of Satan concerning proper sexual behavior.

We fall for the lies of Lucifer concerning proper ethical and financial conduct.

We fall for the lies of the Deceiver concerning what is wholesome entertainment.

We fall for the lies of that Old Serpent concerning what is right and wrong according to the Scriptures.

We fall for the lies of the Arch Enemy of God, and put our Lord to shame!

We, folks are the fall guys!

We don't need to be however, for the Lord has given us all the tools we need, to face the Devil.

He has given us all the armor we need, but we have to put it on.

He has given us the answer, that is to resist him, but we have to do the resisting.

He has given us the Holy Spirit to assist, but we have to allow Him control.

I Pet. 5:8-9 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

We are to be sober.

We are to be vigilant.

We are to resist the devil. Not now and then, but steadfastly!

**HE IS OUR ADVERSARY!**

Let me try to illustrate the thought of an adversary.

Many years ago I saw a movie as a child. It was the story of a destroyer and a submarine. The destroyer was on the trail of the submarine and no matter what the sub would do the captain of the destroyer would out guess him. Each and every move the sub captain would make the destroyer captain would follow.

The sub captain was one of the most cunning of the German U-boat fleet, yet he could not shake this crafty American captain on the surface.

After one of the depth charge attacks the captain of the sub shoot debris and bodies out of the torpedo tube to try and convince the American that he had destroyed the sub.

The sub played dead for as long as their air supply would last. Hoping that the destroyer had gone, he began to surface to get air and recharge his batteries.

The destroyer was waiting and sent another round of depth charges.

The sub captain knew that he had to surface for air and power. The depth charge attack caused more damage. As the sub came close to the surface, the captain was able to get a torpedo off which struck the destroyer. The destroyer being good at strategy played dead in the water. As the sub surfaced to finish the destroyer off with its deck gun the destroyer captain ordered his crippled ship to ram the sub.

The close of the movie was a mass of twisted steel and fire as both ships sank.

The American captain was certainly an adversary. He did not give up the fight even when the other captain made it hard for him.

The thought of our verse is that the Devil is our adversary. He will chase us down and defeat us if we give him any opening at all. His main purpose is to destroy us and our effectiveness for God.

THAT FOLKS IS THE BAD NEWS, BUT GOD DOES NOT LEAVE US ONLY WITH BAD NEWS. WE HAVE SOME VERY GOOD NEWS ON THIS SUBJECT AS WELL!!

James 4.7 is a verse that is critical to our understanding of all that we have mentioned thus far in our study. "Submit yourselves therefore to god. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Now, don't you take that verse lightly! Don't you pick up on only the last phrase and tell me that you are going to resist the devil. The first phrase is there for a supreme purpose! Without it you have no hope of resisting the devil.

"SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD." THEN YOU CAN RESIST THE DEVIL.

HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU - HE WANTS NO PART OF A BELIEVER THAT IS SUBMITTING TO THE LORD IN HIS LIFE!

Yes, there are bad guys. The fallen angels are causing all sorts of problems for the Lord in the heavenlies,

BUT

We know that the good guys are always on the winning side in the heavenlies.

The devil and his forces are constantly trying to ruin what God is doing, YET there is never a time when they accomplish their task.

They may be able to side track some at times, but God always has the victory!

God will not be stopped, nor will His plan be stopped.

The angelic host and God will always be the winning side in all battles, as well as in the war. Satan and his followers will in the end times be cast into the lake of fire for all of eternity.

The point of all this boils down to the fact that, again we can see that God is most worthy of our obedience, service and praise.

He is not only victorious in the cross and in the end times, but He is victorious in every battle.

It is our place to allow Him free reign in our lives so that we will always be resisting the devil.

Not only can we give Satan fits through walking with God, but we can have confidence in the future.

No matter how fierce Satan gets in his battle, God will be the victor!

God is all powerful - He will put the Devil down.

God is all knowing - He will always know what Satan is up to and will block his efforts.

God is everywhere - The demons, nor Satan can ever sneak up on you without God intervening.

He will be victor if we allow Him to be in our lives - Submit to God not the Devil!

May we stop being the fall guys and begin to be the guys with the white hats. That is our main purpose in life folks.

Don't be a fall guy.

We never need to fall, but if you do fall, then take the count and come back fighting for all you are worth.

Reject the junk you hear, see and read.

Remove yourself from contact with things that are wrong.

Renew your mind when you find it walking where it ought not.

Resist the Devil and he will flee from you!

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## INFLECTING PERSECUTION UPON THE AFFLICTED

Acts 7.59-8.4

INTRODUCTION: To introduce our study, I would like to read two accounts of believers from church history.

Blandina, a slave, having a constitution so delicate that even the Christians doubted whether she would have strength to remain steadfast, was tormented from morning till night with every conceivable manner of torture, so that at last the tormentors themselves became exhausted, and

declared they could not conceive of any new torture to apply, and that they could not comprehend how she could continue to live, as her whole body was torn and lacerated. But the Lord mightily strengthened her so that she could continue to confess: " I am a Christian, and the wickedness which is imputed to Christians is slander." (From Woodlawn Co. Electronic Church History)

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, a pupil of the Apostle John and an aged man, was put to death under Trajan. On one occasion he testified before the Emperor that the gods of the heathen are nothing, and that there is but one God who created heaven and earth, and only one Saviour, the only begotten Son of God. Upon command of the Emperor he was sent in chains to Rome, there to atone for his faith in the Crucified One by suffering death.

He writes in one of his letters: "On the whole way from Syria to Rome I fought with wild beasts, being tied to ten leopards (soldiers) who, the more I sought to do them good, were all the more filled with madness against me. Nevertheless, though they cast me into the fire or to the wild beasts, though they nail me to the cross or tear all my limbs asunder, what does it all amount to if I can only enjoy Jesus! "In Rome he was thrown before beasts. When he heard the lions roaring he said, "I am Christ's grain of wheat which must first be crushed by the teeth of wild beasts before it can become pure bread." The lions soon finished their work. The few bones which remained were buried at Antioch (A.D. 116). (From Woodlawn Co. electronic Church History)

This study was initiated by a discussion in my churches evening prayer meeting. Persecution was brought up and I remembered some information that had arrived at the church which I had not had time to go over. I went home and sorted through it. I found a letter and some information from the Conservative Baptist headquarters and the National Association of Evangelicals. (I personally do not belong to either of these organizations. I happened to be interim pastor at a Conservative Baptist Association church at the time, assisting a small church until they could find a pastor.)

I would like to take some time to consider the following points:

#### I. FACT OF PERSECUTION

#### II. BIBLE VIEW OF PERSECUTION

#### III. EVALUATION OF PRESENT ATTITUDE TOWARD PERSECUTION

This is not a detailed study of what the Bible says on persecution, but is enough of a study to know the basics of how we should feel about, and react to persecution in our lives and in the lives of other believers in the world.

#### I. FACT OF PERSECUTION

A portion of the information in this section came from the material from Conservative Baptist

Association and National Association of Evangelicals but I have adapted and added to it.

There are some reasons for rising persecution of Christians in the world today.

1. 70% of evangelicals lived in North America and Europe in 1960.

70% of evangelicals lived in third world countries in 1990.

2. Islam declared a holy war against Christianity a number of years ago. Their war was to be a war of words and they began disseminating their information with millions of dollars of funding. They waged this war by exporting thousands of their followers into our cities. They waged advertising campaigns and media blitzes to spread their message.

You can go to any major city and find one if not numerous mosques. Indeed, many churches have been turned into mosques here in America and abroad.

In more recent years militant movements have taken the war in a more literal way and are waging war on all non Muslims, not just Christians. Anyone that is not a Muslim is given a choice to convert or die in some countries today.

3. Communist governments have always been antichristian. We now have China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba becoming more active in their persecution. Some believe this is due to the high profile of the Roman Church in the fall of the Soviet Union. They may well be taking note of the high interest in Christianity among the former Soviet Block nation people. The countries of the Soviet block are crying to hear of the Word of God.

4. The end of the age seems closer than ever before, and the Devil may well be taking heavier actions in an attempt too slow or stop his own defeat.

5. Michael Horowitz, a Jew, sees parallels between what is going on today to Christians with that that occurred with the Jewish people in Germany BEFORE the real holocaust began. The splitting of families, the taking of parents, the taking of children, the reduction of rights, etc. Based on his concern Mr. Horowitz has joined Christians in their effort to stop the persecution of believers in the world.

6. In Sudan the strong Muslim government is taking children of believers to sell into slavery. They are also withholding food from starving people until they convert to Islam.

Now, a little church history. The Christian record in this is not all that great so don't be too brutal in your condemnation of the Muslims. During the Christianization under Constantine and during the crusades

It was become Christian or die. The Muslims are just using previously successful tactics to gain

converts. Realizing these tactics were mostly the Roman church and the Church of England, it is also realized that most people relate them in this day to all of Christianity - including us, and as a result the Muslims would only feel they were paying us back for what we did to them in the old days.

Not only is there a great persecution, but there is a great "OFFICIAL" blindness to it in our government.

#### EXAMPLES OF BLINDNESS TO PERSECUTION:

The CBA/NAE material was very clear on this point.

1. Ambassador to China, Jim Sasser, was briefed on all sorts of human rights violations in China before he took his position. He was informed about the Tibetan Buddhists, student democracy and other groups, but they forgot to mention the persecution of house churches all across the country of China. When asked about this he asked what a house church was.

2. The Emigration and Naturalization Service has repeatedly turned away Christians fleeing religious persecution even though the believers are under threat of death in their own country. Twenty Iranian leaders have fled Iran in the last two years, yet none have been allowed to come to the US. They are turned over by American officials to Turkish (Muslim) officials and are turned directly back to Iran.

## II. BIBLE VIEW OF PERSECUTION

#### SCRIPTURE TO CONSIDER:

My first thought in this study was Daniel. What outcry was there when Daniel was cast into the lion's den. He went but there was no outcry.

In Daniel's day there was no such movement as human rights, there was no American Civil Liberties Union, there was no Amnesty International. There was no one to raise an outcry against such things as dictators and their lion's dens.

Daniel 6:22 "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 was innocent yet punished, mainly because he was a follower of God. This is the situation in most cases of persecution.

PRINCIPLE ONE: GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS OWN IN THE MANNER IN WHICH HE SEES FIT.

He used an angel to save Daniel, yet he allows others to die for their faith. It is His sovereign will that is in effect.

Is it wrong to raise an outcry? No, but if none is forth coming one should not be surprised, nor should one blame God. He at times allows all sorts of things to happen.

#### PRINCIPLE TWO: PERSECUTION IS NOT A SURPRISE PARTY FOR GOD.

The early church had thousands of people that were killed, fed to the lions, or burned on crosses. Persecution is not to be a surprise.

2 Timothy 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

We should not go looking for ways to be persecuted, but we ought not be surprised if we are either.

#### PRINCIPLE THREE: A BELIEVER SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN STOPPING WRONGFUL DEALINGS WITH PEOPLE BY GOVERNMENTS

Proverbs 24:11 "If thou forbear to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death, and [those that are] ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]? and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works?"

The thought of this passage is that you ought to be involved in keeping people from death if you can, but if you don't, there is a score keeper that will settle with you later.

The NIV translates it as follows: 11 "Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. 12 If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?"

This is a general statement of anyone, not just believers! I mention this because I have some comments about the current concern of Christians over Christian persecution later in the study.

Hebrews speaks to this thought of helping ALL that are wrongly treated. Hebrews 13:1-3 "Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; [and] them which suffer adversity, as being Yourselves also in the body."

After the service in which I preached this message one of the men came to me and told me he had never noticed that Proverbs verse before and then related it to abortion - another fine application

of the text. If we are not verbal in this issue then we are neglectful.

#### PRINCIPLE FOUR: WE ARE SERVING GOD WHEN WE ASSIST THOSE THAT ARE BEING PERSECUTED

These verses are speaking of the helping of those in need, but certainly applies to those that are being persecuted or being tortured, and/or killed.

Matthew 25:36 "Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

Matthew 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me."

#### PRINCIPLE FIVE: OUR DUTY TO THOSE THAT ARE UNDER GOVERNMENTAL PERSECUTION IS TO PRAY FOR THEM

Acts 12:5 "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

This principle is also seen in a general sense in 1 Timothy 2:1 where Paul tells Timothy to pray for leaders and rulers. This should be a part of the prayer for oppression that we offer to the Lord. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and [for] all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

There is a related negative thought to this. Prayer was the limit of assistance given by believers in the passage. The believers did not go to the jail to see if they could break them out.

In our government, we have all sorts of avenues to assist us in aiding someone, but breaking the law is not a normal option.

#### PRINCIPLE SIX: WHEN BELIEVERS IN THE WORLD SUFFER WE ALSO SHOULD BE SUFFERING.

This is not always the case. There was great persecution in the Soviet Block years ago, and American believers didn't know anything about it.

This brings up the need for better communications around the world so that these things can be known. We are just beginning to hear of the persecution of believers because the media does not choose to give us this information.

The verse following is a general passage to a local church, but in application, if any believer is having persecution it is going to affect the overall ability of the universal church to function properly - as God wants it to function.

I Cor. 12.26 "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

**PRINCIPLE SEVEN: THE PERSECUTION OF OTHER BELIEVERS SHOULD BE A GOOD TESTIMONY TO BELIEVERS AS WELL AS TO THE WORLD.**

II Thess. 1.4 "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure."

Though persecution is terrible and frustrating and brutal, we as believers should take it in stride as a part of what God has planned for us in this world.

Believers in America feel that God owes us three cars and a four-bedroom house with full retirement benefits. **GOD OWES US NOTHING!** Our blessings here in America are a **GIFT** from God not our rights conferred.

**PRINCIPLE EIGHT: WE ARE NOT TO BE ASHAMED OF THOSE THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE WORLD ARE PERSECUTING.**

Paul makes this clear in 2 Timothy 1:16 "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain:"

**PRINCIPLE NINE: WE OUGHT TO BE VITALLY INVOLVED IN SEEKING OUT THOSE THAT ARE IN TROUBLE AND ASSISTING THEM AS WE CAN.**

Paul again mentions Onesiphorus and his assistance to himself. 2 Timothy 1:17 "But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found [me]."

**PRINCIPLE TEN: PERSECUTION RESULTS IN VICTORY FOR THE BELIEVER AND GOD**

Rom. 8.35 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

We can know that any persecution we find ourselves in is there due to God allowing it to come into our lives for us to learn from and for us to glorify Him in.

**III. EVALUATION OF PRESENT ATTITUDE TOWARD PERSECUTION**

1. The current move among Christians to stop the persecution of Christians is to be commended, however there are some serious flaws in their reasoning.

The National Association of Evangelicals, the Freedom House in Washington, and many spokes people - evangelical and charismatic alike (Josh McDowell, Bill Bright, John MacArthur, Joe Aldrich from Multnomah, Dr. Stowell from Moody, Elizabeth Elliot, Charles Colson, J.I. Packer, and assorted charismatic preachers) are calling Christians to action. They are wanting us to raise holy Cain due to the persecution of believers in all parts of the world. (This was the thrust of the material from CBA.)

This is commendable, but where was the outcry of Christians when Hitler was doing his work, where was the outcry of Christians when Stalin was doing his work, where was the outcry of Christians when the Cambodians were doing their work, where was the outcry of Christians when the Bosnians were doing their work?

Outcry, yes quite appropriate for all of mankind that is being persecuted, but not just for Christians. I think the lost world will see this outcry as quite late and quite self centered. The lost will be thinking, yes, now that it is them, they will raise Cain. **OUR OUT CRY SHOULD BE AGAINST PERSECUTION, NOT AGAINST PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS!**

2. There is also a great danger in the information that I have seen. It is a great drawing together of religious groups of every stripe into one effort. This is another step toward greater ecumenism. We saw it first on the abortion issue and now on rights issues. The NAE in one of their communications equated Evangelical Christians with Roman Catholics and called both Christian.

3. There is a great danger not only to the ecumenical drawing together of saved and unsaved, but it is also **OF GREAT DANGER TO OUR ABILITY TO WITNESS TO THE LOST WORLD.** If the lost see us as the same as all the other religions of the world, why should they listen to what we have to say.

#### APPLICATION:

In keeping with the thought of the message, we need to give opportunity to apply what we have learned.

1. When you hear information about human rights, listen to what is going on in the world and support the efforts that are being made in the world.

I have always had mixed feelings about America meddling in other countries' human rights. Our own current human rights aren't all that good at times. It is well and good to do as we can, but it must be remembered that these are sovereign countries, not American satellites.

2. Write your congress people. The addresses are at the bottom of the study.

3. Speak out in any situation in which you find yourself and the subject of rights comes up.
4. DON'T YOU DARE FORGET HOWEVER THAT THE KEY FUNCTION OF THE BELIEVER IS TO WITNESS OF THEIR LORD. Never should we give second place to the Gospel, not even in this instance.
5. And finally, PRAY for those around the world that are suffering for their Lord Jesus Christ.

#### HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. For the people being persecuted. That they would be courageous, patient, and good testimonies to their persecutors. That they would find the strength in their God to face what they must face.
2. For the people persecuting others. That they would find mercy and a knowledge of right and wrong.
3. For knowledge of how to help and assist in the work of stopping persecution around the world.
4. Know that it is only God that can intervene in any situation and it is He that we must lean and depend on.

#### MOVING TO ACTION:

President (President's name); White House; Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable (Representative's full name); U.S. House of Representatives; Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable (Senator's full name); United States Senate;

Washington, DC 20510

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m00700

TITLE: THIS RACE IS FIXED

READ I Sam. 17:38-49

#### OUTLINE:

I. RUNNING FAITHFULLY

II. RUNNING EASILY

### III. RUNNING SINLESSLY

### IV. RUNNING PATIENTLY

In our Scripture reading we read of David slaying the giant. I once heard an evangelist go through this story with great gusto and and great emphasis and great action.

He ended the story from Goliath's perspective. As the stone hit him in the head he said, "That's the first time anything like that ever entered my mind."

I wanted to read that particular account because it sets the stage very nicely for our discussion this morning. David went out to meet the giant in the power of the Lord. He had a very big job on his hand and he went as best prepared as he could. He went knowing that his God would make up the differences between himself and the job that God had set before him.

I would like for you to think for the time before us about the job that the Lord God has given to you to do. I would like for you to think through a few thoughts and compare the job He has given you to do with the job that you are now doing.

Please turn with me to Heb. 12:1 for a few moments. "WHEREFORE SEEING we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (2) Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:1-2

### I. RUNNING FAITHFULLY

"WHEREFORE SEEING we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,"

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is full of examples, from the Old Testament, of great men of God that walked before the Lord with great faith and were able to accomplish great and mighty deeds for their God.

In light of all they did, and in light of the fact that they may be gathered around watching us run our own race or walk our own walk before God - in light of their observation, and in light of their great example we ought to run our race as they did!

We need to take a few moments to decide just how they ran their race.

They did it by faith. "The just shall live by faith," according to Habbakuk, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews.

The writer of Heb. introduces the "FAITH CHAPTER" with the verse, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Heb. 10:38

According to that verse the writer of Hebrews will have no pleasure in the man that does not live by faith.

You may want to find some application in that verse. As people that walk by faith we ought not have pleasure in those believers that do not live by faith.

On the other side of the coin those that aren't walking by faith shouldn't be upset with those that are, when they confront them with their wrong.

How are you running your race this week, this month, this year?

Are you living by faith or by self?

The time in which I went to Bible college was a time in church history when "living by faith" was the common topic for study.

The church goes through cycles of teaching - we had the Holy Spirit cycle - we had the spiritual gift cycle - we had the any rule is legalism cycle - we had the feel good cycle -we had the be friendly in church cycle - I grew up spiritually in the live by faith cycle.

It was Biblical - still is Biblical and I saw it for what it was - truth, so we as a couple adopted the life style before the Lord.

Live by faith - God will take care of you - trust God - He won't let you down. We did - we didn't carry life insurance, we didn't carry medical insurance (couldn't afford it anyway) and lived - trusting God to provide.

We even went to school not knowing where tuition would come from. We went through many years of school - God provided. We went through many years of life and didn't need the life insurance, we went through many medical problems and God provided, we had two children and God provided.

Then, guess what. I found out many of my teachers had owned their own homes, had life and medical insurance and had retirement plans and investments. They were preparing for their future - not allowing God to plan it for them.

What hypocrites! I struggled with feelings for a long time then I found this passage - I had lived Biblically and did so before a cloud of heavenly witnesses. What my teachers lived like was irrelevant, I live before witnesses and God not man!

IN ADDITION TO LIVING BY FAITH THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS ADDS A FEW EXTRA ITEMS OF INTEREST TO HELP US RUN OUR RACE.

We are to run easily.

## II. RUNNING EASILY

"let us lay aside every weight,"

Our sons were great fans of cross country races and loved to go running when they were in High School. One of the main things that concerned me with their running however, was the cost of shoes and uniforms. The school supplied the uniforms but the boys had to supply the shoes.

The uniforms are made of very light materials so that they do not tire the runners. They are also very close fitting so that the material does not flop in the breeze and create drag when they run. It is also very slick to lessen the drag.

Some, when referring to my baldness suggest that maybe I'm being prepared for long distance running.

The shoes that I mentioned are not just ordinary tenneys! They are special running shoes. They are designed to be durable yet very light. You wonder, when lifting one up, how they can charge anything for them. They are many times lighter than regular old tennis shoes.

The cost is what really hurt! They cost in the \$45 and up range. The really good ones were way out of the \$45 range and that was many years ago.

The point to be made is this: AS A RUNNER YOU WANT TO HAVE NOTHING THAT IS GOING TO SLOW YOU DOWN. THE REASON FOR RUNNING IS TO COMPLETE THE RACE AS VICTOR! Anything that will slow, should be set aside!

This race is set before each and every one of us to be run. We are to run it with the greatest speed with which we are able.

THE NEAT THING ABOUT THIS RACE IS THAT ALL OF US THAT RUN WILL BE VICTORS IN OUR OWN RIGHT!

What are some of these weights that trouble us in 199.. America?

1. II Tim. mentions that the soldier does not allow himself to become entangled in the affairs of this life.

Read II Tim. 2:4

The question might come to mind as to what the "affairs of this life" might be.

It might mean the money of this life.

It might mean the desires of this life.

It might mean the cars of this life.

It might mean the homes of this life.

It might mean the clothes of this life.

It might mean the opposite sex of this life.

It might mean the occupations of this life.

It might mean the vacations of this life.

It might mean the attractions of this life.

**IN SHORT - ANYTHING THAT THIS LIFE HAS TO OFFER THAT CAN SLOW US IN THE RACE THAT GOD HAS SET BEFORE US!**

If we allow ourselves to become sidetracked in our thinking and our work, to the things that are not in God's plan for us then we are weighing ourselves down with things that the Lord did not desire us to worry about.

2. Worry may enter into this area of weights. If you don't have all that you need to do the job, that God has set before you then you may decide to take things into your own hands and worry about it.

God knows the race that He has placed you in, so don't you think that He knows what you need, to run that race!

He will provide as you have need to run the race in His time!

Indeed, that may relate to one of the other items in our outline - "RUN PATIENTLY." We will see this shortly.

Worry can really tie you up in knots and eliminate any effectiveness that you might have for the Lord's work!

It can take you out of what you should be doing for days if you allow it to. Just allow yourself to

start thinking of your problem and it will become worry very quickly.

The term weight is "onkos" - Strong's # 3591 - and this is the only occurrence in the New Testament. Vine mentions of it, "a bulk or mass; hence, metaphorically, an encumbrance, weight."

Don't allow ANYTHING to become a hindrance to your race!

We are to run faithfully, easily and now sinlessly.

### III. RUNNING SINLESSLY

We all know that we cannot be sinless, however the goal of every believer is to be as near sinless as is possible.

"and the sin which doth so easily beset us,"

It seems from the way the writer puts it, there can be a slowing down of the person by getting entangled in things, yet it seems to be different than being slowed by sin.

It would seem that if we are dabbling in the things that we have mentioned we may not be in sin, yet if we continue we will be in sin.

Or is it that the encumbrances and the sin are the same thing?

I wondered about which it might be so checked some commentators for their thoughts.

It would seem from what I read that there certainly is a distinction between weights and sins.

Newell quotes a man by the name of Ridout concerning the topic of weights (p 400 footnote): "We often hear, alas, the question: What is the harm or the sin in my doing this or that thing; engaging in this business, or indulging in that pleasure? The question is answered just here. Is the thing a weight, or is it a wing? Is it that which speeds you on your course or does it hold you back?... Weights are not necessarily external: they are first of all in the heart."

We might surmise from this that the weights are things that are causing us to be slowed in our hearts and minds. The sins then would seem to be those outward acts of rebellion toward God be they sins of the heart, mind or body.

Newell mentions concerning the term "easily," it "is a Greek word often translated plausibly, and meaning literally, "well-standing-around." The sin that we are discussing is, "well standing around." It is always standing by for us to become involved in.

Vine relates the term to a garment. Our clothing surrounds us - is easily accessible. This sin is near. (euperistatos)

We don't have to go out looking for it - it will be right handy!

We should also probably notice that the weights would tend to slow us in our race while the sins would probably stop us in our race.

Sin may or may not always stop us completely and take us out of the race permanently, but it may be that it will seriously hinder our race for a period of time - even stop our running for a time.

A very good friend of ours in Bible college was living by faith as we were. In his second year of college he began to worry about finances. He knew God was supplying their every need. However he decided he needed to help God and began thinking and planning - he became weighted down.

He spent more and more time planning and thinking and less time on study. He finally had a plan. Take a year off - work like mad and make himself financially stable and return to school.

He bought a business - dropped from school and started gaining financial security. He never returned to school, he lost his business, was deep in debt and he separated himself from his friends.

Don't weigh yourself down with God's duties!

The first time I met him I was sitting by a world map. He walked over to it pointed to the map and said that is where God is going to take me. He has called me to minister to the \_\_\_\_\_ Indians.

He never went. His race was stopped cold by weights of material things.

It should be remembered also that there are certain situations that will keep you from completing your race. For example a pastor that has allowed himself to commit adultery. His ministry is stopped cold. The consequences will hinder his race for his entire life from that point forward.

Not only are we to run faithfully, easily and sinlessly, but we are to run patiently!

#### IV. RUNNING PATIENTLY

"and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

This phrase must have been placed here for Stanley L. Derickson!

I have always been waiting for things to happen. I have spent more time looking forward with anticipation than I have spent in preparation for the race.

I looked ahead to getting to high school.

I looked ahead to getting out of high school.

I looked ahead to getting into the Navy.

I looked ahead to getting out of the Navy.

I looked ahead to getting married.

**DON'T YOU DARE PUT WORD'S IN MY MOUTH!**

I looked ahead to getting into college.

I looked ahead to getting out of college.

I looked ahead to getting into graduate school.

I looked ahead to getting out of graduate school.

I looked ahead to getting into the ministry.

**NOW I LOOK AHEAD TO THE RAPTURE!** Looking "forward to" is acceptable as long as it doesn't hinder our present service.

I looked ahead to everything that was ahead and wasted a lot of time and energy **LOOKING**.

**DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE ANTICIPATION, TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE PREPARATION!**

Don't get ahead of the Lord as He leads you in your race!

Don't even try to figure out ways of getting to your destinations quicker. God may choose a slower path than you would because He knows that you have need of experience or further education.

**HE KNOWS THE PATH THAT HE WANTS YOU TO TAKE, SO WHY NOT LET HIM LEAD YOU THROUGH THAT PATH FOR HIS HONOR AND GLORY.**

Have you noticed this race is fixed? Yes, I will repeat that last phrase for you.

## HAVE YOU NOTICED THIS RACE IS FIXED?

If we follow the Lord faithfully, unweighted, sinlessly and patiently then we will automatically be victors!

We don't have to worry about finding the pylons that direct the runner around the course - He will lead us every step of the way.

In one race that one of our boys was running in, the coach had taken them through the course beforehand so that they would understand just where they were to go. That might have been foolish to some, but as our son was running in the race some of the fellows ahead of him turned a way that they weren't supposed to, and were disqualified. They hadn't followed the rules. Our son ended up in the top group because of the failure of others, to run the course that was set.

## GOD WILL LEAD US AROUND THE COURSE THAT HE HAS SET!!

We need to prepare by setting aside the weights and sins. Then all we have to do is run as fast as we can - as fast as He has enabled us!

He has done everything but move our feet for us. Our only response is to prepare and run and He will do the rest!

## CONCLUSIONS:

1. I found a description of the games in Corinth that relates well to our study.

(From Accents "THE WAY INTO THE HOLIEST" teacher manual page 83.)

"The winners were immortalized. The rules were strict. Every contestant had to be a freeborn man. He had to certify that he had trained for a prior period of ten months. He must be morally clean. Preceding the contest, the athletes were paraded around the arena by a herald who cried out, asking whether the audience could accuse the contestant of any crime, wickedness, slavery, or depravity of life.

"In the ancient contests, each participant was announced by name and country. The winner was crowned with a garland of laurel or parsley, and upon his return home the city received him with great ceremony."

This is similar to our text. We are to lay aside weights and sin and then run.

Can you imagine being lead around the aisles of the church by someone asking if the people could tell of any problems in your life?

2. The tenses of this verse are also very interesting. The verse could read as follows: Having put away the weights and the ever present sin, let us keep running the race that God is setting before us.

The verse assumes you have put weights and sin away and are now ready to run.

God is involved in the course of the race and this involvement as well as our running is in the present tense which indicates that we are to continue running as He continues to lead us.

3. We certainly can't do all this in our own power even though the Lord has made it so very easy for us already.

In verse two we see how we can accomplish all this that God has asked us to do.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

He is our supreme example in how to run the race that God has set before us!

We are to live our life as He lived His.

OUR GOAL SHOULD BE TO:

Be as faithful as He was.

Be as unweighted as He was.

Be as sinless as He was.

Be as patient as He was.

Follow your example! Run as He ran!

4. I don't know what race God has set before you, but you do.

I don't know where you are in that race, but you do.

I don't know if you are even running, but you do.

I don't know if you are weighed down, but you do.

I don't know if you are in sin, but you do.

I don't know if you are being patient in your race, but you do.

BUT YOU DO!

AND SO DOES GOD!

I TRUST THAT YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT!

May we all take time today to assure ourselves and our God that we are running the race that He has set before us as faithfully, unweighted, unsinning and patiently as we can.

May we always look to Christ for the ability to do all that we can, and should for our God!

It is a most lamentable thing to see how most people spend their time and their energy for trifles, while God is cast aside. He who is all seems to them as nothing, and that which is nothing seems to them as good as all. It is lamentable indeed, knowing that God has set mankind in such a race where heaven or hell is their certain end, that they should sit down and loiter, or run after the childish toys of the world, forgetting the prize they should run for. Were it but possible for one of us to see this business as the all-seeing God does, and see what most men and women in the world are interested in and what they are doing every day, it would be the saddest sight imaginable. Oh, how we should marvel at their madness and lament their self-delusion!

If God had never told them what they were sent into the world to do, or what was before them in another world, then there would have been some excuse. But it is His sealed word, and they profess to believe it. Richard Baxter (from <http://www.bible.org> on the internet)

You do as He leads and you win.

The race is fixed.

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m00750

TITLE: HALLOWEEN

Excerpted from Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia

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“HALLOWEEN. Customs and superstitions gathered through the ages go into the celebration of Halloween, or All Hallows Eve, on October 31, the Christian festival of All Saints. It has its origins, however, in the autumn festivals of earlier times.

The ancient Druids had a three-day celebration at the beginning of November. They believed

that on the last night of October spirits of the dead roamed abroad, and they lighted bonfires to drive them away. In ancient Rome the festival of Pomona, goddess of fruits and gardens, occurred at about this time of year. It was an occasion of rejoicing associated with the harvest; and nuts and apples, as symbols of the winter store of fruit, were roasted before huge bonfires. But these agricultural and pastoral celebrations also had a sinister aspect, with ghosts and witches thought to be on the prowl.

Even after November 1 became a Christian feast day honoring all saints, many people clung to the old pagan beliefs and customs that had grown up about Halloween. Some tried to foretell the future on that night by performing such rites as jumping over lighted candles. In the British Isles great bonfires blazed for the Celtic festival of Samhain. Laughing bands of guisers (young people disguised in grotesque masks) carved lanterns from turnips and carried them through the villages.

In the United States children carved faces on hollowed-out pumpkins and put lighted candles inside to make jack-o'-lanterns. Halloween celebrations today reflect many of these early customs. Stores and homes display orange and black figures of witches, bats, black cats, and pumpkins. People dressed in fanciful outfits go to costume parties, where old-fashioned games like bobbing for apples in tubs of water may be a part of the festivities. Children put on costumes and masks and go from house to house demanding "trick or treat." The treat, usually candy, is generally given and the trick rarely played. Some parents feel this custom is dangerous. There have been numerous instances in which sharp objects or poisons have been found in candy bars and apples. To provide an alternative to begging for candy from strangers, many communities schedule special, supervised parties and events at Halloween. The United Nations has used the Halloween observance to collect money “

Some further info on the Druids: They held mistletoe in great reverence, they were well versed in astrology and magic, they were versed in witchcraft, they offered human sacrifices, and one of the games they played on their special day was “who will die next year?”

Most of these verses speak for themselves.

Ex 22:18 Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

Le 20:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.

De 18:9-12 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 11 Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. 12 For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

2Ki 9:22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

2Ch 33:1-2, 6 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: 2 But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Isa 47:10-12 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. 11 Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. 12 Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail.

Na 3:1-6 Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not; 2 The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. 3 The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: 4 Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. 5 Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6 And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazingstock.

Ac 8:9-24 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: 10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he

was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Ac 13:6-10 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Ga 5:19-20 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Re 9:21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Re 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Christians should certainly not want to allow themselves or their children to be tied up in these things. Indeed, would anyone want their children tied up in this sort of thing?

What can Christians do?

1. Pass out tracts sharing Christ with the trick or treaters.
2. Have children pass out tracts or church invitations rather than trick or treating.
3. Tell other people of what you have just read.

Logical reasons not to be involved in Halloween.

1. 10-30-96 national news a police officer commented that they knew there would be human deaths related to Satanic sacrifice on Halloween night in 1996.
2. Vandalism is very costly. Not only to private property, but for extra police etc.
3. Drugs, ground glass and razor blades hidden in candy.

The church today rejects all saints day, but many have adopted the "Harvest Festival" to get away from the thought of Halloween, but most of them have it on Halloween and we have seen black cats, jack-o-lanterns and witches decorating harvest festivals.

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m00800

TITLE: CHRISTMAS - TRUTH OR TRADITION?

INSTRUCTIONS: Before doing anything take the following test to see how well you know Christmas. The key to the test is at the end of the file.

Remember the three kings from the Orient?

1. Were these men kings? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
2. Were there three men? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
3. What did they ride? a. donkeys b. camels c. we don't know
4. Did they follow the star from the East? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
5. What were they looking for? a. baby Jesus b. a king c. we don't know
6. Did they go directly to Bethlehem? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
7. Did the star lead them to Jesus? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
8. Did they find Jesus in the manger? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
9. Did they find Jesus as a baby? a. yes b. no c. we don't know

10. Was Joseph there when the wise men came? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
11. Was Jesus born in a stable? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
12. Were the shepherds there when the wise men came? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
13. Did the angels sing when they announced Christ's birth to the shepherds? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
14. What kind of animals were present at Jesus' birth? a. donkeys b. cattle c. sheep d. all of these e. we don't know
15. Was Jesus born on December 25th? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
16. Was Jesus born the day Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
17. Did Mary ride a donkey either to Bethlehem or to Egypt? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
18. Did Joseph take Jesus and Mary to Egypt from Bethlehem? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
19. Did the shepherds see the star? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
20. Did the wise men go to Bethlehem? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
21. Does the Bible say there was more than one angel making the announcement to the shepherds? a. yes b. no c. we don't know
22. Were there more angels than one involved with the shepherds? a. yes b. no c. we don't know

23. Did the angels appear to the shepherds a. before b. during  
c. after the birth of Jesus?

24. When was Jesus born? a. daytime b. evening c. night d. we don't  
know

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The Christmas Story as told by God.

BIRTH:

"And it came to pass, in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be registered. (And this registration was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be registered, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David), to be registered with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:1-7)

ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo an angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were very much afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." (Luke 2:8-20)

(The circumcision, adoration of Simeon and testimony of Anna are found in Luke 2:21-38)

MAGI:

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod, the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod, the king, had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people, Israel. Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." (Matt 2:1-12)

EGYPT AND THE MASSACRE:

"And when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word; for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its borders, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matt. 2:13-18)

EGYPT TO NAZARETH:

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in

the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there; notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee; And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matt.2:19-23)

#### CHILDHOOD:

"And the child grew, and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)

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#### KEY TO TEST:

The answers below are based on the strict reading of the text and nothing else.

1. b

2. c

3. c

4. b

5. b

6. b

7. a

8. b

9. b

10. b

11. c

12. b

13. b

14. e

15. b

16. c

17. c

18. c

19. b

20. b

21. b

22. a

23. c

24. d

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m00850

WHERE WAS THE GARDEN OF EDEN

MILLENNIAL TEMPLE:

READ Ezek. 43:1-9

Wow!

Let's turn to another text in Ezek. and read a few verses.

The context of this passage is the Lord has been completely disgusted with the children of Israel and is removing His special presence from the temple area.

READ Ezek. 11:22-23.

"Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

"And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city."

We see from these two texts that the Lord was in the temple in the time of the prophets, but that He left due to their sin. We also notice that He will one day return to the temple that will be built in the time of the kingdom.

The old temple was on the site of a rock. Indeed, today the arabs have a mosque on this very site. It is called the Dome of the Rock. Most expositors agree that this will be the site of the future millennial temple. Indeed, Jews of our own day state that this is the location where they will build the temple of God one day for it is the site of the old temples.

Well we have looked at Jerusalem and the temple site in the future and in our present day, so let's take a look at this site in its past.

#### HEROD'S TEMPLE:

In the time of Christ there was a large temple on this site which was built by Herod. This temple was destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 AD when they destroyed Jerusalem. The temple burned and they found that the heat had melted gold and the gold had run down into the cracks between the rocks. The next logical solution to greed was to tear the temple apart rock by rock to get the gold.

The only part of this temple that is left in our own day is what is called the wailing wall. It is a small portion of the foundation of the old temple.

Let's consider the Mt. of Olives for a moment or two.

Baker's Bible Atlas gives a good description of this mountain. "Paralleling the eastern elevation of Jerusalem, separated from it by the Kidron Valley, is the milelong ridge of limestone hills known as the Mount of Olives, or Olivet (elevation about 2,680 feet)."

a. Christ prayed there. Lu 31:37, "And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of olives."

b. Christ taught of the end times there. Matt. 24:3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

By the way the context of this was a statement by the Lord that is of interest. They had just left the temple and Christ speaks to them.

"And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Matt 24:2

Sound familiar? That is what happened in AD 70.

c. The Triumphal entry began on the Mt. Of Olives. Mk 11:1. Christ sent the disciples to get the donkey from Mt. of Olives and the march into Jerusalem began there.

d. He ascended from there. Acts 1:11-12

"Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet...."

e. He will return in like manner and I would assume to the same place. Acts 1:11.

Indeed Zech. 14:4 states this as fact. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Ezek. 43:1-7 speaks to the return to the city as well.

f. We saw in Ezek. 11:22ff that the Glory of the Lord departed from the Mount of Olives.

#### EZRA'S TEMPLE:

Prior to Christ's time there was a smaller temple that had been constructed by some of the returning Jews from captivity in Babylon.

This return was under Ezra and the temple is mentioned in Ezra 6:13-22. Verse 16 mentions, "And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy,"

Since this was a rebuilding of the temple, we must assume that it was on the site of the previous temple that had been destroyed when the people were taken into captivity.

This by the way was the site of the Herodian temple of Christ's time as well.

#### SOLOMON'S TEMPLE:

This temple was of great splendor. The site of this temple was on the site of David's sacrifice after the sin of numbering the people.

II Sam 24:18 mentions, "And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite."

The account mentions that David purchased this floor and made the offerings.

The temple site that Solomon chose is seen in II Chron. 3:1.

"Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite."

Note should be taken. This was the place of access to God for physical salvation of Israel II Sam 24.25. Indeed, all of these temples are for the same thing and these are all on the same site.

We see from this text that Solomon's temple was built on the site where David offered, however a third title is given to this particular place. Mount Moriah.

What significance is there to the term Mount Moriah?

If you have a cross reference, it will send you to Gen 22:2 where Abraham is told to offer Isaac. "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Since the writer of Chronicles names the temple site as Mount Moriah, there must have been basis for thinking that it was where Abraham offered Isaac.

Notice the phrase the mountain "...which I will tell thee of."

There was a special place that the Lord wanted Abraham to meet him with his offering. A special place of meeting God.

This would possibly fit with Jerusalem. Gen 21.33 Abraham is at Beer-sheba; 22.3 He left to offer; 22.44 Three days journey he saw spot.

It is also of interest that the priest that came out to meet with Abraham after Abraham had saved Lot from the armies was from Salem. Melchizadek was the king and priest of Salem.

Salem, by the way is Jerusalem. These may relate. Abraham seemed quite willing to give him a tithe. It may be that they knew of each other.

Do you begin to feel that the temple site in Jerusalem and the city of Jerusalem are of some importance to the Lord our God?

Might we take one step further backward and see what we can discover?

Q. Can you think of any thing further back?

#### CAIN AND ABEL'S TEMPLE:

Cain and Abel offered sacrifices according to Genesis four.

Gen 4:3-4, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:"

We don't want to get into the offerings and problems, but we do want to notice one thing from the verse. Both "brought". What does that indicate? They brought something would indicate that they brought it to a specific place. Since God was showing Moses the history of man, it would seem that the Lord was trying to indicate that the boys brought their offerings to God.

The \$64,000 question is just where did they bring the offerings.

Well since the text does not tell us might we make a sanctified guess that it was to the same place that Adam and Eve probably took their sacrifices. Since there were only four people on earth I must assume that there was only the First Baptist church. They wouldn't have had time to split and start the Bible church yet.

The next question is the same as the last, "Just where did they bring the offerings?"

I am sure in my own mind that the Lord told Adam and Eve where to bring the sacrifices. He doesn't just let us make up our own minds about such things.

Can you think of where Adam and Eve would take their sacrifices?

Where is the last place that they saw the Lord?

Turn to Gen 3:22-24, "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

"So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

What do you make of all that?

Do you see anything in that text that rings a bell with other Old Testament items?

Cherubim - where do we know them to be? Over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.

The sword of flame - could that be similar to the pillar of fire and smoke that was over the tabernacle.

There is some interest in the word "place." It can and is translated "dwell" in other texts in the Old Testament. The verse would then read "so he drove out the man; and he dwelled at the east of Eden...."

God was quite possibly dwelling at the entrance to the Garden of Eden!

SO WHAT?

The garden of Eden was in the area of Jerusalem and the gate quite possibly was at the site of Mt. Moriah, the site of Ornan's threshing floor, the site of Solomon's temple, the site of Ezra's temple, the site of Herod's temple, the site of the Dome of the Rock, the site of the coming Millennial temple.

Does that grab your interest just a little bit???

By the way the cherubim in the Holy of Holies were at the east end of the area, which faced east. The entrances to the temples were on the east and here we see that the cherubim were on the east of Eden.

A couple of texts that might be of interest to you now:

Ps 48:1-2

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

Zion was another name for Jerusalem.

Zech. 8 tells of the restoration of Jerusalem. It also shows the great love that God has for this city. Let's read Zech. 8:1-3

"Again the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying,

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury.

"Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain."

Ps 87 mentions the importance of the city to God.

"His foundation is in the holy mountains.

"The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah."

And one last one, Isa 51:3

"For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found in it, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

Q. Why is Jerusalem so important to God?

He created the garden especially for His creation, man. I assume that He may have had a specific reason for choosing it as the place for His Garden.

Thought: If this spot is special from Abraham to the Millennium it is only logical that it was special before Abraham. Why would He tell Abraham to be at that spot if it isn't special?

Why lead Abraham from Ur clear over to the Jerusalem area? Why tell David to offer on THAT spot if it isn't special?

It seems very logical to assume that if this spot is important in so many dispensations and centuries that it might have been important earlier as well - as in Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel.

One last thing that may add to the information that we have drawn together this

\_\_\_\_\_.

Turn to Gen. 2:8-14

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had

formed.

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

"The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

"And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

"And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Eupharates."

One river that divides into four rivers. The Eupharates is named and is probably the one that we know of today to the northeast of Israel.

The Hiddekel is thought to be by most the Tigris also of which we know.

The other two rivers are unknown to us.

I would like to notice however that one of these is related to Ethiopia which has always been viewed as being south of Egypt. The only river related to that would be the Nile or the Red Sea.

Or might we wonder if the one is the Nile and the other is the Red Sea?

If we were allowed to wonder about that might we know what the first river is then?

The only possible is the Mediterranean Sea and guess what is at the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea! A 10,000 plus foot rift! In places it is 12,960 ft below sea level.

Since most agree that the flood there were some tremendous upheavals and down drafts, might we assume that possibly the Med. was one of the down drafts as was the Dead Sea. Indeed if you look at maps that show the lay of the land the rift goes to the northeast corner of the sea and it is possible that the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan river and the dead sea were a part of one of the rivers.

Unger holds that the garden was in the Tigris Euphrates valley and that the other two rivers were

canals between the Tigris and Euphrates He does not speak to the question that he leaves - what the first river is.

Unger mentions, "Shifting river beds and accumulation of enormous deposits of river silt make the task of locating the site of the Pishon or the Gihon virtually impossible. But the other two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, are well known." (P 406)

Baker's Bible Atlas interestingly enough places the land of Havilah on the south east coast of the Red Sea!

If our thought is correct, it certainly fits with the scripture. Pishon is related to Havilah which is the Red Sea and Gihon is related to Ethiopia which would be the Nile!!!

You might ask if there are any authorities that agree with you? No, to this date I have found none. I will read a comment from Baker that backs up a belief in much of what I have said.

To quote Baker's Bible Atlas, page 150, "The temple Mount, the location of Araunah's Threshing-floor purchased by David and later used by Solomon as the site of the Temple, appears to have been north of the original Zion. It is traditionally associated with the place where Abraham offered Isaac -- Mount Moriah (Gen 22:2; II Chron. 3:1), Although the land of Moriah in the patriarchal record appears to have been a remote spot, removed from human activity. The Moriah of David's day is the central portion of the eastern hill, and the term Zion, initially used of the Jebusite fortress to the south, came to be applied to the Temple Mount as well (cf. Ps. 55:1; Jer. 31:6). Once the site of Solomon's Temple and the Temple built by the Jews who returned from Babylon, the Temple Mount is now the location of the Dome of the Rock, a beautiful octagonal structure built late in the seventh century to serve as a mosque."

This is something that I have been thinking about and teaching as serious theory for some time. I have worked on it since in the 70's and have added to it as I have found references that might relate.

I always encourage all of my theology students to study an item where you disagree with the traditional view long and hard before you even verbalize your thoughts. Then you should keep studying and begin to talk about it with other believers and see if you get any negative reaction. Then teach it as something to think about. Then if still no negative reaction, teach it as what you have come to believe. That way you can always plead ignorance and back up to the traditional position. I offer this study for your consideration and would encourage problems and texts that you might come up with over the years.

We must look at what others say to give you a fair choice.

Unger's Bible Dictionary/p 285

When speaking of Eden: "...evidently in the easternmost third of the fertile Crescent."

"The Hiddekel is the ancient name of the Tigris. Friedrich Delitzsch located the site of Eden just north of Babylon where the Euphrates and Tigris closely approach each other."

The New Universal Standard Encyclopedia, Vol. I: Endless controversy has revolved around the question of the geographic location of Eden, also called the Garden of Eden or Garden of Paradise. According to the Ethiopic Enoch 32.2, it was situated in the northeast, far beyond the Erythraen (Red) Sea. Some religious scholars favor Babylonia, near the Persian Gulf, while others are in favor of Armenia, near the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers."

"Of the vast amount of literature available on the subject of Eden, little is of value in the search for its exact location."

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia "Columbus when passing the mouth of the Orinoco surmised that its waters came down from the Garden of Eden."

If you do shoot me down, please do it gently!

#### APPLICATION:

1. The pillar of smoke and flame was Christ Himself. He was over the tabernacle and at the gate to the garden of Eden.

Can we say that Christ was always the access to God the Father? I think that we can!

The last phrase of Gen. 3:24 is of interest to us in this context. "...sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

One commentary translates the verse as follows: "And He (God) dwelt at the east of the Garden of Eden between the Cherubim, as a Shikinah (a fire tongue or fire-sword) to keep open the way to the tree of life." (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

Indeed Christ is the only way that we can ever see the tree of life that will be in the eternal state according to Rev. 22:2, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

2. Christ is the Angel of the Lord and the Angel of the Lord is the pillar of fire and smoke over the tabernacle.

Ex. 13:21, "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."

There are a number of references to the pillar leading the Israelites. The pillar also came down so God could communicate with Moses at the door of the tabernacle.

As a side note to the idea of a pillar in relation to meeting with God, Jacob after the vision of the ladder and the angels, took the rock that he had used as a pillow and "...set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." Gen 28:18

Then in 28:22 mentions, "And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." This was at Bethel. (Bethel was a little way north of Jerusalem.)

3. If this has been a profitable study and we see that it may well be true, then are there any questions of scripture that are unanswerable if we have the time to seek all through scripture for information that relates to the question.

I have very few questions raised about Scripture that I cannot find an answer to if I take time to do the proper study. A few are still bothering me and I am boiling those away on the back burner until the rest of the information that I suspect is there is brought to my mind.

If this study be true, then you know Adam to Millennium the spot of worship!

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m00900

TITLE: JOB ONE

READ: Matt. 6:21,24, & 33

At Ford, "Quality is job one!" In Christianity "Quality is also JOB ONE!"

JOB ONE IN THREE AREAS

WE NEED A QUALITY BANKER

WE NEED A QUALITY MASTER

WE NEED A QUALITY DESIRE

I. YOUR BANKER

When I think of treasure, I naturally think of my favorite comic book hero. When I was four and five, I had a long sickness that caused me to be in bed for an extended period of time. Many of my folk's friends wanted to do something for me so many of them would bring me comic books.

The one's that I really liked and identified with were the Donald Duck comics. Not so much for Donald but more for Uncle Scrooge than anything!

Uncle Scrooge was "IT" for me. We were poor and I really could identify with Scrooge's desire for money.

I can remember him having a diving board installed in one of his safes so that he could dive into and swim in his money.

I can remember him washing his money in large laundry machines.

I can remember him leading caravans of dump trucks full of money up to his large buildings built in the form of safes.

I can remember Uncle Scrooge opening one of his safe buildings and all of the money running out all over the ground.

I can remember Scrooge having to build new and better and bigger buildings to store his money in.

We have modern day counterparts to Scrooge today in our society.

I have read articles about the rich in our world today that tell of the warehouses that they build to house all of the articles that they no longer use. Jackie Onasis was supposed to have had a warehouse in Europe for just the clothing that she no longer used.

God says, (Matt. 6:21) "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

He isn't saying that if you have a bank account that your heart is in the bank - No, he is talking about our temporal values and allegiances.

If we are laying up treasures in heaven then our concentration will be in the heavenlies.

If we are laying up treasures here on earth then our concentration and priorities will also be here on earth.

Let's face it, if I were Uncle Scrooge I think I would be just as the comics portrayed him - swimming in money and constantly worried about someone making off with a truckload of it!

A friend in graduate school shared a story with me. He was in a business administration class. An alumnus had been asked to share of his great financial success. He came to the class and introduced his success by telling of the roll of money he carried with him. Indeed, he took it out and showed it - then passed it around. He explained that it was all \$100 bills, and that money

meant very little to him.

My friend said, however, that the man's eyes never left the roll of money as it went from student to student around the room.

Let's turn to Col. 3:1-4 for a moment or two.

"If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Some items to notice:

1. THE FACTS: "If ye" is a Greek construction that has the idea in our language of "If and assumed so". If you are risen with Christ, and I assume that you are, then seek things which are above.
2. THE LOGIC: Seek things above! Why? That is where Christ our reason for existence resides!
3. THE POSITIVE: "Set your affection" above. If you really like something then be sure it is above. Your heart's desire should be above not here below.
4. THE NEGATIVE: Not here on earth.
5. THE REASON: You are dead!

Our life exists only in Christ. We have no existence here on earth. It is done and our residence is in heaven with God.

This is the Bible basis for the phrase - "you can't take it with you". My wife had an uncle that said that he was going to take it with him - he had an asbestos coffin!

6. THE REWARD: We will appear with Christ in glory.

a. TURN TO AND READ Rev. 19:11-16

b. In eternity we will reside with Him.

7. THE PREPARATION: "...Christ, who is our life...." We are to consider Christ as our entire life. We are to be so committed to Him that we are always seeking to be more like Him and to be seeking to please Him.

## II. YOUR MASTER

Now as I remember old Uncle Scrooge was in a real quandary at times with the safety of his money. He was constantly building new and better safes for his money.

He was constantly worrying about the thieves that were always trying to steal a truckload or two.

His total concentration was on the safety of that money.

God says, "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and money." Matt 6:24

We see the significance of the term "MASTER" don't we. God says that you cannot serve money and God, and He keynotes the principle with the fact that you will love one and HATE the other!

NOW

LET'S THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A MOMENT IN RELATIONSHIP TO OUR LIVES  
TODAY IN AMERICA!

IF WE LOVE GOD, WE WILL HATE MONEY!

IF WE LOVE MONEY, WE WILL HATE GOD!

hate = 3404 = miseo = "to hate" - used of "malicious and unjustifiable feelings towards others"  
(Vine)

This term is used in Jo. 15:18 where Jesus mentions, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." This is a real dislike to say the least!

If we were to grasp that concept and really love God we would have a very different lifestyle in Christianity in this day in America!

The idea of the construction of the text is that we cannot, of our own accord, serve both God and money. There is a built in impossibility in the idea. THE ONE EXCLUDES THE OTHER!

Application: Don't try for you cannot do it!

## III. YOUR DESIRE

Now back to Uncle Scrooge. His entire being was keyed to his money. Even his gifts to Huey, Duey and Louie were money! He had no other desire in life. He wanted money, money and more money!

Now we can't in all honesty say that this is our desire as believers. Our consuming desire isn't usually to have and gain and hold money, HOWEVER at times in practical application and outward appearance it may well seem to the unsaved world around us that we are serving our desire for money.

We add unto our earthly possessions at a far greater rate than unto our heavenly rewards! DON'T WE!

Think about your thought life. How much time do you spend thinking of ways of using your money for the Lord's work as compared to how you are going to use your money for your own enjoyment.

Notice in Matt 6:33 that there are two things that we are to be seeking.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

a. The kingdom of God. This is a reference to the Millennial kingdom that Christ wanted to set up for the Jews. We are to be seeking after that kingdom. For the church age believer the kingdom means that they are with the Lord already!

Our desire should be for His coming!

b. His righteousness.

Now just how do we interpret that phrase in present day America?

May I read parts of an article from Moody Monthly to show you how some Christians interpret this thought?

From Moody Monthly; July/August 1988

FOR STARTERS by Jerry B. Jenkins

SHINE ON

Item: A young man employed by a service company decided he'd rather watch the Chicago White Sox play than spend the rest of the day working.

He drove the company truck to the ball park then called his office and told his supervisor that his early afternoon service call would take the rest of the day

Fact: The young man told me that story.

Item: A young reporter interviewed a famous personality at a downtown hotel. As the reporter was preparing to leave, the celebrity noticed his parking stub. "Let me have that stamped for you," he said. Not understanding what he meant, the reporter followed him to the front desk, where the celebrity told the clerk, "I'm parked in the hotel lot. Can you validate this for free parking?"

"You're a guest here?" the clerk asked.

The man nodded and showed his mom key to prove it. The ticket was stamped. The reporter could have parked free. But he chose to pay instead.

Fact: The reporter told me that story

Item: A woman enjoyed lunch with an older lady and split the bill.

"Here," the older one said, "you can have the receipt for your income taxes."

"what do you mean?"

"List this as a business lunch that you paid for. You've got the receipt."

Fact: The young woman told me that story

item: A middle-aged man had recently moved to a big city He parked at an expired meter, reasoning, "Even if I get a ticket, I'm changing my license plates soon. They'll never track me down.'",

Fact The man told me that story

Item: A businessman was upset that this competition was underselling him by mail. When he received the competition's catalog, he mailed in every pre-paid business reply card and envelope they provided, but he ordered nothing. "They had to pay all that postage," he says with a smile.

Fact: The businessman himself told me that story

Item: A couple celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary Their son, a salesman, called in sick so he could attend the party

Fact: The couple told me that story clearly amused at their sons resourcefulness.

Item: A young woman working as a telephone installer frequently absconded phones left by customers who had moved.

She reported to her employer that the customers had taken the phones with them. She kept some

of the phones, gave others to friends, and sold the rest.

Fact: She herself told me that story

The saddest facts of all:

The white Sox fan is - and was at the time of his lie. - an active, church-going Christian who is involved in training youth.

The famous personality is - and was at the time of his lie - involved in full-time evangelism.

The older lady is - and was at the time of her recommended deception of the IRS - on the full-time staff of an evangelical church.

The middle-aged man is - and was at the time he parked illegally - a pastor.

The anniversary couple is - and was at the time that they took delight in their son's lie - active in Christian work.

The telephone installer is - and was at the time of her theft a professing Christian, active in her church.

"Therefore, my dear friends... become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" (Phil. 2:12,15).

It seems that the Christian world is in a bit of a tizzy as to how they are to live before the lost!

We are to live as Christ lived! He is our example to go by!

His righteousness or righteous living is that which we are to seek in our own lives!

If we do this then He will add "all these things" to us.

**WHAT A PROMISE! IF WE SEEK HIS COMING AND HIS WAY OF LIFE HE WILL GIVE US EVERYTHING WE WANT!**

**NO!**

There are a negative and a positive side to this promise.

Negative: It is not stereos, clothes, cars, houses, horses, bank accounts etc.

Positive: It is the needs of life that we view in the context of the passage verse 25-32.

God does not promise the world but he promises to get us through the world!

YES, THAT PUN WAS INTENDED! HE DOES NOT PROMISE THE WORLD -- HE WANTS US TO SHUN THE THINGS OF THE WORLD NOT SEEK AFTER THEM!

CONCLUSION:

I am not asking that anyone change their attitude toward money. Just think about what we have talked about in this study and consider the things that God's Word has to say to you today. Let the Holy Spirit work in your mind and help you REALLY evaluate your priorities and commitments.

THEN CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDES TOWARD MONEY, TOWARD CHRIST, AND TOWARD LIFESTYLE - BECAUSE GOD CAUSED YOU TO HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART AND NOT BECAUSE I CAUSED YOU TO CHANGE YOUR MIND!

Let's turn to a familiar passage in I Jo. 2:15-17.

This is the Christian life in the negative nutshell. If we avoid these things then we will be on the right track to serving God.

The lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eye.

Pride of life.

Wrapped up in these three are all of the wrongs that man can get himself into.

As Dr. Stowell mentioned in one of his editorials, if the morals don't get you materialism will. I might add if these two don't get you your pride of life may well be winner!

As you enter into a certain situation or consideration and try to decide what to do run the situation or consideration through this frame of reference and see if the Lord doesn't give you some insight!

Some have said that we can be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good.

The more I study the Word and see what God's desire is for us the more I think that this statement is false.

God wants us heavenly minded. Indeed, that is what will motivate us to do the witnessing and preaching and counseling that we need to be doing.

Those that say that we can be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good are using the phrase to say that if we dwell on the heavenly we won't do the ministry. I think that this is incorrect. If we are concentrating on the heavenly then we will naturally do the ministry.

Those that are so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good are probably the phony believers - those that put on a facade of heavenliness and never get around to living out that heavenly attitude.

As we go out into the world may we keep the world at an arms length as far as its influence upon us.

MAY OUR BANKER BE GOD!

MAY OUR MASTER BE GOD!

MAY OUR DESIRE BE GOD!

MAY "QUALITY BE JOB ONE" IN OUR LIVES!!

Just some side thoughts to the above:

To the poor these principles can be a blessing, because they have to live this way to a point, yet to some it is a curse because they rebel against God's position for them.

To the rich these principles can be a blessing because they may choose to live according to this life, yet if they want to live unto themselves it would be a curse to them.

SO, to each and every one of us no matter our financial statement, it is the attitude with which we approach things that will determine our joy or lack of peace in relation to living these principles.

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m00950

#### PROPOSED DEACON'S FUND POLICY

In that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting other believers in need, and in that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting widows and orphans, and in that the Scripture is clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting strangers, we hereby institute this policy to assist us in this ministry to those in need. (See footnote at end of policy for references.)

Each person seeking assistance will be interviewed by two of our deacons/elders and their concurrence will result in help. There is no need to INVESTIGATE a request for help other than

to talk with the person involved to gain a sense that the need is valid. (We will trust God to guide us in our decisions and allow Him to deal with those that misuse our ministry.)

1. The fund shall be financed by an offering taken in the mission's bowl after the Lord's table service each month.

2. The fund shall be dispersed under the guidance of the deacons.

3. The funds will be distributed by gift certificate as much as possible, or by cash/check if the need is not available via certificates.

4. A grocery closet will be maintained at the church via the donations of the membership. It will contain sealed goods that can be stored for extended periods of time.

5. If the fund is depleted, and a seemingly valid case exists, the deacon and pastor may go before the church for a special offering/general fund expenditure for the assistance.

6. A list of social service agencies will be maintained and a copy of that list shall be given to each person requesting assistance. (It is assumed by this policy that much of our tax money goes to support social services, so we should make use of those services for the assistance of those in need.)

7. A total value for each assistance shall not exceed \$50. (Groceries need only be approximated.)

8. The above is not to say that every person that requests assistance is to be helped. It shall be at the discretion of those talking with the person that may or may not determine to extend help from the church family.

9. If there is a choice between church family members and those outside the church, then the church family's needs should be met first.

10. In keeping with James 2:15, I Jo. 3:17-18, and II Thess. 3:6-15 we feel that there is a different relationship between the church and the church member that is in need than between the church and a nonmember. We therefore set forth the following guidelines for the church member in need.

a. It is assumed that most of the needs will be met via the church membership before there is need to go to the deacon's fund. All should feel a responsibility to voluntarily assist in any manner that they can. (Some possible examples: Repair people assist in repairing items needed by the family, doctors/ dentists /other professionals giving minor services, etc.)

b. If there are needs over and above that which is forthcoming from the membership the deacon's fund should assist as possible. Within II Thess. 3:6-15 is the responsibility for the church to

assure that the need is real. This is usually quite obvious, but if the obvious dims into a habit, there should be intervention by the pastor/deacons. The person that is failing to do all that they can to resolve their situation should be counseled. If there is no change then the pastor should be brought in to institute steps toward church discipline.

c. If the need is real and the deacon's fund cannot relieve the need, then it should be considered by the pastor and deacons whether the need should be brought before the church for action by the congregation. This step might be eliminated if the congregation were to vote a sum of money be set aside to be given at the discretion and unanimous agreement of the pastor and deacons.

(II Thess. 3:6-15 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother.")

#### FOOTNOTE:

Heb. 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. I Tim 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. Matt 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.

## RESOURCE LIST FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE:

Insert here any nearby social service centers.

Nave's topical Bible references for further study:

De 15:7-18; Le 25:35-43; Ps 41:1, 112:9; Pr 3:27,28, 11:25, 22:9, 25:21,22, 28:27; Isa 58:6,7,10,11; Eze 18:5,7-9; Mt 5:42, 19:21, 25:35-45; Mr 9:41, 10:21; Lu 3:11, 11:41; Ac 6:1-4, 11:29,30; Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 13:3, 16:1-3; 2Co 8:1-15,24, 9:1-15; Ga 2:10; Php 4:10-18; 1Ti 5:8,16, 6:18; Heb 6:10, 13:16; Jas 2:15,16; 1Jo 3:17.

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m01000

Prov. 10:7

"A well-known actor was seated at the guest table at a dinner given at a large New York hotel. Among other things, he was known to be a free thinker along theological lines. When the hour for starting the dinner arrived the toastmaster, a very religious man, discovered there was no minister of the Gospel present, despite the fact that several had been invited. In the emergency he turned to the actor and asked him to give the benediction.

"The actor rose, lowered his head, and in the midst of a deep hush said fervently:

"There being no clergyman present, let us thank God!" (From Marion D. Mosher, *More Toasts* (H.W. Wilson) Excerpted from "Complete Speaker's and Toastmaster's Library" Copyright (c) 1993, 1994 Compton's NewMedia Inc.)

KJV 7 The memory of the just [is] blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

ASV 7 The memory of the righteous is blessed; But the name of the wicked shall rot.

Memory seems to be the thought of a memorial or being remembered. It seems in the older literature writers the thought of memory was more important. "Levin scarcely remembered his mother. His conception of her was for him a sacred memory, and his future wife was bound to be, in his imagination, a repetition of that exquisite, holy ideal of a woman that his mother had been." (From *Anna Karinina* by Leo Tolstoy)

In our society memory doesn't seem to be all that important - outwardly at least. About the only time we bother remembering someone is after they are dead and we are gathered to make ourselves feel good.

The term just has the thought of lawful conduct. It is used in relation to being righteous in government (I won't comment on the modern view of that) and it has the idea of correct living.

The memory of the just will be blessed. Speaking highly of, would be the thought. It is used of giving of a gift - something that would be appreciated and accepted.

The term blessed in the French version is translated "benediction" giving the thought of finality in the context.

BUT

The term translated "name" has with it the thought of reputation rather than identification. Some possible translations are famous, report, reputation, fame etc.

Some of the thoughts of the term "wicked" are ungodly, wicked man, one guilty of crime, guilty of sin.

Rot simply means to rot. I heard a discussion on the pros and cons of vaults for burial. They suggested that the vault keeps the bugs and worms and moisture out. One of the people in the discussion knew of the normal processes of rot. She said something along the line of this. If you want a vault, you can have the rot that is not natural, that is wet and yukky, or you can have the normal drying out process of nature without a vault.

Charles Dickens was a master painter with words. He describes a rotting portion of a house. "It was a broad paneled staircase, with massive balustrades of some dark wood; cornices above the doors, ornamented with carved fruit and flowers; and broad seats in the windows. But all these tokens of past grandeur were miserably decayed and dirty; rot, damp, and age, had weakened the flooring, which in many places was unsound and even unsafe. Some attempts had been made, I noticed, to infuse new blood into this dwindling frame, by repairing the costly old woodwork here and there with common deal; but it was like the marriage of a reduced old noble to a plebeian pauper, and each party to the ill assorted union shrunk away from the other." (From David Copperfield by Charles Dickens)

One of the quips that Dole was heralded for was concerning the three living presidents. He said, now in this country we have hear no evil, see no evil, and evil, (referring to Nixon). (Ruff quote)

Matthew Henry sums it up. "Both the just and the wicked must die; but between their souls there is a vast difference. "

The man of God will be remembered long and well, while the evil man will not be remembered well. Indeed, the evil man may be remembered worse and worse as time goes on - this may relate to the use of the term rot.

IN MEMORY THE GOOD GETS BETTER AND THE BAD GETS WORSE.

APPLICATION:

1. We ought to care for our reputation in this life so that we are remembered well. Keeping a good name is the Godly thing to do. Not for the sake of pride, but for the sake of testimony for the Lord.

We should desire to keep our names free from all detractions.

2. We ought to be training our young people in the thought of making a good name for themselves and their God.

Most gang members today want only a name among their gang. What others outside the gang think of them is **TOTALLY IRRELEVANT** to them - they don't care.

This sort of thing is instilled in children when they are small and growing, not after they are teens and don't care.

#### WORD STUDY INFO:

memory: 02143 zeker {zay'-ker} or zeker {zeh'-ker} from 02142; TWOT - 551a; n m AV - remembrance 11, memorial 5, memory 5, remembered 1, scent 1; 23 ;1) memorial, remembrance 1a) remembrance, memory 1b) memorial

just: 06662 tsaddiyq {tsad-deek'} from 06663; TWOT - 1879c; adj AV - righteous 162, just 42, righteous man 1, lawful 1; 206; 1) just, lawful, righteous 1a) just, righteous (in government) 1b) just, right (in one's cause) 1c) just, righteous (in conduct and character) 1d) righteous (as justified and vindicated by God) 1e) right, correct, lawful

blessed: 01293 Barakah {ber-aw-kaw'} from 01288;; n f AV - blessing 61, blessed 3, present 3, liberal 1, pools 1; 69; 1) blessing 2) (source of) blessing 3) blessing, prosperity 4) blessing, praise of God 5) a gift, present 6) treaty of peace

name: 08034 shem {shame} a primitive word [perhaps rather from 07760 through the idea of definite and conspicuous position; TWOT - 2405; n m V - name 832, renown 7, fame 4, famous 3, named 3, named + 07121 2, famous + 07121 1, infamous + 02931 1, report 1, misc 10; 864; 1) name 1a) name 1b) reputation, fame, glory 1c) the Name (as designation of God) 1d) memorial, monument

wicked: 07563 rasha` {raw-shaw'} from 07561; TWOT - 2222b; adj AV - wicked 249, ungodly 8, wicked man 3, misc 3; 263; 1) wicked, criminal 1a) guilty one, one guilty of crime (subst) 1b) wicked (hostile to God) 1c) wicked, guilty of sin (against God or man)

shall rot: 07537 raqab {raw-kab'} a primitive root; TWOT - 2213; v AV - rot 2; 2; 1) (Qal) to rot

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m01050

Take time to consider the poorest time in your life and then describe it to yourself or someone else. What was it like? How did you feel? Were you happy?

I was told by some Dallas Seminary graduates of some of their seminary days (many years ago) in school housing. One of them related that there were holes around the plumbing in the bath tub area. The holes weren't just small cracks, but large ones - in fact they were large enough for the rats to peek out at them when they were taking their baths.

That reminded me of a house we lived in when at Bible college. It was a pre-plumbing and pre-electric era house. The amenities had been added at a later date.

Beside the toilet someone had peeled all of the wall paper off and had started digging the plaster off the lath. We were very poor and having a very serious time getting by. We decided to save our pennies and purchase some paint. We bought three or four very small cans of paint and I set about painting a small beach scene on the wall over the peeled materials. I painted a palm tree, beach and sunset. We thought we had redecorated the entire house with that small addition.

Our poverty or wealth is not the point as believers, it is our attitude toward whichever we are in. I think that Prov. 10:15 speaks to this thought.

Prov. 10:15 "The rich man's wealth [is] his strong city: the destruction of the poor [is] their poverty."

Someone has said, "It is better to live rich than to die rich." Excerpted from "Complete Speaker's and Toastmaster's Library"

Copyright © 1993, 1994 Compton's NewMedia Inc. There is a lot of logic to that comment. Our attitude about wealth or poverty is of serious importance to us as believers.

All of the translations I checked give about the same thought as the King James.

The rich man's wealth is his strong city. One translation states "fortified city" which gives a thought of protection. A simple statement that his wealth is his city - not literally, but figuratively. A city provides home, friends, protection, safety and care. His wealth certainly provides all of these.

Wealth allows the person to take care of themselves in all areas and they don't have to lean on others to assist them. The problem is that if a wealthy man trusts in his wealth as a city, then he has no trust in God, the one that can really take care of all his needs.

The thought of destruction in this text to me would be the idea of ruin, dismay or breaking. The poor aren't literally destroyed by their poverty normally, but rather the idea of breaking them.

To be poor is to have the same set of choices that the rich have. The rich must decide to walk with God in spite of their financial situation. This will result in them not being broken or destroyed. On the other hand if they dwell on their wealth and turn against God they may well be destroyed or broken.

The poor must decide to walk with God in spite of their financial situation. This will result in them not being broken or destroyed. On the other hand if they dwell on their poverty and turn against God for their situation, then they will be broken and ruined.

I think that both of these phrases are talking about equal destruction or strength though it is not stated in the two cases. However, if a wealthy person is looking to their wealth to be their city, then they will certainly be destroyed just as the poor person dwelling on their poverty will be broken.

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m01100

TITLE: FATHER EQUALS ELDER, UNLESS PRODUCT IS DELINQUENT

SCRIPTURE READING: I Tim 3:1-7

"SUSAN WESLEY'S RULES FOR CHILD TRAINING "She had 19 children, and raised them well with the following 16 rules:

1. No eating between meals.
2. All children in bed by 8:00 p.m.
3. Take your medicine without complaining.
4. Subdue self will in each child.
5. Work with God to save the soul of each child.
6. Teach child to pray as soon as he can speak.
7. Require all to be still during family worship.
8. Give children nothing they cry for.
9. Give them only what they ask for politely.
10. To prevent lying, punish no fault which is first confessed.

11. Do not allow a sinful act to go unpunished.
12. Command and reward good behavior.
13. Preserve property rights, even in the smallest matters.
14. Strictly observe all promises.
15. Require no daughter to work before she can read well.
16. Teach children to fear the rod."

Now, I wish that these rules had been introduced as Wesley's fathers rules, but they are good rules anyway.

I don't want to talk about children specifically, though they are related to our study. We want to look at the elder qualification to be a good parent as a prerequisite to being a church leader.

Turn to I Tim. 3:4-5 with me. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)"

In a long list of single word qualifications, Paul places two complete verses relating to one qualification. One might suspect that this qualification is mighty important!

One that ruleth well his own house is done by having his children in subjection with all gravity ("dignity" NASB) He achieves obedience of his children in this way - by having them in subjection with gravity. He stands as head of the house and runs it as head of the house. Chain of authority with him at the top. One of the biggest hindrances to proper upbringing of children is a family that has no authority. If the father runs things one way and the mother another there is no way that the children can know what is expected. The parents need to discuss what they think the proper family is to be, then the father is to make the final decision and the couple should go forth with a united front in the raising of their children.

The man should be able to control his children. If his children aren't saved and turn out bad it is not necessarily a disqualification in this area, unless of course, he has neglected the family's training. He should be able to control the children. Their salvation is up to God, and their life's decisions are theirs BUT their raising and discipline are the fathers overall responsibility.

The father must teach, guide, exhort and nurture the child to adulthood. Vine mentions, "to stand before, hence to lead, attend to" This indicates care and diligence. Not something that is accomplished by remote control, nor is it something that is accomplished by delegating authority to the mother.

Ruleth is "proisteemi" (4291) and is seen in Rom 12:8 as ruleth in the context of ruling a church congregation. These two verses only strengthen one another. (others: I Thess 5:12 as "are over"; I Tim 3:12 and Titus 3:8,14 where it appears as "to maintain".)

There is more to the office of elder than doing the bidding of the congregation. The congregation sets the purpose of the assembly and makes decisions, but the leadership is in the hands of the church leaders.

Subjection is "hupotagee" (5292) (Others: Gal 2:5; I Tim 2:11 as women learning in subjection.) The term is seen in II Cor. 9:13 as submission to the Gospel. This is not a subjection or submission that is now and then - the submission to the gospel is a serious, deep, one time, total, life altering decision.

So the children of the family of a church elder should be committed to their father's headship and leadership - not now and then - not when it is convenient - not when the child wants to - AT ALL TIMES! It should be their lifestyle.

The thought of "children" is not that of a small child necessarily. The term is used of young to old. (Matt 9:1-2 = man; Matt 2:18; 3:9 = children under two; Ro 8:16 = adults are children of God; Col 3:20 = children obey your parents; I Ti 1:2, 18; Philemon 10 = Onesimus)

Vine states, "it gives prominence to the fact of birth".

gravity = semnotes (sem-not'-ace) Thayer mentions of the term "the characteristic of a thing or person which entitles to reverence and respect, dignity, majesty, sanctity 2) honour, purity"

The elder should run his house in such a way that his children automatically see him as a man that is entitled to respect and dignity.

One of the merchandise managers at the store where we work is such a man. I call him by first name, but find myself a little uneasy in doing so. This man is not a believer, but he seems to have his house in order, he seems to have his work in order, and he seems to have his life in order.

I have a great respect for this man. I feel that he is deserving of any respect, help, or assistance I can ever give to him. He did not ask me for this respect. The respect comes from my knowing his character and life.

Many are the children in this world that have no respect nor dignity toward their parents. In the store we see children mouthing off to their parents constantly, even to the point of swearing at them and calling them names.

One of our pastors when we were going to Bible college had one good son and one poor one. The poor one was rebellious to a point - didn't care for church - long stringy hair - very rough type.

Didn't turn out a pride and joy BUT, he was under subjection. One look from his father and foolishness or wrongdoing was stopped. He was always in church. He always did as his father asked him to do. He seemed later on to have turned out okay. He bothered some people in the church, but they were not seeing the whole story - only the outward trouble. Before you condemn a pastor for a bad teen, see if he has him in subjection. This is the requirement - not that all kids turn out as super saints. The result of a good pastor is not necessarily 100% spiritual, on fire Christians.

This man lead his small struggling congregation over a number of years to establish a large church with a very adequate building. He had some in his church that were as his sons. Some were outstanding members, and some were stinkers. The pastor as in his family brought his membership to a place of unity and lead both his natural family and his spiritual family to success.

Verse 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Verse five shows the why of verse 4. The implied thought is if he isn't capable of being a good father then he is not capable of running a church.

The term "house" may imply as well as controlling the family as the context speaks of, but also the material things. He should be able to run his house in a proper manner, keeping his bills paid, keeping his house in repair and keeping his house in pleasant appearance. Some preachers today are behind in their bills if not delinquent, and are behind in their homes upkeep. This ought not be so.

Now, just why would Paul tell Timothy that an elder must be a good head of house to be a good elder?

#### SOME THOUGHTS:

1. If he is a good head of house he will be a good head for the church. Paul likens the one job to the other. The job, the principles of, and the work of being a good head of house are JUST the qualifications for the elder.

a. He will be the one that heads up the church.

One that assists or sets the course for the church.

One that trains the church.

One that nurtures the church.

One that encourages the church.

One that assists the church to its fullest potential.

One that DISCIPLINES THE CHURCH.

b. I suspect that Paul saw another characteristic that a good father will bring to a church.

The father that is head of his house and a responsible father to his children is one that has a great love and concern for the family. So, the elder that has a love and concern for his people will be the leader of the church that he ought to be and will be the responsible leader that he should be.

c. On the other side of the coin we must relate the thought of submissive children to the congregation.

There is absolutely no way a church can march forward if the people are not willing and desirous of following the man that God has placed over them. Think of the logic of this. A child has no choice in the father that is placed over them by God. The church member may have little choice over the elder that is placed over them by God. Both should be in subjection to the respective leader.

NEVER CAN A CHURCH HOPE TO BE SUCCESSFUL FOR GOD IF THE PEOPLE ARE NOT WILLING TO ALLOW THEIR ELDER TO LEAD THEM.

HE CANNOT FORCE THEM TO FOLLOW, HE CANNOT FORCE THEM TO SUBMIT TO HIM, AND HE CANNOT FORCE THEM TO RESPECT HIM.

If he is God's man for the hour then that ends the discussion. The church member should work and live in the church membership as a good child of God.

d. And this brings us to the final thought. The church member is a Child of God. The elder is placed over the child of God as an earthly father or guide. THIS IS NOT HOW STANLEY DERICKSON SET IT UP - IT IS HOW GOD SET IT UP!

The elder should have the responsibilities of a father, the elder should have the authority of a father, and the elder ought to have the respect of a father.

NOW, DON'T GO OUT TELLING EVERYONE I WANT TO BE CALLED FATHER! I don't know this to be a fact, but I suspect that this may be the basis for the Roman Catholic thought of the priest being called father.

APPLICATION:

1. Never consider a candidate that does not have his family with him if he has small to teenage children. How in the world can you consider his qualification in this area if you have never met

the family?

2. It is wise to see the family for more than a couple hours. This is one of the reasons that many churches are asking that their candidates to spend a week with the church before being considered.

3. The pastor and his family are to be the example of a proper family to those that they minister to.

One of the reasons our mission was excited about us going to Ireland was this very fact. The Irish Christians had a very poor concept of the family and the mission wanted the Irish believers to see what a Christian family was to be like - not that ours was perfect - only a lot more of a family than the Irish had seen.

4. The man that does not fulfill this qualification is not to be a church leader. If a man has not raised his family well, then God does not feel that he can raise a church family well.

5. One final family concept that relates to the church family concept is unity. The family that is properly raised is a family unit - there should be a real unity of purpose. So, in the church there should be a real unity - indeed, there must be a unity of purpose lest the church crumble.

Pleiades is a set of seven stars in the constellation Taurus. They are supposedly the seven daughters of Atlas in Greek mythology. The seven make up a loose cluster of stars. Six are visible to the average person. The interesting part of this cluster of stars is that they are in separate and distinct orbits, which one day will lead them in different directions. This will result someday in the disappearance of the star cluster Pleiades.

I think that this illustrates quite well the church that has several people going several different directions - often their own direction instead of God's. The church that is not united in purpose will one day cease to exist.

I trust that as time goes along the church will look very seriously at the qualifications for elder before calling someone into the congregation to lead.

I also trust that if there is ever a time that an elder of the church ceases to rule his own home well, that he is asked to step aside before he rule God's house not so well.

God did not set these qualifications for the fun of seeing if Timothy could find someone to fulfill them. **THESE ARE GOD'S REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAN THAT IS GOING TO LEAD HIS CHILDREN!**

God knows what outcome He wants for His children and He will provide the man which can get that job done! Don't be afraid to require what God requires! Don't be afraid to be picky! Don't be

afraid to await God's man!

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m01150

TITLE: "Honor your father and mother at least until you get out of the house. OR until they are too old to spend your inheritance."

SCRIPTURE READING: Eph. 6:1-3

OUTLINE:

INTRO

I. HONOR INSPECTED

II. HONOR DEFINED

III. HONOR APPLIED

INTRODUCTION:

Years ago my father mentioned a family that homesteaded near his folks farm. The family had a number of sons and the father was a harsh taskmaster. One of the sons accidently got his hand crushed by a wagon wheel and the father punished him severely for his stupidity in allowing it to happen.

The sons did not grow up to be that type of fathers to their own children. Indeed, the boys grew up to be fine citizens. One was a very successful farmer and one ended up in the cabinet of one of the presidents in recent years as Secretary of Agriculture.

I recently heard of a widower that was in his late 40's when he decided to remarry. He went to his father for his fathers blessing.

These are two extremes in fatherhood. I rather suspect that there were two different types of upbringing and response to that upbringing. It is obvious that the later man honored his father. I do not know if the first family saw a group of sons that honored their father or not. I rather suspect that they did in their own way.

I recently made a big deal about the fact that we are to honor our parents all our, or their lives. Naturally there had to be someone in the congregation that asked me just how you honored your parents. The person asked me for some practical applications of how to honor the parent on a daily basis.

This study is an outgrowth of those questions and I trust that the answers and suggestions are adequate to get her off my back! My dear and loving wife is the one that put me on the spot.

We are specifically going to look at the thought of honoring the mother and father in this study, but be aware that the principles are the same for honoring anyone that is deserving of our honor.

This may include your pastor, your Sunday School teacher, your employer, your church officers, your mate, your parent, your \_\_\_\_\_ you fill in the blank.

This is a study in how to honor.

One more suggestion might be that we honor God in a similar manner!

## I. HONOR INSPECTED

Honor in Deut. 5:16 is the Hebrew word "kaved" has the idea of be heavy, grievous, hard, rich, honorable, glorious.

A quote will set the stage for us. "In this case the idea is of that which is weighty in the sense of being noteworthy or impressive. Common translations are 'honorable, honored, glorious, glorified.'

"The reputation of an individual is of central importance in these usages. Thus the person of high social position and accompanying wealth was automatically an honored, or weighty, person in the society (Num. 22:15, etc.). Such a position, its riches, and long life were commonly assumed to be the just rewards of a righteous life (I Chr. 29:28, etc.). While one would be honored automatically if one attained this stature, it is also clear that one was expected to merit the honor and the glory. The book of Prov. makes it clear that the trappings of glory without an accompanying weightiness of character was an offense to life (21:21; 22:4; 26:2; etc.).

"Likewise persons in positions of responsibility and authority were deserving of honor (Ex. 20:12; Mal. 1:6). It is significant to remind oneself that giving honor or glory is to say that someone is deserving of respect, attention and obedience. A life which does not back up one's honorable words is hypocrisy of a high form. Israel was again and again guilty of honoring God with her lips, while by her actions making him appear worthless (Isa. 29:13)." Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament pp 426-427

From the above we might see the requirement for the mother or father to be honored that they would be found worthy of honor.

This would be very dangerous for our day and age for all could well say, "You are not worthy." Today's society is based on the individuals perception of truth. If I don't want to honor someone I just have to decide that the person isn't worthy - no matter how worthy they may be.

We will discuss this thought in a few moments.

Ex. 14:17, mentions the fact that the Lord will get "honor" from Pharaoh and his armies.

From this we might gain that honor can be demanded or exacted from the one that should be honoring.

The context is that the children of Israel are at the Red Sea and God is telling Moses to raise his rod and that He will cause Pharaoh to follow the Israelites and that God will gain honor! How? By the death of Pharaoh and His army.

**GOD IS SERIOUS ABOUT HONOR BEING GIVEN.**

**GOD WAS NOT ABOVE EXACTING HONOR FROM THOSE THAT WOULD NOT!**

Ex. 14:18 tells us that the honor gotten from the preceding verse was to show the Egyptians that He was Lord.

This would place a qualification on the idea of exacting honor. The honor was gotten to prove something to another party. A possible example would be if you had three children and one did not honor you in front of the others. You might consider exacting honor from the one rather than have the other two assume that you were not in the place of parent.

Ex. 20:12 again lists honor thy father and mother as one of the ten commandments as did the Scripture reading.

Nu. 22:17,37; 24:11 is the account of Balak trying to get Balaam to curse the people. Balak promised to "...promote thee unto very great honor...." The idea seems from the context to be the idea of wealth in Balaam's mind (vs. 18 where he asks for gold and silver).

The term "promote" might indicate that Balak had in mind the thought of position and honor rather than riches. At any rate the thought of promoting someone to a position brings honor.

Judges 9:9 mentions honoring God.

Judges 13:17ff speaks of Manoah talking with an angel. The angel is the angel of the Lord from all indications of the context. Manoah mentions honor in the thought of worship for he sacrificed on a rock and the sacrifice was acceptable.

The implication would be the giving of worship as the term indicates.

**HONOR IS GIVING THE PERSON TO BE HONORED THE WORTH THEY DESERVE. At the very least we could say is that we should honor God with worship!**

I Sam. 2:30 records that God states, "...Be it far from me; for them who honor me I will honor, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed." The implications of this thought are many. God will honor those that honor Him.

By application we will note that the parent that is not honored will not honor the child. Indeed, the child that does not honor the parent will be held with little esteem by the parent.

I believe that this can be born out in the everyday life of people if you were to ask.

THE HONOR GIVEN BY THE PARENT IS DETERMINED BY THE HONOR OF THE CHILD TO THE PARENT.

I Sam. 15 is the account of Saul disobeying God and in verse 28 Samuel told Saul that the kingdom had been torn from him. Saul makes a plea to Samuel in verse 30, "Then he said, I have sinned; yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God."

The idea of restoration of place before God. In this case the restoration of the kingdom to Saul.

HONOR IS GIVING PROPER PLACE TO THE PERSON.

Ps. 91:15 seems to indicate an honor that would be that of God honoring the believer that has done well. I think it would have the idea of giving rightful place to the person as well.

Pr. 3:9 is one that we don't want to talk about. It speaks of honoring God with our substance. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase;" Again the ultimate idea is that we give proper place to God and we do that by giving. He is worthy to accept our gifts!

By application - HONOR MAY BE GIVING OF OUR SUBSTANCE TO OUR PARENTS. Naturally in their old age but maybe even before that. If we really honor and care for them then we will enjoy doing nice things for them.

A man from our hometown became well off and he came home one time to purchase a new car for his folks. They had been struggling along with an old clunker for years and years. They were driving a 32 Ford in 1950. He bought them a brand new 1950 Plymouth. He honored them by using his material possessions.

In our world of great knowledge and technology we might do well to remind us of one text that uses the term honor even thou it isn't overly relevant to our discussion.

Prov. 4:7-8, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding.

"Exhalt her, and she shall promote thee, she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her." Here we see the promoting to honor again.

If we seek wisdom and understanding then we will be promoted to honor. The idea of this would be that we will be recognized as wise and understanding.

HONOR IS A RECOGNITION OF THE POSITION AND ABILITIES OF A PERSON.

Isa. 29:13 tells us that the Israelites honored God with their lips but that their hearts were far from Him.

HONOR WITH THE LIPS ONLY IS NOT ACCEPTABLE! THE HEART IS TO BE BEHIND THE HONOR OF THE LIPS.

The implications are that you need to have a proper heart attitude before you can properly honor.

Isa. 43:20 tells of the giving of water to the God's people in the wilderness and that the beasts of the field will honor Him. "The beast of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches...." If you want to be real blunt about honoring you might say something like this. If the jackals, and the ostriches - some of the unlovely of the earth can honor, then certainly anyone as lovely as you can honor!

ALL MANKIND HAS THE CAPACITY TO HONOR IN A PROPER MANNER!

"The meanings of the Hebrew root 'kbd' and Greek 'time' - words translated 'honor' - are much wider in scope than the English implies. Kabad literally means 'to be heavy, weighty' but is used almost exclusively in figurative ways, the most common being to be honorable. For a man to be 'weighty' in society is understood figuratively as his being important, respected, and honored. 'Time' also includes the idea of value" (From International Standard Bible Encl. as near as I can remember.)

By way of general observation then it is not improper to be respected and honored. Being recognized for your effect and place in the community is not incorrect, be that community the nation, the state, the town, or even your Christian community be that community the nation's Christians, the state's Christians or your local church.

It is not improper to give recognition to work well done!

One further step of observation. If God leads and directs a person to further education and endeavors, it is incorrect to condemn that education or endeavor. Daniel did not decline the honors of his office. David did not decline the honor of his position.

The idea of humility and not accepting honor, or of not seeking education that is needed is not

humility, but false humility. We cannot function in areas where God leads us if we aren't worthy of honor and trained properly.

Mat. 15:4; Mk. 9:10 Honor is linked with the care of the parents in their old age.

The cursing of the parent is linked in the same verse as well.

CARE FOR PARENTS WHEN OLD IS HONORING THEM

NOT CURSING THE PARENTS IS HONORING THEM

Mat. 15:8 The term is used of the Jews honor of God with lips and not with heart.

HONOR IS OF THE LIPS AND OF THE HEART (Mk. 7:6 also)

Mat. 19:19; Mk. 10:19; Lu. 18:20 Honoring parents is listed among the commandments by Christ.

HONOR IS COMMANDED

Mat. 27:9 The term is also translated "valued" twice.

A VALUE IS PLACED UPON THE PERSON

Jn. 5:23 The term is used of honoring of Christ and the Father.

HONOR IS TO BE GIVEN TO GOD AND CHRIST

The context here seems to be the recognition of Christ and the Father as a salvation provider. The idea may well be that they were to honor or give proper attitude to the position of God. Recognize who God is. By application to the parent we might draw that the child is to give proper due recognition of the parent and the parent's relationship to the child.

Jn. 8:49 Christ contrasts our term, timao and atimazo" Atimazo is translated dishonor. The thought of the text seems to be that the people were not recognizing Christ for who he was.

HONOR IS RECOGNITION OF THE PERSON OR POSITION

Jn. 12:26 Christ mentions if a person serves Him that the Father will honor the person. The context is being the Lord's servant.

HONOR RECOGNIZES WORK OR SERVICE DONE

Acts 28:10 The text seems also to give the idea of showing a respect to those that are involved in ministry.

## RECOGNITION OF MINISTRY

I Tim. 5:3 This text also gives the idea of recognition of position. The widow is of a special class and should be honored as such.

I Pet. 2:17 We are told in a context of proper Christian living to honor all men and the kings. Again we see the idea of giving proper recognition to the person. All mankind is a general honor that they are human and deserve our respect.

If you want to see the lack of this or the need of it however you want to look at it, go to a retail store. Now, this is a generalization - there are exceptions - there is no honor between human beings today.

Push and shove, glare and grumble, being obnoxious and abrupt are the norm. Our society honors only themselves. Impoliteness, discourtesy, crabbiness, nastiness are the norm.

Teenage gangs have the same problem today. They have no honor for anyone for themselves and I doubt that they even honor themselves very much. They submit themselves to beatings to become members. They desire honor of all people outside the gang and if you don't give it to them they feel free to kill you. They take the ultimate honor from those that don't do what they think they should by taking their life.

The kings are to be honored and recognized as authorities over us. This includes a sitting president of the U.S. even if you can't stand his philosophy, or his politics - honor should be his in relation to his position. Hopefully he will be worthy of it.

A related term "timee" is used in the idea of the value of the honor. It is translated at times price and seems to be the result of the honor of "timao" Indeed this is the case in Acts 28:10, "Who also honored [timao] us with many honors [timee] ...."

Let us recap briefly the thoughts which the term honor brings forth.

## OLD TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES:

GOD IS SERIOUS ABOUT HONOR BEING GIVEN. Ex. 14:17

GOD WAS NOT ABOVE EXACTING HONOR FROM THOSE THAT WOULD NOT! Ex 14:17

HONOR IS GIVING THE PERSON TO BE HONORED THE WORTH THEY DESERVE. Ju.

13:17ff

THE HONOR GIVEN BY THE PARENT IS DETERMINED BY THE HONOR OF THE CHILD TO THE PARENT. I Sam. 2:30

HONOR IS GIVING PROPER PLACE TO THE PERSON. I Sam. 15

HONOR MAY BE GIVING OF OUR SUBSTANCE TO OUR PARENTS. Pr. 3:9

HONOR IS A RECOGNITION OF THE POSITION AND ABILITIES OF A PERSON. Pr. 4:7-8

HONOR WITH THE LIPS ONLY IS NOT ACCEPTABLE! THE HEART IS TO BE BEHIND THE HONOR OF THE LIPS. Is. 29:13

ALL MANKIND HAS THE CAPACITY TO HONOR IN A PROPER MANNER! Is. 43:20

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES:

CARE FOR PARENTS WHEN OLD. Mat. 15:4; Mk. 9:10

NOT CURSING THE PARENTS. Mat. 15:4; Mk. 9:10

HONOR IS OF THE LIPS AND OF THE HEART. Mt. 15:8; Mk. 7:6

HONOR IS COMMANDED. Mat. 19:19; Mk. 10:19; Lu. 18:20

A VALUE IS PLACED UPON THE HONORED. Mt. 27:9

HONOR IS TO BE GIVEN TO GOD AND CHRIST. Jn. 5:23

HONOR IS RECOGNITION OF THE PERSON OR POSITION. Jn. 8:49

HONOR RECOGNIZES WORK OR SERVICE DONE. Jn. 12:26

RECOGNITION OF MINISTRY. Acts 28:10

## II. HONOR DEFINED

AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE TERM AND MEANING OF THIS "HONOR".

A look at a dictionary will show that the idea is to give recognition to the accomplishment or position of the person.

In the area of parents it would seem from the forgoing information that it is:

- a. Recognition that they are the parent.
- b. Recognition of that which the parent has accomplished.

This may be in the area of the parent's life or may be in what the parent has done in the child's life.

- c. Recognition of the ministry the parent might have in the children life.

Realizing that the parent has had a positive impact on the children life.

- d. It is placing a value on the parent's impact on the children life.
- e. It is sharing of your substance just because they are your parent.
- f. It is recognizing their worth.
- g. The honor the parent receives may affect the honor given to the child.
- h. God is very serious about this honor business. He wiped out Pharaoh's army to prove that He was honorable before the Egyptians.
- I. None are exempt from honoring for even the animal's honor in Isa.
- j. A parent may need to exact honor in the face of being dishonored before other children.
- k. It is recognizing wisdom and understanding in the parent.

In the negative honoring the parent is not:

- a. Withholding care in old age.
- b. Cursing the parent.
- c. It is not only lip service but a feeling of the heart.

Now that we know what the Scriptures show of the term and we have looked at what the definition seems to be let us move onto the practical aspect of the term honor.

### III. HONOR APPLIED

## QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED:

1. If a parent does not take the responsibilities of a parent, must the child honor them? Can the child honor them in this situation? (In other words the parent is absent.)

The two questions can be answered in the statement no. There is now position assumed that can be honored if the parent is not a parent. There can be honor given if the child desires, however there will be no recipient of the honor. The fact of parentage may be recognized if the parent is around and desires to accept that recognition.

2. If a parent shows hateful ways toward the child is the child responsible to honor the parent? Yes, for the parent is a parent whether they are hateful or not. The hatefulness will detract from the honor given at times I am certain.

a. The child will always recognize the parent for the position.

The child will always recognize the parent for impact upon their life.

Example: A parent may be the reason the child is a believer. This fact does not change even if the parent turns into a nasty parent.

The recognition of that ministry in the child's mind should not be changed.

b. The parent is parent by fact and this does not change.

c. The parent may have had a tremendous informational part in the child's life - wisdom, knowledge, understanding and training. Again, this does not change and there should be recognition of this to the parent.

3. How do we show that we recognize the parents proper place?

a. Giving them the respect due a parent.

b. Giving an ear to their wisdom and suggestions. This is not to say that you as an adult have to concur or follow but a hearing of their views is very proper. As a child at home - obeying is proper and gives honor.

If a teenager is unwilling to hear the parent's exhortations to proper behavior and actions then the child is not honoring the parent.

c. Caring for an aging parent. This does not mean that we should support an independently wealthy parent. It does mean that if a parent has need of material or physical care that the child is responsible to care for those needs as best they are able.

d. In the eastern thought were the family at times lived under the same roof or area then the child should come under the rules and guidelines of the parents household.

e. It may be just sharing of your own material blessings with them because they are your parent and you want to give to them.

4. Does it mean that a child must have perfect and pure thoughts about the parent at all times?

No, that would be impossible. There will be times when the child will be upset with the parent. These times must be marked with Christian love and forgiveness. We should also strive for the unity of the Christian body in such cases. In short keep the peace if at all possible. These times must be marked by the forgiveness of the 7 X 70 times that the Lord mentioned.

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

1. Call them when there is a special occasion if you can afford it.

2. Care for them as best you can.

Mat. 8:14 indicates that at the least, Peter and his wife were caring for his sick mother-in-law. Many think that she may have been living with them.

Care may include having them in your home.

3. Keep in contact with them as you can.

4. Be sure that you recognize their ministry in your life. If you realize that they have been important to your upbringing let them know.

This may find application in letting other people know of your parent's impact on your life.

5. Just be there when you are needed.

6. When telling others of your parents dwell on the positive and don't downgrade them. If you are downgrading them you probably have a poor attitude toward them and probably you are not honoring them.

7. Overlook as best you can their failings. Remember that they probably overlooked many of yours in the younger days.

Realize that they may be an eighty-year-old two year old. This is not uncommon and we must cope with them being two year olds just like they coped with us being two year olds.

8. Don't demand perfection from them for they are only human.

9. REALIZE THAT IT MAY BE VERY VERY HARD AT TIMES TO DO ALL THIS!

10. It may move into the realm of realizing their feelings and trying your best not to be an upsetting factor in their emotional life.

If you know you can upset them, then this principle would say, don't upset them.

11. Share your substance with them.

In conclusion I would like to read a poem that might encourage anyone that has not been particularly good at honoring previously. It should encourage that person as well as all of us to begin now to do that which we know we ought to do.

By Berton Braley

"Start where you stand and never mind the past; The past won't help you in beginning new.

"If you are done with it at last, Why, that's enough. Your're done with it, you're through;

"This is another chapter in the book, This is another race that you have planned.

"Don't give the vanished days a backward look - Start where you stand.

"The world won't care about your old defeats. If you can start anew and win success,

"The future is your time, and time is fleet, And there is much of work and strain and stress;

"Forget the buried woes and dead despairs. Here is a brand-new trial right at hand;

"The future is for him who does and dares - Start where you stand.

"Old failures will not halt, old triumphs aid; Today's the thing, tomorrow soon will be;

"Get in the fight and face it, unafraid, and leave the past to ancient history.

"What has been has been; yesterday is dead, And by it you are neither blessed nor banned;

"Take courage, man, be brave and drive ahead - Start where you stand!"

There is one passage that I saved for our closing. It is a neat text to contemplate.

If we all get this one straight, I think that we will get the other areas of honor straight as well.

Isa. 58:13-14

"If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable, and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words;

"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob, thy father; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

May we place the LORD in His proper place of honor first and then begin to work on those areas that we have need of working on.

Remember, that the proper honoring of the parents is part of our proper honoring of the LORD!

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m01200

#### TITLE: MISSIONS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Most anyone that has observed things over the last ten to twenty years has undoubtedly noticed a decline in the overall missionary emphasis of the church in this country. I have discussed this with college aged young people, and even they in their 18 to 20 years of observation have noticed a decline.

There may be a number of reasons that this has occurred, and it is the purpose of this article to suggest some possible reasons for consideration by the powers that be. Possibly it will stir others to suggest further reasons so that we might begin to act upon these things in our churches and our institutions to turn the trend around.

Let's just list some observations and some possible reasons for the problems.

1. Mission conferences are declining in number, as well as excitement. Many of us can remember conferences with 10 missionaries from different organizations telling of their work around the world.

Today many conferences are lucky to have two or three missionaries. Indeed a few years ago I was involved in a one-missionary-missions conference.

The reason? It is too expensive to bring the workers in. Why? Some missionaries need to fly instead of drive. The cost of transportation is up in all modes of travel. Some have observed that we can't just have a potluck banquet to close the conference. We must have it catered.

2. Schools are not emphasizing missions. Today in many schools the missions courses are for missions people, and the pastoral courses are for the pastors. It seems very wrong not to train missionaries in the art of church planting and pastoring, when indeed that is what many will be doing on the field, and it is also very wrong not to train pastors in the art of exciting people toward missions. The church is the seed plot of missions, it is the sending agency, and it is the financing agency. If the church is not centered on missions then missions will automatically decline due to the lack of interest.

3. Pastors that have become more materialistic have tended toward seeing missionaries as taking funds away from the church when the funds should be going to the home front.

In some cases this is true. The church has a commitment to allow their pastor to have a living wage, however at the same time the living wage is not what I see offered in many of our churches today. A living wage is something that you can live on, but not necessarily get "well off" on.

We might insert here, as well, that it has been observed that the missionary force at times is becoming very materialistic also.

4. Christians have gone the same route as the Christian workers. They are becoming more materialistic all the time.

How many churches have you been in lately that did not have padded pews and carpet?

How many choir lofts have two microphones hanging from the ceiling. Do you know that some of those things cost \$300 plus apiece?

I was in a new church a few years ago that had spent over \$40,000 on their sound system alone. That would support many missionaries completely for two years on the field.

Many churches have a color tv and video recorder.

How many churches have free socials, vs. the "paid for" socials? We have been in churches where it costs every time that they have fellowship. Indeed, we recently ran into a church that has a soup supper/prayer meeting on Wednesday evening that you are asked to pay for.

How many Christians are really sacrificing in our world today?

Much of the church's finances are used to support the ministry of the local church at home. Very little makes its way into missions. We sat in a church and watched the congregation raise pledges of \$700 a month to pay a part time youth pastor to minister to about 15 young people, yet a few weeks before that same church would not increase a veteran missionary's support by \$50 per month to help him get back to his field of ministry.

We might even get personal and talk about the money that the people are spending on themselves in their personal lives. Many have huge homes that will be sitting idle as soon as the teenagers leave. Hundreds of thousands of dollars sitting with no practical use. They do find a use for it however. They redecorate it. They refurnish it. They may even put a missionary up in it once in awhile.

A friend of ours was visiting supporters on the West Coast. He had just come from a supporter in Northern California that had a huge multi-bedroomed home. They had a stereo in every room, a satellite dish, a tv in almost every room, every modern appliance that you can think of and several cars in the garage. My friend said that he didn't know how to react to the people. He had always felt that they were very committed Christians yet they were heaping material things upon themselves.

5. We are pretty much through the really hard financial times of the early 80's. Much of the lack of successful missionary deputation during this period was due to the economy. The churches were hurting. This was fact. Many churches were in a mess financially.

Why? Some because people moved away to find work, yet many had problems because their believers were far in debt and when the crunch hit, the church was the first name withdrawn from the basket at the first of the month.

The interesting part of the economic crunch is that even if all the church financial problems were based on the crunch, the church has not recovered from the crunch. The believers became used to not doing for the church so they are still not doing for the church.

6. The missionaries may well be part of the problem as well. I see missionaries that have \$3000 worth of sound equipment to sing with. I see missionaries with VCR'S and video cameras. I see very few missionaries driving old cars even though there are several organizations that supply older cars free of charge for use while in the states. I see missionaries that will not help in the homes in which they stay. They assume that the host will do all the work.

They assume that the host will do all the clean up. They assume that the host will do all the cooking. Etc.

I have been told by pastors of small churches that the missionaries never contact them for meetings because they are too small to give support. I have seen missionaries pick three churches to attend on furlough. One for Sun. AM, one for Sun. PM, and one for Wed. They hope to get to know the people and get support from all three churches. I have seen missionaries come into our home and talk of nothing but material things. A couple recently had four missionaries in their home for dinner and the topic of conversation never left the material spectrum.

A pastor in California mentioned that it is hard to plan a conference in his area during the hot period of the year because all of the missionaries are in the states with cooler climates.

I have seen missionary presentations of slides that were more of a travelogue than of a ministry. I have seen presentations with slides from every country in Europe with a few from the country in which they minister. I've seen presentations that are so full of other parts of the country that one is left to wonder when they ministered.

AT THE SAME TIME I SEE MANY MISSIONARIES THAT ARE THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THIS!!!

7. There is a shift of importance in raising our children. In the 60's a child going into missions was great. Today it is a sign of lack of proper understanding of the world system by the child. They have to go into business if they are going to amount to anything.

8. The shift in world view has added to the missions problem. In the 60's we saw the world as lost. I think that today we view the world as just like us. Economics, lifestyle etc. are very similar in many of the larger nations. Why do they need the gospel?

9. There is a real bias against cultured and economically progressive nations when it comes to supporting missionaries going there. It is hard for missionaries to Europe to convince people that the European community is lost. They are still "Christian" in many people's minds.

The hardest field to raise support for at present is the United States. Again it is assumed that there is a bias toward supporting someone in a "Christian" nation.

10. There is a real rise in concern for cost effectiveness in everything including missions. I sat across the table from a man in Pennsylvania that was seriously questioning the cost effectiveness of soul-winning on the mission field. Is it worth all that we are pouring into missions to save so few souls, was his question. I should have asked him about how cost effective the American church is in spending 90% of their income to save the few souls that are saved in our country today.

11. I have run into home mission organizations that require that churches fully support their pastor before they consider supporting missions. This is good in principle, for the pastor is needful of support, but on the other hand the people are to be involved in world missions. They cannot be involved if they never are confronted with missions by missionaries. Most of these churches will not allow missionaries to even come to present their work and seek prayer support.

I might add that I've been in many small, struggling churches that have allowed missionaries to come, and the love offerings were great. The churches have never suffered because the missionaries took some of the funds. Indeed, most mission-minded churches prosper.

12. I have seen home missionary people preach that we should take foreign mission dollars and shift them to the home mission organizations so that they can plant lots of churches here and build a "strong economical base" from which we can then send missionaries.

This is not in keeping, however with Acts 1:8 which tells us that we are to be working at home and on the world at the same time, not working at home until we can afford to work on the world.

13. There are many people now that just do not know what missions is all about. They have never been trained and have no idea that the world is the Lord's field. These need to be taught!

SO, WHAT IS THE ANSWER TO ALL THE GLOOM AND DOOM?

VERY SIMPLE! WE CAN FIND AN ANSWER IN TWO WORDS! YOU ARE.

1. People like you that realize that what has been said is true, will have to go out into the world and train, and teach, and encourage, and exhort, and challenge, and wake up all those people out there that have either turned a deaf ear to missions or that have never heard of missions.

Some of you may go into pastorates. The pastor that can train and challenge his church in missions is invaluable. Indeed I am almost to the point of thinking we need them as badly as we need missionaries.

Some of you may go into missions. As you go out on deputation be sure that you are communicating well the needs and the story of missions. You might be asked to teach a class or preach a sermon. Use that time to instruct and challenge people to missions in general.

Some of you may end up teaching in a college situation. Challenge to missions.

Some of you are lay people. Use your talents accordingly. Teach and challenge to missions.

Sunday School teachers can do great things if they put their minds to it. If you instill missions into every class you teach, then some day the church membership will be missions-minded.

2. As you meet other Christians, instead of talking about the "fellowship trio," news, weather and sports, ask them how they feel about missions. If you know anything about missions you can spend several hours on the subject just talking and challenging.

3. Get involved as much as is possible for yourself. Go to short term missions projects. Give. Pray. Support the missions committee in your church. Support the pastor if he is trying to strengthen missions.

4. Remember that unless individuals commit themselves to being missions-minded and start working toward that goal, then nothing will be done. This is between you and God, not your neighbor and God, not your neighboring church and God, but you as an individual and God. Then you can start work on your neighbor, your church and your neighboring church!

5. Don't give up just because you feel like the Lone Ranger! There are some great churches out

there that are supporting missions like mad. There are pastors out there that break their backs to help missionaries. A friend that was on deputation for Japan had a pastor that did all of my friend's contacting with pastors and churches. The pastor wrote all the letters and made all the phone calls and set up the appointments. My friend just had to show up for the meetings. That is a pastor that is involved! This church helps care for their finances and puts out their prayer letter for them. They supplied them with housing while they were on deputation.

**BE GLAD THAT YOU ARE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH TODAY, WHEN THINGS ARE COMING AROUND!**

We are seeing some great things happen in the church today! Some of the real big religious leaders of the nation are realizing what has not been done, and are now trying to stir the American Church into action! They are beginning to speak out, and call for action!

We are hearing great reports from around the world about what is going on. We hear of many coming to know the Lord. We are hearing of strong indigenous churches being planted and turned over to national pastors. We are hearing of third world mission organizations, and the workers that they are sending out to the world.

We live in exciting times. I trust that you will make yourself a part of these times of growing interest in missions. I trust that the Christian world will wake up to the fact that the world is on its way to hell, and we are doing precious little to stop it.

It is our generation's task to reach our own generation. If we don't, there is no generation that can. Either we will reach our own generation, or fail. It is a choice that we, the American church, are making each and every day.

May tomorrow's church follow after yesterday's church, due to the efforts of today's church!

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m01250

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT Stanley L. Derickson**

In light of the comment from a missionary awhile back about the fact that there are around 2000 language groups that do not have the Bible in their own language, I pondered the following list of Bibles that I jotted down. The list comes from a brief visit to a small Bible book store and listing the Bibles from memory and then looking through five catalogs from the same evangelical book supplier. Imagine what the list would be like if it were extensive!

I did not list all of the colors, bindings, edges, choices, etc. that are available. (There may be duplicates, I just listed them as they were advertized.)

1611 KJV BIBLE

ADVENTURE BIBLE

ADVENTURES IN ODYSSEY CHILDREN'S BIBLE

AFRICAN HERITAGE STUDY BIBLE

AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

AMPLIFIED BIBLE, EXPANDED

BIBLE EXPLORER

BIBLE EXPLORER COMMENTARIES EDITION ON CD-ROM

BIBLE: JAMES MOFFATT TRANSLATION WITH CONCORDANCE

BIBLE MASTER

BIBLESOFT REFERENCE LIBRARY PLUS ON CD-ROM

BIBLE VISION: THE NEW TESTAMENT ON VIDEO

BILINGUAL BIBLE, NIV-RVR 1960

CAMBRIDGE ANNOTATED STUDY BIBLE NRSV

CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE NAB

CHILDRENS BIBLE

CLASSIC STUDY BIBLE

COMPANION BIBLE

COMPARATIVE STUDY BIBLE

COMPLETE BIBLE ON CASSETTE

COMPLETE MULTIMEDIA BIBLE

COMPLETE PARR. BIBLE WITH THE APOCRYPHAL/DEUTEROCONONICAL BOOKS

COMPLETE WORD STUDY NEW TESTAMENT

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH BIBLE

CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION BIBLE

COUPLES BIBLE

DAILY BIBLE

DAILY BIBLE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

DAKE'S ANNOTATED REFERENCE BIBLE

DEFENDER'S STUDY BIBLE

DEFENDER'S STUDY BIBLE KJV

DICKSON STUDY BIBLE

DISCOVERY BIBLE NAS

DRAMATIZED BIBLE ON CASSETTE NIV

ECONOMY BIBLE

EIGHT TRANSLATION NEW TESTAMENT

FAMILY BIBLE

FRANKLIN BOOKMAN, NIV

FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE

FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE KJV

FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE NIV

GENEVA BIBLE, 1599 FACSIMILE FIRST EDITION

GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE

GIFT OF LOVE: ONE YEAR NEW TESTAMENT

GOOD NEWS BIBLE

HARPERCOLLINS STUDY BIBLE

HEBREW-GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT-ENGLISH AND SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT KJV

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT NASB

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT NIV

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT NKJV

HERE'S HOPE NEW TESTAMENT RVR

HERMENEUTIKA BIBLEWORKS 3.5 ON CD-ROM

HOLY BIBLE

HYPER BIBLE

HYPER BIBLE MASTER EDITION

HYPER BIBLE MASTER EDITION PLUS

HPERBIBLE MULTIMEDIA MASTER STUDY EDITION # 4

ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

IMPERIAL REFERENCE BIBLE

IN STEP STUDENT BIBLE

IN STEP STUDENT BIBLE: CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

INSPIRATIONAL BIBLE

INSPIRATIONAL BIBLE STUDY BIBLE NCV  
INSPIRATIONAL BIBLE STUDY BIBLE NKJV  
INSPIRATIONAL STUDY BIBLE  
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S AWARD BIBLE  
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE  
INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BIBLE  
INTERNATIONAL INDUCTIVE STUDY BIBLE  
INSPIRATIONAL STUDY BIBLE  
JUST FOR A WOMAN BIBLE  
KID-BUILDER BIBLE  
KING AND THE BEAST  
KING JAMES BIBLE  
KING JAMES BIBLE, 1611 EDITION  
KING JAMES STUDY BIBLE  
KJV AFRICAN-AMERICAN DEVOTIONAL BIBLE  
KJV AFRICAN-AMERICAN FAMILY REFERENCE BIBLE  
KJV APOCRYPHA  
KJV AWARD BIBLES  
KJV BIBLE ON CASSETTE  
KJV CHRISTIAN LIFE NEW TESTAMENT  
KJV CLASSIC GIANT PRINT CENTER-COLUMN REFERENCE BIBLE  
KJV COMPACT REFERENCE BIBLE

KJV COMPACT QUICK-REFERENCE BIBLE, LARGE-PRINT EDITION

KJV DEFENDER'S STUDY BIBLE

KJV DELUXE GIFT BIBLE

KJV ECONOMY BIBLE

KJV FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE

KJV HEBREW-GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE, SIXTH EDITION

KJV HEBREW-GREEK STUDY BIBLE

KJV KIRBAN REFERENCE BIBLE

KJV LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE

KJV LITTLE LAMB'S NEW TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS

KJV MATTHEW HENRY STUDY BIBLE

KJV MINISTRY PEW BIBLE

KJV NEW ADVENTURE BIBLE

KJV NEW OPEN BIBLE

KJV NEW SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE

KJV NEW SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE, LARGE PRINT

KJV ORIGINAL SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE

KJV ORIGINAL SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE, LARGE PRINT

KJV ORIG. SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE, LARGE PRINT, RED-LETTER EDITION

KJV PERSONAL SIZE GIANT PRINT BIBLE

KJV PEW BIBLE

KJV PULPIT BIBLE

KJV SPIRIT FILLED LIFE BIBLE

KJV STUDENT BIBLE

KJV SUPER GIANT PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE

KJV RYRIE STUDY BIBLE, EXPANDED EDITION

KJV THOMPSON CHAN REFERENCE BIBLE, HANDY SIZE

KJV THOMPSON CHAIN-REFERENCE BIBLE, FIFTH EDITION

KJV THOMPSON CHAIN REFERENCE BIBLE, LARGE PRINT

KJV TRADITIONAL VALUES BIBLE

KJV ULTRA THIN LARGE PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE

KJV ULTRA-TRIM BIBLE

LAMSA BIBLE

LAYMAN'S PARALLEL BIBLE

LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE FOR STUDENTS

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE KJV

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE LIVING

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE, NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE NIV

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE NKJV

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE NRSV

LIFE SOURCE: THE HANDBOOK FOR LIFE

LIVING AWARD BIBLE

LIVING BIBLE

LIVING INSIGHTS STUDY BIBLE  
LIVING THE SPIRIT FILLED LIFE  
LOGOS BIBLE SYSTEM LEVEL FOUR  
LOGOS BIBLE SYSTEM LEVEL ONE  
LOGOS BIBLE SYSTEM LEVEL THREE  
LOGOS BIBLE SYSTEM LEVEL TWO  
MACBIBLE  
MARRIED'S BIBLE  
MEN'S BIBLE  
MESSAGE  
MESSAGE, NEW TESTAMENT: YOUTH EDITION  
MESSAGE: THE NEW TESTAMENT IN CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE  
MODERN LANGUAGE BIBLE  
MULTIMEDIA BIBLE  
NAB CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE  
NAS CASSETTE BIBLE  
NAS DISCOVERY BIBLE, NEW TESTAMENT  
NAS SCOFIELD BIBLE  
NASB AWARD BIBLE  
NASB GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE  
NASB HEBREW-GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE  
NASB INTERNATIONAL INDUCTIVE STUDY BIBLE

NASB MINISTRY PEW BIBLE

NASB NEW OPEN BIBLE

NASB PERSONAL SIZE GIANT PRINT BIBLE, REFERENCE EDITION

NASB PEW BIBLE

NASB RYRIE STUDY BIBLE, EXPANDED EDITION

NASB NEW SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE

NASB SMALLEST BIBLE

NASB THOMPSON CHAIN-REFERENCE

NAVE'S TOPICAL BIBLE

NASB ULTRA THIN REFERENCE BIBLE

NCV EVERYDAY STUDY BIBLE

NELSON'S STUDENT BIBLE-NKJV

NEW ADVENTURE BIBLE

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

NEW CENTURY VERSION BIBLE

NEW GENEVA STUDY BIBLE

NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION BIBLE

NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION, NEW TESTAMENT

NEW JERUSALEM BIBLE

NEW KING JAMES BIBLE

NEW LIFE BIBLE

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

NEW LIVING TRANSLATION BIBLE, DELUXE TEXT EDITION

NEW OPEN BIBLE KING JAMES VERSION

NEW OPEN BIBLE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD

NEW OPEN BIBLE NEW KING JAMES VERSION

NEW OPEN BIBLE STUDY EDITION

NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE

NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE, NRSV WITH APOCRYPHA SOFTWARE

NEW REVISED STANDARD BIBLE

NEW STUDENT BIBLE NIV

NEWBERRY REFERENCE BIBLE

NIV BIBLE

NIV BIBLE REFERENCE EDITION

NIV CHILDREN'S BIBLE

NIV CHILDREN'S PERSONAL GIFT BIBLE

NIV CLASSIC REFERENCE BIBLE

NIV CLASSICS DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

NIV COMPACT REFERENCE BIBLE

NIV COMPLETE BIBLE ON CASSETTE

NIV DELUXE GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE

NIV DISCIPLE'S STUDY BIBLE

NIV FULL LIFE STUDY BIBLE

NIV GIANT PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE

NIV GOSPEL OF JOHN

NIV HEBREW GREEK KEY STUDY BIBLE

NIV KIDS' STUDY BIBLE

NIV LARGE PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE, PERSONAL SIZE

NIV LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE

NIV MEN'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

NIV MINISTRY PEW BIBLE

NIV MOM'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

NIV NARRATED BIBLE

NIV NAVE'S TOPICAL BIBLE

NIV NEW ADVENTURE BIBLE

NIV NEW TESTAMENT WITH STUDY HELPS

NIV NEW TESTAMENT, PSALMS, AND PROVERBS

NIV PERSONAL GIFT BIBLE

NIV PEW BIBLE

NIV POCKET-THIN NEW TESTAMENT

NIV PULPIT BIBLE

NIV ONE MINUTE BIBLE

NIV QUEST STUDY BIBLE

NIV QUIET TIME BIBLE

NIV RAINBOW STUDY BIBLE

NIV RECOVERY DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

NIV RYRIE EXPANDED EDITION STUDY BIBLE FOR WINDOWS  
NIV RYRIE STUDY BIBLE, EXPANDED EDITION  
NIV SENIOR'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE  
NIV SERENDIPITY BIBLE  
NIV SERENDIPITY BIBLE: 10TH ANN. EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED  
NIV SPANISH NEW TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS AND PROVERBS  
NIV SPANISH/ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS AND PROVERBS  
NIV STUDENT BIBLE  
NIV STUDY BIBLE  
NIV STUDY BIBLE, 10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION REVISED AND EXPANDED  
NIV TEEN STUDY BIBLE  
NIV TEXTBOOK EDITION BIBLE  
NIV THOMPSON CHAIN-REFERENCE BIBLE  
NIV THOMPSON CHAIN-REFERENCE BIBLE, HANDY SIZE  
NIV THOMPSON CHAIN-REFERENCE BIBLE, LARGE PRINT  
NIV TINY TESTAMENT  
NIV THINLINE BIBLE  
NIV TRIMLINE BIBLE  
NIV ULTRATHIN REFERENCE BIBLE  
NIV WIDE-MARGIN EDITION  
NIV WITNESS EDITION BIBLE  
NIV WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE, COMPACT EDITION

NIV WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE 2  
NIV WORSHIP BIBLE  
NIV YOUNG DISCOVERER'S BIBLE  
NIV YOUNG EXPLORER'S BIBLE  
NIV YOUTHWALK DEVOTIONAL BIBLE  
NIV/KJV PARALLEL BIBLE  
NKJV AWARD BIBLE  
NKJV BELIEVER'S STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV CHILDREN'S MINISTRY RESOURCE BIBLE  
NKJV CHRISTIAN CHARACTER BUILDER BIBLE  
NKJV CLASSIC GIANT PRINT CENTER-COLUMN REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV CLASSIC PERSONAL STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV COMPACT REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV ECONOMY BIBLE  
NKJV GIANT PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE  
NKJV EXPERIENCING GOD STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV ILLUSTRATED FAMILY-TIME BIBLE  
NKJV LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE  
NKJV NELSON'S COMPLETE STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV NEW GENEVA STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV NEW OPEN BIBLE

NKJV NEW SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV PERSONAL GROWTH BIBLE  
NKJV PERSONAL SIZE GIANT PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV PERSONAL WITNESS NEW TESTAMENT  
NKJV PEW BIBLE  
NKJV PEW AND LIBRARY BIBLE  
NKJV POCKET COMPANION BIBLE  
NKJV PRECIOUS MOMENTS BIBLE  
NKJV PROPHECY STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV SPIRIT FILLED BIBLE FOR STUDENTS  
NKJV SPIRIT FILLED LIFE BIBLE  
NKJV SPIRIT FILLED STUDY BIBLE FOR STUDENTS  
NKJV THOMPSON CHAIN STUDY BIBLE, EXPANDED EDITION  
NKJV TOPICAL STUDY LARGE PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV ULTRA THIN REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV ULTRA THIN LARGE-PRINT REFERENCE BIBLE  
NKJV WESLEY BIBLE  
NKJV WESLEY STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV WOMAN'S STUDY BIBLE  
NKJV WORD IN LIFE STUDY BIBLE  
NRSV ANNOTATED APOCRYPHA

NRSV AWARD BIBLE

NRSV CHILDREN'S BIBLE

NRSV GIFT AND AWARD BIBLE

NRSV MINISTRY BIBLE

NRSV NEW ADVENTURE BIBLE

NRSV NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED WITH APOCRYPHA

NRSV PERSONAL GIFT BIBLE

NRSV PEW BIBLE

NRSV READER'S EDITION

NRSV READER'S EDITION, WITH APOCRYPHA

NRSV READER'S TEXT BIBLE

NRSV STUDEN BIBLE

NRSV WORD IN LIFE STUDY BIBLE

ONE MINUTE BIBLE

ONE MINUTE BIBLE NIV

ONE-YEAR BIBLES

ONLINE BIBLE

ONLINE BIBLE FOR MAC

ONLINE BIBLE DELUXE FOR MAC

ORIGINAL AFRICAN HERITAGE STUDY BIBLE, KJV

OXFORD STUDY BIBLE REVISED ENGLISH BIBLE WITH APOCRYPHA

PASSAGES OF LIFE BIBLE NKJV

PC STUDY BIBLE.

PRECISE PARALLEL NEW TESTAMENT

PROMISE

PROMISE CEV

PROMISE STUDY EDITION: CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSION

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QUICK VERSE

QUICKVERSE 4.0 DELUXE BIBLE REFERENCE COLLECTION ON CD-ROM

RAINBOW CHILDREN'S BIBLE

RAINBOW STUDY BIBLE KJV

RAINBOW STUDY BIBLE NIV

REESE CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLE

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REVISED STANDARD BIBLE

ROTHERHAM'S EMPHASIZED BIBLE

ROYAL REFERENCE BIBLE

RYRIE STUDY BIBLE

RYRIE STUDY BIBLE, EXPANDED EDITION

RYRIE STUDY BIBLE NEW AND EXPANDED KJV

RYRIE STUDY BIBLE NEW AND EXPANDED NASB

RYRIE STUDY BIBLE NEW AND EXPANDED NIV

SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE

SEEDMASTER BIBLE

SERENITY NEW TESTAMENT

SERENITY NEW TESTAMENT, PSALMS AND PROVERBS

SERINDIPITY BIBLE

SMALLEST BIBLE KJV

SPANISH OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT AUDIO CASSETTE

SPIRIT FILLED LIFE BIBLE

SPIRIT FILLED LIFE BIBLE (LA BIBLIA PLENITUD)

SPIRIT FILLED LIFE DAILY DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

SPURGEION'S DEVOTIONAL BIBLE

STUDENT BIBLE

STUDENT BIBLE, REVISED AND EXPANDED

STUDY BIBLE

TANAKH TRANSLATION

TEACHER'S BIBLE COMPANION ON CDROM

TEEN STUDY BIBLE NIV

THOMPSON CHAIN REFERENCE BIBLE

THOMPSON CHAIN STUDY BIBLE KJV

THOMPSON CHAIN STUDY BIBLE NASB

THOMPSON CHAIN STUDY BIBLE NIV

THOMPSON EXHAUSTIVE TOPICAL BIBLE

THRU THE YEAR BIBLE

TIME WITH GOD NCV

WHITE HARVEST FAMILY BIBLE COMPANION FOR CD-ROM

WHITE HARVEST STUDENT BIBLE COMPANION FOR CD-ROM

WHITE HARVEST TEACHER'S BIBLE FOR CD-ROM

WILLIAM TYNDALE'S OLD TESTAMENT

WORD IN LIFE STUDY BIBLE

WORD SEARCH

WORD SEARCH - CLASSIC STUDY LIBRARY

WORD SEARCH - DISCIPLESHIP LIBRARY VERSION

WORD SEARCH - EVERYTHING ON IT VERSION

WORLD'S SMALLEST BIBLE NASB

WORSHIP BIBLE

YOUNG'S LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

YOUTH BIBLE

YOUTH BIBLE, NCV

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LIFE ISN'T A BOWL OF CHERRIES RIGHT NOW BUT IT ISN'T THE PITS EITHER! By  
Rev. Stanley L. Derickson Ph.D. (First published in Voice, magazine of the Independent  
Fundamental Churches of America.)

Have you ever had one of "THOSE DAYS," or maybe "ONE OF THOSE WEEKS" or possibly  
even "ONE OF THOSE MONTHS" where nothing went correctly? Judith Viorst wrote a  
children's story called "ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY  
BAD DAY. If you can find a copy at your library I'm sure you would enjoy it. Each time I read  
the story I am more convinced than ever that she was writing about adult life! It is the story of a

small boy that has a day when nothing at all goes right.

Paul the apostle introduces us to the fact that he had some real "TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD problem times in his own life in II Corinthians 4:8,9.

This text has four phrases that are very full of implication to the believer that is in the midst of troubles and trials.

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed;"

The term trouble is also translated in the New Testament as suffering tribulation and affliction. Paul is relating to the Corinthians that there are some real problems and troubles that he is having to deal within his life and ministry.

There is a play on words in this phrase that is not evident in the English translation. The term trouble means in a narrow spot, and the term distressed has the idea of being crowded into a narrower spot. Could we say, "between the rock and a hard spot, but not stuck in concrete?"

Indeed, this is a narrow spot that Paul is speaking of, but with Gods assistance we will never be crowded to a point where we can't pass.

No matter how far the Lord allows the devil to push, we always have room to maneuver. We always have room to fight!.

Paul notes that these troubles are on every side. The problems he was facing were coming from the people and situations around him. We need to realize that the problems of the day usually come from a close proximity to us. Our job, our family, our cash flow, our ministries, our cars, our houses etc.

Troubles and trials will appear on your sunny horizon every now and then to give you those cloudy days.

Indeed, you may at times feel that you are living in the tropics when the monsoon rains are upon you - BUT may I remind you that you have a very effective umbrella that can care for every drop of your trouble if you will allow Him to.

Paul in these two verses gives us a tremendous declaration that no matter how bad it gets there is always a God that will suffice in your every need.

"We are perplexed, but not in despair;"

The term perplexed can be translated doubt. Doubt comes from a root meaning of twice or two. The apostle is thinking twice about his situation yet he is "not in despair." It is of interest that this

phrase is constructed to indicate that the apostle is doing the acting. He is perplexed, but he won't allow himself to be in despair. He won't give up. He won't be left with no hope. The other three phrases are constructed in such a way that they show that the those things going on around him are not of his doings. They are testings and trials that the Lord has allowed into his life.

He has made a conscious commitment to face all that the Lord has allowed to come upon him and not give up.

"persecuted, but not forsaken;"

The term persecuted is used by Paul in Phil. 3:14 where he states, "I PRESS toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He is really pressed by his situation but "not forsaken!" He may be in the middle of trials plus a bunch, yet he knows, he has a confidence that the Lord is still in control!

"cast down, but not destroyed;"

"Destroy" has an interesting formulation. It means to ruin a structure. The term comes from a French term meaning structure with the "de" prefix which means to take apart the structure.

Paul has been submitted to many trials and problems yet he has not been taken apart!

As we face trials and problems of life we need to consciously analyze the situation and realize that these trials are from the Lord for His purpose and His plan for our lives. We need to realize that He is building us up for the labors that He has planned for us in the future.

We might even say that, "HE IS THE ONE THAT BUILDS IN THE STRESS FACTOR - THAT WHICH WE NEED TO FACE THE TROUBLES AHEAD!"

In shock absorber factories they have a large machine. It is in the factory for only one reason and that is to harden the steel rods that take the shock of the bumps and jolts of the road . The machine prepares the rods for the stresses and strains of the road. This machine causes great heat in the rod as it is nearing the end of its process which causes great hardness.

Without this hardening there would not be enough strength to go through the life of the shock without being bent beyond use.

God is in the business of hardening us for life's bumps and jolts!

Without God to give us this hardening there would be no use in our going out into the world to minister!

This hardening process is a must! It is not an easy process but it is a necessary process!

Our emphasis is to be the confidence that we place in Him to carry us through!

If you are going through some very hard times you can be assured that the Lord is preparing you for situations that will require great stress handling capabilities.

The devil may have you in a corner, however God always gives you room to maneuver and to find an opening in the opponent's offense to gain the victory.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make the way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The term used here is translated "temptation" however the term is also translated trial in the New Testament. (I Pet. 4:12,13)

We can see from this text that Paul had some times when he was really pressed with troubles yet he knew that the Lord was in control and that the Lord would provide the way through!

In short, I think we could say, "Life is the pits, however I'm still enjoying the flavor of the cherries, and I know the pits will spring forth into life and bear fruit for our Lord one day!"

**WHEN TRIALS FACE US HOW CAN WE HOPE FOR A BETTER PROMISE THAN THIS - THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS GIVE US AN OPTION!**

He is in the business of training and preparing you - your responsibility is to live through that to which He has called you!

No matter how hard the trials, remember that He will give you the strength and way through those trials so that you may give Him the victory and glory!

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**TITLE: THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION**

In recent days our community was shocked by two teenagers, one of which was on a local football team, tortured and beat a stray cat to death and then hid the evidence from their parents. The two boys were jailed on a ten thousand dollar bail.

One of our churchmen, the following Sunday, related this incident to another more common occurrence that goes, basically, unnoticed by the media and the public at large. He related that it was strange that these two young men would be jailed on \$10,000 bond, while a doctor can plunge a pair of scissors into the brain of a full term baby and suck its brains out and call it a needed medical procedure.

We in America care more for the rights of animals than we do for the rights of other human

beings.

I will preempt this study by saying that I am sure that I will offend some. I will also say that I probably should offend more than I will offend. I will also say that it is not I that offends, but Almighty God. He sets the standards that we are to live by, not me.

I would like to do something a little different in this study. I would like to give you two answers to a question. I will then give you the question after we have the answers in our minds.

Answer number one. We as believers have adopted the secular mind set that tells us that we MUST have our rights.

## I. THE OUGHT NOTS

The Bible is supposed to be our very guide for living as believers. Baptists have as one of their Baptist Distinctives the Bible as their only authority for faith and practice. However, I think that we will see that today we reject its teachings by our life style.

We live as if "no" were a dirty word. "No" is a word of control. It was designed to limit the activity. We feel that it is a word that will warp our child's mind so we avoid it like the plague.

Might I remind you that God uses negatives? "Thou shalt not" is a negative much like the word no. God has many negatives, God has many restrictions, yet we in the church over the last few years have given ourselves permission to do all things rather than to follow the restrictions and avoid those things the Scriptures tell us to avoid.

We Christians, seldom say no to ourselves or for that matter to our children.

If you spend time in retail stores, you will find that "no" is the word children use when they talk to their parents, rather than the other way around.

No, I won't wear that dress to school.

No, I won't pay for that with my own money - you buy it for me.

No, I won't be quiet.

No, I don't want to go yet.

No, I won't ----- .

Let's consider our rights for a moment or two.

## A. MY CHRISTIAN RIGHTS

We have been living in a generation that has wanted its rights for all to long.

We have groups wanting to be viewed with equal rights.

We have groups wanting to be viewed with special rights.

We have groups wanting to have the same rights as others.

We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have special rights.

We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have more rights than anyone else.

In America we have many rights, and we also have lost many of our rights in recent days. Indeed, if we don't watch our government we will be losing many more of our rights.

It was recently reported that President Clinton was in a Christmas church service and that people were greeting him and that one of the preachers mentioned concerning his veto of the partial birth abortion bill, that "God will hold you to account." The secret service searched and questioned the preacher for fifteen minutes publicly accusing him of threatening the president's life.

Some groups deserve to have rights enforced, while other groups want rights that they have no right to.

We have "CHALLENGED" people that want to be able to do everything that everyone else can do, yet they say don't treat me as if I'm special. I'm sorry but you can't have it both ways! If the society spends billions of dollars for ramps and accesses for only those few, then they are special! The ramps and accesses are not necessary for the majority nor are most of them used for the majority.

Our public schools have been teaching young people that whatever they decide to do is okay. They have the right to make any decision that they want. Now those same young people are older and demanding their rights that no one can give them.

Some of those young people are committing crime and wondering why everyone is upset with them. The young people declare their actions alright and themselves not guilty and wonder why others are upset.

### 1. THE RIGHTS WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES

I recently talked with a man that was very frustrated for his children. One of his kids and spouse

came to him complaining of all their problems. They were both working, they were not making a lot of money, they had no savings, they had a home but it was only a very modest one - not what they wanted, they had a three year old car, their kids couldn't have all the clothes they wanted, they weren't getting ahead, and in general they were frustrated because they hadn't achieved the American dream - what ever that is.

As the man talked, I was taken with the total self-centeredness of the family. Everything centered upon them and what they wanted and what they didn't have.

SOUND FAMILIAR? I find that this is about where most Christians live their lives. Their concentration is acquiring material things, and acquiring more material things.

If you have been watching television news over the last few years, you know that many people in our nation have been denied the American dream. They resent this exclusion from what EVERYONE ELSE HAS.

Indeed, many people in the LA riots mentioned this exclusion from what was rightfully theirs as Americans. They haven't achieved what they feel in their minds they should have achieved in the material realm.

Their thinking is very similar to the farmers I used to work with in Nebraska. When I would ask them how they had done in a certain year they would tell me that they lost 25,000 dollars or some such figure. I was talking to them in their \$150,000 home working on their \$800 television set. I had walked by their three new cars and pickups and had admired the four new snowmobiles parked in the garage.

Now, I would try to figure all this out. Just how does the expression of always loosing money relate to the facts of all I had viewed.

It was explained to me by a farmer one day. The farmer in that area would decide how much he wanted to make the coming year. Say he decided he wanted to make \$60,000 and at the end of the year he had only made \$40,000, then he has lost \$20,000.

Using this method of accounting, I must admit that Faith and I have been loosing about \$35,000 per year for the last 30 years. Do you suppose IRS would accept this as real business losses?

Now, let us consider the rights that God has given us in this area of life.

## 2. THE RIGHTS GOD GAVE US

I would like to read God's estimation of our rights to the American dream.

Gen 3:17b-19 "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife,

and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

God says that we will live - eat and survive - by the sweat of our brow. He does not give 25 declarations, such as

THOU SHALT HAVE A GORGEOUS HOME.

THOU SHALT HAVE A BMW.

THOU SHALT HAVE A HUGE SAVINGS ACCOUNT.

THOU SHALT HAVE A BULGING BILLFOLD.

THOU SHALT HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

THOU SHALT HAVE A FIVE BEDROOM HOUSE.

THOU SHALT HAVE A ..... .

BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW, YOU WILL SURVIVE THIS LIFE, NOT BY THE SIZE OF THINE BANK ACCOUNT.

Our society has given us the self-centered/materialistic mind set that many of us function under today. It is an incorrect mind set!

Before you take what I say wrong, let me be quick to say that God has supremely blessed some of his people through the years. He has chosen to give many of his people great wealth and prosperity, but this is a blessing over and above what he has promised. He has only promised us the need to work for our NEEDS.

When struggling through the first years of Bible college we had very little income. We needed car to replace the old one that was without a transmission for the second time. We looked at all the cars we could afford and they were in worse shape than our present car. We had bid the salesman goodbye and were leaving the lot. As we neared the edge of the lot we spotted a beautiful white Plymouth Sport Fury convertible. We stopped and commented on how great it would be to have such a car. The salesman walked up and said, "You wouldn't be interested in that would you?" I told him we certainly would. He left for a moment and returned to tell us that his manager wanted to move the car as winter was near and they could seldom sell convertibles in the winter. They gave us the car for what we had to spend!

STRUGGLING, POOR BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS driving a Sports Fury convertible with bucket seats and leather interior! God truly blesses sometimes.

Scripture bears out this line of thinking. Abraham, David, Solomon for a few from the Old Testament. These men had great wealth. While these man had great wealth, there were MANY that were barely getting by financially.

We often quote Matt. 6:33 to show that we will be given all we need. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Most interpret "all these things" as everything we want. NO! The context shows clearly that God is promising, not to provide all our wants, but to supply our NEEDS!

He promises to give to us the needs of life. Those things required to keep us alive.

DON'T TAKE ME WRONG! We as believers DO HAVE A LOT OF RIGHTS! I would like to remind you of some of these GOD GIVEN RIGHTS.

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE A WITNESS for our Lord: Matt 28:18-20

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HOLY: I Pet 1:15-16 "But as he which hath called you is holy , so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy ."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PERSECUTED: John 15:20a "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;"

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Eph. 4:8 "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. " The following context of this verse shows that the gifts are to be used, not laid aside in disuse!

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRAYERFUL: I Tim 2:8A "I will therefore that men pray every where," (James 5:16 also)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED: Gal. 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO ETERNAL REST: Rev. 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM SIN: Rom. 6:22 "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another ."

Now that we know what our true Christian rights are, compare them to the rights that you tend to be worried about and see if your mind is running with God or the world.

## B. MY CHRISTIAN LIFE STYLE

Now let us move on to answer number two. We have made the holy things common and meaningless.

One of the condemnations God delivered to the leaders of Israel via Ezekiel is the basis for this thought.

King James Version Ezek 22.26 "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed [difference] between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

This passage relates to the leaders of Israel, but as I view our society today, especially our Christian society, I feel that this verse has application to us.

We have made holy things common. We don't know the difference between clean and unclean today. Let me list a few for you quickly.

1. Worship services: Today we have celebrations, we have gatherings, we have youth clubs, we have AWANA, we have cancellations, we have travel reports, we have everything under the sun but the worship of God!

We were in a Baptist church in the south a few years ago and the entire service after the songs was given over to a report of a woman that had traveled to China. There was nothing of Spiritual import to what she said, but this was termed a worship service.

When worship services were put into place, they were designed to be a time of teaching, fellowship and worship. Many churches are replacing worship with group discussions, many are replacing worship with watching tv at home, many are spending more and more time on everything but worship.

My wife was told by a Christian woman that her daughter attends a church in Salem that has dropped the Sunday evening Bible study. The church leadership determined that the family is

very important (which it is) and that the family has a hard time finding time to be together, so they have canceled the service so that the families can spend time together. Yea, RIGHT, like those families are spending an hour on Sunday evening having family time! I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE STATISTICS OF FAMILY TIME ON SUNDAY EVENING IN THE FAMILIES OF THAT CHURCH. I WOULD ALMOST BET THAT THE SUNDAY SERVICE HOUR IS NOT SPENT IN "FAMILY TIME!" I hope that I am wrong.

2. Prayer: Today we have canceled most of our prayer services, and those that still exist are so small that most meet in the back rooms of the churches. Most churches average less than 20% of their membership at the prayer meetings.

Many churches are replacing prayer meetings with AWANA and other activities.

I received a brochure for a seminar with some real side benefits. "The 'Celebration Service' and the 'Concert of Prayer' on Monday and Tuesday evenings will bless your socks off!!" I was tempted to right back and ask if Baptists were getting ready to practice foot washing, but refrained.

3. Witnessing: This used to be a person telling a lost person of the love of Christ in shedding His blood for their sin, but now it is scrawling words like "Jesus loves you, God bless you across the walls of a men's room.

4. Christian living: Today we have people teaching just about everything except HOLINESS as the proper Christian life style.

We have homosexuals declaring that they are good Christians, yet they are involved in activity that God calls abominable.

We have politicians declaring that they are good Christians, yet they are full of lies, half truths, and lack general moral character.

We have music stars declaring that they are good Christians, yet they sing the lyrics of the world.

We have church leaders declaring that they are good Christians, yet use worldly standards to conduct business.

I Cor. 6:19 "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

We know from the Word that we are to be HOLY. Being holy is the normal need in light of our being the TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. We are to be a holy dwelling for ALMIGHTY GOD and all too often we as believers give GOD a shabby shack to live in. THAT IS REALLY MAKING SOMETHING HOLY - COMMON.

We have taken so many things of our Christian faith and allowed them to become common and everyday.

I've mentioned some of these in other studies, but they relate to what I am saying in this study.

5. Games: Bible Trivia, Bible Pictionary. There is nothing wrong on the surface, but aren't we teaching our children that these serious spiritual things are just games to be enjoyed?

6. Bible Action figures

7. Bible novels - THE BIBLE IS TRUTH YET WE NOW HAVE BIG PUBLISHERS PUTTING OUT FICTION ABOUT BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES!

8. Christian music - most Christian radio stations you have to listen to for quite awhile to find out that they are Christian.

I saw a Christian music INFOMERCIAL that was declaring that this music would change your life - that it would do great things for you as if it were an exercise machine!

9. Christian radio - every sort of false teaching available and GOOD CHRISTIANS keep sending in their money.

10. Giving: Paul calls it a sacrifice in Phil. 4:18, yet some use it in every conceivable way to gain more money for ministries. I recently saw an article in a group of churches newsletter that was entitled "HOW DO WE MAKE A MINISTRY GO FORWARD?" (Dwane Shockley; CBNW Newsletter Oct. 96

I was excited to see if there was some new information to assist me in the interim pastor work I was doing in a little church that was struggling to get moving.

Point one was prayer. Good point. Second point was giving. Another good point - nothing new yet but good points. Point three was SPECIAL GIVING, point four was ONE TIME GIVING, point five was ESTATE GIVING, and point six was ENDOWMENT GIVING. I assumed from the article that giving is five times more important than prayer in getting a work moving.

11. The ministry: The ministry used to be something special and uplifting for the man that decided to follow God into ministering to people. Not so any longer for many of the pastors of our country.

(From Pulpit Helps Jan 96/"MINISTRY FRUSTRATION") "All of the latest survey data indicates that the clergy is a dissatisfied and unhappy lot. From burn-out to disputes with elders, from counsel unheeded to people on the take, from budgets to boards, from unhappy saints to the mega church with mega programs down the street, pastors seem to constantly be fighting an

uphill battle. Is ministry to be so difficult? Why do we find ministry so frustrating?

"Our society is star-struck and it has infected the church and the ministry. We are enamored with Christian leaders who have national and international notoriety. Everyone wants to pastor the largest, fastest-growing, church in the city, county, or state."

Enough said. I think that if you consider how we view Christian things, that you will agree that we tend to make them common rather than treat them as special parts of our lives.

## II. THE OUGHTS

If we are self centered, we will naturally live for ourselves, thus

we should not be surprised to see worship services on the decline,

we should not be surprised to see prayer services on the decline,

we should not be surprised to see Christian living on the decline.

Now that I have given you the answers to the question we want to ask, can you figure out what the question is?

Let me repeat the answers for you:

Answer number one. We as believers have adopted the secular mind set that we MUST have our rights.

Answer number two. We have made the holy things common and meaningless.

The question is this: What has happened to Christians in America?

Let me repeat that and then insert the answer.

What has happened to Christians in America? We as believers have adopted the secular mind set that we MUST have our rights.

What has happened to Christians in America? We have made the holy things common and meaningless.

The Christians of our era have taken upon themselves the standard of the world - materialism, and they have cheapened the holy things to make them everyday and meaningless.

Need I add anything else?

I don't think so.

CONCLUSION:

I have declared the question, and I have answered the question.

It is now your turn to do something.

NOW is the time for you to adjust your lives to fit into the MIND SET OF ALMIGHTY GOD and not the mind set of the ALMIGHTY DOLLAR.

NOW it is time for you to take the worship service of this church seriously.

NOW it is time for you to take the prayer service of this church seriously.

NOW it is time for you to take your personal Christian life seriously.

If you concentrate on these - worship prayer and holiness - I really believe that your rights will have little meaning to you!

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m01400

I would like to take a moment to read something that at first upset me, then disappointed me, and then burdened me.

From Statesman Journal Newspaper; Salem, OR; 1-4-1997; Letters to the editor; Ed Rutledge, Eugene.

"Attitudes of Christians Shown By New Symbol

"I cheered when I first saw the Christian fish symbol eating the Darwinian-footed fish. I cheered because, with this symbol, The Christians revealed themselves.

"They are intolerant of those who do not share their dogma. They seek to devour those with whom they are intolerant. And, they have absolutely no sense of humor."

I have three questions for this man.

1. So, who doesn't have a sense of humor? He is the one that is upset!
2. So, who is intolerant? He is the one that calls us intolerant and accuses us of devouring others!
3. So, who poked fun at whose symbol first? We raised no public outcry when they came out with their symbol, but I can't believe if we displayed bumper stickers of Darwin on a cross that they would not have raised an avalanche of disgust.

I was upset because of the terminology the man used in describing us. "Devour" "intolerant" etc. I was then disappointed in that he has this concept of believers, and finally, I was burdened with our supremely important need of being very careful of our walk before nonbelievers.

One of our men mentioned at prayer meeting that he had discovered that the people he stays with when on fishing trips are very opposed to believers.

We know that believers are being persecuted around the world and we are beginning to see more and more in our own country. The lost are becoming very upset with Christians for some reason in our society.

I think these thoughts should draw our attention to our great need of being very careful of our testimony.

In the Lord's table we are showing Christ's death till He comes. Possibly we as Christians need to be more tuned into the Lord's work on the cross and less tuned in to ourselves as we walk our everyday walk.

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m01450

TITLE: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

No, that isn't a self portrait! I plan to be a little light in this study because it is some heavy material and I want you to go away with a smile on your face even though the Word may have been heavy on your toes.

Back in the 50's and 60's it was popular to talk about how ugly another person was. Phrases like,

"Someone must have beat you with an ugly stick!" or "Did you take a whole bottle of ugly pills today?" were popular. We want to talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly today.

I would like to speak about the tongue this morning. Someone has aptly said, "A dog is smarter than some people. It wags its tail and not its tongue."

I trust that as we leave this morning we will have learned not to wag our tongues.

## INTRODUCTION

I. The importance of the tongue

II. The badness of the tongue

III. The goodness of the tongue

## CONCLUSION

### INTRO:

A number of years ago I worked for an electrical company in Nebraska as a combination TV repair and appliance repairman.

I went to an older woman's home one day to work on her ancient oven and found that she needed some insulators for some wires that came through the back of the oven.

I returned to the shop and could find none, so ask some of the other men that worked there, and no one knew of any so we ordered some new insulators.

As the weeks passed the woman became more belligerent and after about a month my employer became very upset with the whole situation and began to look for something that we could make insulators with. As we looked and thought it dawned on him that we might have something way in the back of the store. We went back and after much digging in some ancient repair parts that everyone had forgotten about we found just the parts for the oven.

I was instructed to go out immediately to do the repair and get the woman off my employers back. That's one of the privileges of being the boss!

As I arrived at the woman's home, I noticed the screen door was broken. As she answered the door she was pleased to see me. I offered to fix the door for her and she said she would appreciate it. As I repaired the door, she began asking about the parts and when they came in. Well you know old honest Abe - he never tells a half truth - I told her what had happened.

She turned beet red and said, "YOU MEAN THE PARTS WERE THERE ALL THE TIME?". I replied in the positive. She clobbered me with the back of her hand across the chest and said, "YOU BIG DUMMY!" and stormed off into the house.

That was once that I had a soft tongue. I didn't even hit that old woman!

As I was working on the oven, I found that I needed help to hold the oven while I installed the parts so I called the shop and asked one of the men - one of the boss' sons to come out to help. Jerry was a new Christian and wore his hair fairly long and had a mustache, remember this was in the 70's. The woman took one look at Jerry and walked out of the room with a loud grunt. Totally upset to have a DUMMY and a long hair HIPPIE in her house and BOTH AT THE SAME TIME.

We completed the repairs and left with great relief. About an hour later I was sitting at the desk near the sales floor doing some paper work when you know who walked in red as a beet. I didn't run and hide but the temptation was great! She walked over to Jerry and started shaking her finger in his face and hollering at him. In essence she chewed him out for being a dirty hippy and that he was NEVER TO ENTER HER HOUSE AGAIN AND THAT SHE WAS GOING TO SPEAK TO THE OWNER ABOUT HIM. (He was the owner's son.)

Jerry showed great Christian maturity and did not hit her either. He just said, "Okay I won't come to your house" and walked away.

Evidently the woman didn't know that "a loose tongue can lead to loose teeth."

Someone else has aptly stated, "Some people have learned that a sharp tongue often invites a split lip."

By the way do you know what she was doing when I was working on the oven the first time I was in her home? She was sitting at the kitchen table working on her Sunday School lesson. She was the teacher of the older women's class in her church.

One more example of the misuse of a tongue.

When I was in high school one of the cute young ladies that had moved from our town came back to visit. Everyone wanted to spend some time with her but I was the only one that had a car.

Yep, she wanted to go with me. Along the way, the conversation allowed four or five others to be invited as well. We took off for a ride in the country and as things progressed one of the other fellows wanted to drive.

I turned the wheel over to him so I could talk to the young lady. Over a period of an hour I wasn't watching where the friend was going and rather sheepishly he said, "Stan, do you know where we

are?"

I had no idea where we were. I saw nothing familiar anywhere. I took over the wheel and started driving and looking. After about another half hour I finally realized where we were and it wasn't good.

We were quite a way south of a town that was 15 miles west of our hometown. That in ruff figures was about 60 minutes past "time in" for one of the fellows.

To shorten the story, we arrived in the drive way of the young man and his father was waiting in front of the house.

He came storming out to meet us. He ripped open my door and literally chewed me up and spit me back into the driver's seat.

He was so red in the face and angry, I was sure he was going to have a heart attack.

He finally finished calling me a hood, contributor to his sons delinquency, a trouble maker and delinquent and ended by telling me never to be found on his property again, and never to have anything to do with his son again.

I considered some wise words for the man but refrained. I told him that I would not come around again.

As I drove away, everyone in the car was trying to figure out why the man had been so upset with me. He hadn't even allowed us to tell him what happened. He had never met me before and it was the first contact I had with his son.

At the time I knew that the man and his family attended the church where some of the people had been talking to me about spiritual things. In fact most of the kids were from that church and several apologized for his actions. They were very embarrassed.

I wondered at the time about the man's actions. I really never understood why he was so terribly angry.

I will finish the account, because I don't want to leave the man in a bad light. He came to me one day several weeks later when I was working with four other teenagers and asked if he could talk to me.

I am not sure if I cringed or not. He started talking in front of the other fellows, and apologized on the spot for his actions and told me that he was way off base for giving me a hard time.

As yet an unsaved person, I must admit that what he did impress me. This man was a ruff-neck,

and operated big heavy machinery and it took a very big man spiritually to come to talk to a duck tailed hood in front of other teenagers.

I must admit that I was impressed with the man and the same thought entered my mind about his church.

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." James 3:8-10

#### I. The importance of the tongue.

"The tongue is the doorway to a man's strength, the window to a man's soul and the weakness of a man's character if he chooses to misuse it." (A ruff quote from one of my past pastors Pastor Churilla)

[to repeat] "The tongue is the doorway to a man's strength, the window to a man's soul and the weakness of a man's character if he chooses to misuse it."

The tongue - so important a part to our body yet how ugly and cruel it can be.

It is used in chewing, in tasting, in derision if we stick it out, in swallowing and speaking.

Medical books list it as a "muscular organ".

A muscular organ, I wonder what kind of music we play with our organ. My wife can do wonderful things on the organ, yet I'm sure I could make some very foul sounding music as well with the same instrument.

The tongue can be sweet to the ear or terrible to the ear.

They say that, "Conversation is an exercise of the mind, but gossiping is merely an exercise of the tongue." HUMMMMMMM!!!!

A doctor will look at your tongue to find indicator of some physical problems. We took one of our children into the doctor many years ago and the doctor listened to the symptoms and took one brief look at the child's tongue and said he is dehydrated and we need to get him to the hospital immediately. The tongue is important in many ways.

There is hope for us older folks however for they say, "Our vigor wanes with middle age, we find our footsteps lagging, our backbones creak, our sight grows dim, and yet our tongues keep wagging."

The tongue is such an important tool.

With the tongue politicians are made and broken.

With the tongue treaties are set. And just as easily broken.

With the tongue souls are comforted.

With the tongue the Gospel is made known.

With the tongue our souls are fed.

With the tongue we praise God.

YES, THE TONGUE IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE!

Yet we can so easily turn the tongue into an instrument of brutality in the split second that it takes our mind to shift it from good to evil.

II. The badness of the tongue.

Medical doctors measure physical health by how the tongue looks. The Great Physician measures spiritual health by how the tongue acts.

Let us look for a moment now at some of the misuses of the tongue.

Consider your own tongue as we move through this list.

The tongue can be involved in: Lying, gossip, backbiting, exaggeration, misrepresentation, promising to do and not doing, profanity, using the Lord's name in vain, cutting remarks, sarcasm, boasting, false flattery, crude language, off color jokes and stories not telling the whole story, excuses, character assassination, and twisting of what another says.

"Guy H. King writes: 'The deadly drug does not need to be taken in large doses - a drop or two will suffice; and the tongue does not need to distill long speeches, it has but to drop a word, and the mischief is set afoot. Thus has a peace been ruined, thus has a reputation been blackened, thus has a friendship been embittered, thus has a mind been poisoned, thus has a life been blasted. Let a child's rhyme point the same moral -

'I lost a very little word, only the other day;

It was a very naughty word I had not meant to say.

But, then, it was not really lost - when from my lips it flew,

My little brother picked t up, and now he says it too!"" (Lehman Strauss's/James, Your Brother)

Parents beware - what is true in brothers in this case is true of families - as in parents and children and I don't mean we as parents pick up the kids wrong language - examples and attitudes.

Let us consider some of the ways the tongue can hurt another. Maybe your tongue!

Cutting remarks: "YOU HOOD!" or "YOU BIG DUMMY" There I was fixing her screen door free of charge and she cuts my head off and hands it to me!

Sarcasm: "YOU DELINQUENT!" or "YOU DIRTY HIPPIE!" This one is often disguised as humor. Remember the "Political Humor" cartoons in the newspaper? Some of these are so cutting that they almost bleed. It is sad to say that Christians often couch some of their cutting remarks in "humor" form as well.

Gossip: I think that most of us know what gossip is and how wrong it is for the believer to be involved.

Slander: We knew a man in Nebraska that was pastoring a large church and one of his parishioners decided to get rid of him. She tried the normal channels and finally in frustration charged him publicly with making obscene phone calls to her. The pastor had to resign and move away within a couple of months. The slander took root and ruined a good ministry.

Polonius in one of Shakespeare's works mentions,

"Who steals my purse steals trash," HUMMMMM he must have been a taxpayer in this country.

"Who steals my purse steals trash,

But he who filches from me my good name

Robs me of that which not enriches him

And leaves me poor indeed."

Slander never benefits - it only hurts others.

Misinformation: Relaying what you've heard without checking it out. When teaching at a Bible Institute in Wyoming we were told that a barber in a town about 60 miles away was spreading the word that the school was Charismatic. One of the churches in the town had called us as interim

pastor and the barber, who was also the pastor of an independent Baptist church, was condemning the church for having me, a charismatic, filling their pulpit.

One of the members set the barber straight - that I was not Charismatic, that the school was not Charismatic and that the church was not Charismatic - but I often wondered how many people didn't come to the church because of him. I also have wondered if he ever told those people that he had misinformed that he had been incorrect.

We could go on to other ways that the tongue can hurt, we could mention wickedness, we could mention evil, we could mention lying, we could mention deceit, we could mention perversion, we could mention falsehood, we could mention vanity, we could mention flattery, we could mention craftiness, we could mention iniquity and we could mention wickedness, all of which are directly linked to the tongue.

I think it will suffice it to say that the tongue certainly can be wicked! Indeed, we fail to know how wicked, because the people we hurt with our tongues very seldom reveal how injured they are!

Many Christians do not even know how their tongue affects others. They just run it, business as usual, and wonder why they have no friends.

Possibly a little quiz would help you to know if you have a problem with your tongue.

1. Do you often use terms and phrases like, "Have you heard about?", "Did you know?", "Someone told me" or "I heard?" These oft times are introductory to gossip.
2. Do you hurt peoples feelings? If you do your tongue may be involved.
3. Do you offend people even when "You're doing right?" Again, if you offend, your tongue may be involved.
4. Are people open with you when you talk to them, or are they shallow and standoffish? They may be reacting to your tongue.
5. Do you admit error on your own part? (If you acknowledge error to yourself and don't admit it to others, your silence is a lie.)
6. Is your conversation always honoring to God and His principles? Shady stories, off color language, crude language etc. are all an offense of the tongue. I see more and more believers operating here all the time.
7. Do people just drop by to talk with you? A person without tongue trouble is usually easy to talk to - enjoyable to be with.

8. Do people answer questions you ask, freely and openly? Hesitancy to answer may mean that they are afraid of what you will do with what they say.

9. Do you have any close friends that really talk to you? Again, tongue trouble forces people away. I know people with tongues that are always at the ready to injure or to downgrade. They are always at the ready to strike out. I find myself avoiding these people. I will avoid speaking to them. Indeed, I find that I will avoid them period to be sure that I don't have to speak to them. At times I have taken myself into hand and said, "Now, this is ridiculous - let's just go and talk to the person - it can't be that bad! When I leave the person I usually am in the "Regret mode" of operation.

It is only natural for you to begin to avoid a person with a sharp tongue. If you kick a dog enough times you will train him to avoid you, cower or bite back. The human being will take only so much abuse before they get the message and quite exposing themselves to abuse - indeed they may bite back.

III. The goodness of the tongue.

On the other hand we must consider a story from antiquity.

I have been told that the Jewish Talmud has a story that tells of a king that once sent forth two messengers into the world.

One was to bring back the most beautiful thing in the world.

The other was to bring back the most terrible thing that he could find.

The messengers returned and presented their finds to the king.

They both gave the king a tongue.

Yes, the tongue can do great and wonderful things which we need to realize and apply to our lives.

The scripture says many things about the tongue. There are approximately twenty-two places where good things are mentioned about the tongue. There are about twice that many references to the misuse of the tongue.

It is of interest that there are about as many good things that a tongue can do as there are bad things for it to do. There is a heavy emphasis on the fact that the tongue can lie and be deceptive.

Perhaps just a little mention of this area would be good. Lying and deceit of the tongue are linked to wickedness, evil, mischief, proud looks, wrongful gain, and hate in Scripture. Jer. 9:5 gives

light to the liar. "And they will deceive everyone his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity."

If a person can teach their tongue to speak lies then we are left to assume that we can also teach our tongues to act properly.

As a father, a man has authority to campus, curfew, limit, ground and punish his children, but that is overkill for a one year old that spits out his spinach! A father can use many types of punishment but a well placed softly spoken phrase can be more discipline than a child desires to have. Prov. 25:15 mentions that the soft tongue can break bones and I think this is the most painful of punishments of a father.

When I as a teenager - yes I was one once long long ago in the days of yore! - any way I wrecked my father's car. He drove an old 39 Chevy up into the mid fifties because he could not afford anything newer. He had waited many years to get another car and it was a large investment for him. His first reaction was a simple statement of frustration and hurt. He made no comment for two months. We couldn't afford to have it repaired properly so we fixed it with used parts. I mentioned one day as we were working on the car that it had really taken a long time to get it fixed. His soft bone breaking reply was, "But it only took seconds to wreck it."

We want to just mention the things that the tongue can do that are good.

ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE THE TONGUE CAN:

Defend, speak of God's righteousness, speak of God's praise, sing of God's righteousness, extol good, talk of righteousness, speak of the Word, sing of God's works, can be controlled, is like choice silver, is health to the wise, uses knowledge correctly, breaks bones, and can show love.

With an instrument that is sharp as a razor we can cut so deeply that one does not know it has cut until the blood is seen. YET. With the same instrument we can do these wonderful things that we have just listed.

Many more things can be done with speech. These items we have looked at today are only items that are directly related to the term "tongue" in Scripture. We could go into the terms "mouth" and "speech" and others to find many more!

CONCLUSION: In conclusion we should look at a few things that we need to know.

First of all we need to understand something about the tongue. We need to understand that a Godly life style does not assure a proper tongue. We need to understand that a good devotional life does not assure a proper tongue. We need to understand that a good prayer life does not assure a proper tongue. We need to understand that a high position does not assure a proper tongue. We need to understand that a high income does not assure a proper tongue. In short there

is very little in the physical or spiritual realm that will assure a proper tongue!

Secondly, we can see from Scripture that some Godly men did not always have a proper tongue.

1. Moses was barred from the promised land because of his failure to use his tongue as the Lord commanded him to. Num 20:12

2. David in Ps 3:1 mentions, "...I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;"

3. James the man many call the praying disciple includes himself when he declares in 3:8-9, "But the tongue can NO MAN tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless WE God, even the Father; and therewith curse WE men,"

We are told that the tongue must be bridled or controlled! James 1:26

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

Indeed, godly men of our own age do not always control their tongues well. I know a Christian leader in the east that is known for his "forthrightness of speech." That is what his admirers say of him. Others feel he has a sharp tongue. He cuts people down for wrong activity in public. This is not proper use of the instrument that God has given us for good.

The question may be in your mind - how do I handle the sharp tongue of another person?

1. Avoid it. 2. Remove yourself from its range. 3. Be careful to offer as few verbal openings as possible for it to slash out. 4. You might confront it but duck quickly - they probably don't realize they have one, and will use it. Confrontation and prayer are both needed.

In the same vain the question may come up - How do I handle a sharp tongue when it's mine? 1. Train it and teach it in correct activities. 2. Apologize when you misuse it. This will be very good training for it. This will be difficult but it is needed. 3. A sharp knife is usually kept in a sheath made of cow hide. Now, I'm not making any comparisons here but God created us with a sheath for our own tongues - our mouth - if you can't control the thing keep it in your mouth! "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from trouble." Prov. 21:23

REMEMBER! "When men hold their tongues you can't tell a fool from a wise man." Wisdom may well lead to silence!

Thirdly we must understand that we will be held accountable for the use of our tongues. Matt. 12:44-47 states, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But

I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of it in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

EVERY WORD! God knows EVERY word! "For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Ps 139:4

We won't take time to read these references however, Isa 45:23, Ro. 14:11 and Philip. 2:11 all mention that EVERY tongue will confess God or Christ! EVERY TONGUE WILL ONE DAY DO GOOD!

Fourthly we need to understand how we learn to misuse our tongues. First of all we learn to speak by training, teaching and practice. We learn to praise by training, teaching and practice. Thus it is safe to assume we learn to hurt with our tongue by training, teaching and practice. Yes, there is the thought that we can't rule the evil thing and that is assumed. What we are talking about now is the cultivation of that evil thing. We can cultivate it in a good direction, or we can cultivate it in a bad direction.

Fifthly we need to realize that the tongue can even turn upon its owner. "So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves;" (Ps 64:8)

When in college we had a young lady that was very high on her own priority list. She thought she was super special. She tended to put others down to lift herself up.

One evening at a party we pulled out a test that we had picked up in a magazine that tested personality traits with colors. There were ten colored squares and you were to place the colors in the order of preference.

The young lady insisted that she try it. I was not to happy to let her because several had tried it and it had been very accurate. She arranged the colors and began to read the results. She was only a few sentences into the text when she and all present knew she had been had by her own tongue. The further she read the redder she turned and the slower she read. She survived the experience, but she learned a very hard lesson about herself.

Beware of your own tongue if you misuse it!

Sixthly and lastly we need to know that there is only one answer to the problem of the tongue. The Holy Spirit can control the tongue if He controls our life. Yes, practice of a proper tongue will help. Yes, keeping praises and thanksgiving on our tongue can help. Yet, without the Holy Spirit controlling our life we cannot be assured that the tongue won't slip into areas where it ought not be.

May I read a promise from our God via the book of I Pet. 3:10-12 "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; Let him

eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Dare I say that God may not be listening to the prayers of the liar, the gossip, the slanderer, the sharp tongued?

May we each one consider the tongue that we use so freely and how it is affecting other people.

If it were the Lord Jesus Christ that you were speaking to, would you use the phrase that you are about to use? Think about this the next time you want to be sarcastic - what if this were Christ you were talking to? Think about this the next time you want to say something cutting - what if this were Christ you were talking to? Think about this the next time you want to think about lying - what if this were Christ you were talking to? Think about this the next time you want to gossip - what if this were Christ you were talking to? Think about this the next time you want to twist something someone has said - what if it were Christ you were talking to or about?

WHAT IF TODAY JESUS WALKED UP TO YOU AND SAID, "GIVE ACCOUNT FOR YOUR TONGUES ACTIVITY THIS WEEK".

MAY GOD HELP US TO BRIDLE OUR TONGUES! We have seen how important the tongue is. We have seen the goodness of the tongue. We have seen the badness of the tongue. Let's not see the ugliness of the tongue in our lives.

May the Lord help us to dwell on this thought as we talk to one another in coming weeks and in coming years in our ministry. May each of us show our love rather than our cutting edge. And remember "No matter which screw in the head is loose, it is the tongue that rattles."

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m01500

THEOLOGY OF WORK

by

Stanley L. Derickson

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

I. THEOLOGY OF WORK

II. THEOLOGY OF ETHICAL WORK

III. THEOLOGY OF ACCEPTABLE WORK

IV. THEOLOGY OF UNACCEPTABLE WORK

V. THEOLOGY OF PEACEABLE WORK

VI. THEOLOGY OF GODLY WORK

APPENDIX ONE: Deacon's fund policy

APPENDIX TWO: Work situations calling for ethical evaluation

APPENDIX THREE: Women working outside the home

APPENDIX FOUR: Workmen of the tabernacle/temple

INTRODUCTION:

In recent days our community was shocked by two teenagers, one of which was on a local high school football team, tortured and beat a stray cat to death and then hid the evidence from their parents. The two boys were jailed on a ten thousand-dollar bail.

One of our churchmen, the following Sunday, related this incident to another more common occurrence that goes, basically, unnoticed by the media and the public at large. He related that it was strange that these two young men would be jailed on \$10,000 bond, while a doctor can plunge a pair of scissors into the brain of a full term baby and suck its brains out and call it a needed medical procedure.

We in America care more for the rights of animals than we do for the rights of other human beings.

I will preempt this study by saying that I am sure that I will offend some. I will also say that I probably should offend more than I will offend. I will also say that it is not I that offends, but Almighty God. He sets the standards that we are to live by, not me.

Premise: We as believers have adopted the secular mind set that tells us that we MUST have our rights.

The Bible is supposed to be our very guide for living as believers. Baptists have as one of their Baptist Distinctives the Bible as their only authority for faith and practice. However, I think that we will see that today Christians oft reject its teachings by our life style.

We live as if "no" were a dirty word. "No" is a word of control. It was designed to limit the

activity. We feel that it is a word that will warp our child's mind so we avoid it like the plague.

Might I remind you that God uses negatives? "Thou shalt not" is a negative much like the word no. God has many negatives, God has many restrictions, yet we in the church over the last few years have given ourselves permission to do all things rather than to follow the restrictions and avoid those things the Scriptures tell us to avoid.

We Christians, seldom say no to ourselves or for that matter to our children. If you spend time in retail stores, you will find that "no" is the word children use when they talk to their parents, rather than the other way around. No, I won't wear that dress to school. No, I won't pay for that with my own money - you buy it for me. No, I won't be quiet. No, I don't want to go yet. No, I won't ----- .

Let's consider our rights for a moment or two.

### MY CHRISTIAN RIGHTS

We have been living in a generation that has wanted its rights for all to long. We have groups wanting to be viewed with equal rights. We have groups wanting to be viewed with special rights. We have groups wanting to have the same rights as others. We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have special rights. We have groups wanting to limit the rights of some so that they can have more rights than anyone else. Everyone is worried about their rights.

In America we have many rights, and we also have lost many of our rights in recent days. Indeed, if we don't watch our government, we will be loosing many more of our rights.

Some groups deserve to have rights enforced, while other groups want rights that they have no right to.

We have "CHALLENGED" people that want to be able to do everything that everyone else can do, yet they say don't treat me as if I'm special. I'm sorry but you can't have it both ways! If the society spends billions of dollars for ramps and accesses for only those few, then they are special! The ramps and accesses are not necessary for the majority nor are most of them used for the majority. It is not wrong for society to supply equal access to those that need it, but they are special no matter how much they don't want to be.

Our public schools have been teaching young people that whatever they decide to do is okay. They have the right to make any decision that they want. Now those same young people are older and demanding the rights that no one can give them.

Some of those young people are committing crime and wondering why everyone is upset with them. The young people declare their actions all right and themselves not guilty of anything and

wonder why others are upset.

## THE RIGHTS WE HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES

I recently talked with a man that was very frustrated for his children. One of his kids and spouse came to him complaining of all their problems. They were both working, they were not making a lot of money, they had no savings, they had a home but it was only a very modest one - not what they wanted, they had a three-year-old car, their kids couldn't have all the clothes they wanted, they weren't getting ahead, and in general they were frustrated because they hadn't achieved the American dream - whatever that is.

As the man talked, I was taken with the total self-centeredness of the family. Everything centered upon them and what they wanted and what they didn't have.

SOUND FAMILIAR? I find that this is about where most Christians live their lives. Their concentration is acquiring material things, and acquiring more material things.

If you have been watching television news over the last few years, you know that many people in our nation have been denied the American dream. They resent this exclusion from what EVERYONE ELSE HAS. Indeed, many people in recent riots mentioned this exclusion from what was rightfully theirs as Americans. They haven't achieved what they feel in their minds they should have achieved in the material realm.

Their thinking is very similar to the farmers I used to work within in the Midwest. When I would ask them how they had done in a certain year they would tell me that they lost 25,000 dollars or some such figure. I was talking to them in their \$150,000 home working on their \$800 television set. I had walked by their three new cars and pickups and had admired the four new snowmobiles parked in the garage.

Now, I would try to figure all this out. Just how does the expression of always loosing money relate to the facts of all I had viewed.

It was explained to me by a farmer one day. The farmer in that area would decide how much he wanted to make the coming year. Say he decided he wanted to make \$60,000 and at the end of the year he had only made \$40,000, then he has lost \$20,000.

Using this method of accounting, I must admit that my wife and I have been loosing about \$35,000 per year for the last 30 years. Do you suppose Internal Revenue Service would accept this as real business losses?

Now, let us consider the rights that God has given us in this area of life.

## THE RIGHTS GOD GAVE US

I would like to read God's estimation of our rights to the American dream. (By the way isn't a dream something that you look forward to and work toward? The American dream has been something that millions have worked their lives for, not something that is given to them by the federal government because it was due them.)

Gen 3:17b-19 "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

God says that we will live - eat and survive - by the sweat of our brow. He does not give 25 declarations, such as: THOU SHALT HAVE A GORGEOUS HOME. THOU SHALT HAVE A BMW. THOU SHALT HAVE A HUGE SAVINGS ACCOUNT. THOU SHALT HAVE A BULGING BILLFOLD. THOU SHALT HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION. THOU SHALT HAVE A FIVE BEDROOM HOUSE. THOU SHALT HAVE A ..... . BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW, YOU WILL SURVIVE THIS LIFE, NOT BY THE SIZE OF THINE BANK ACCOUNT.

Our society has given us the self-centered/materialistic mind set that many of us function under today. It is an incorrect mind set!

Before you take what I say wrong, let me be quick to say that God has supremely blessed some of his people through the years. He has chosen to give many of his people great wealth and prosperity, but this is a blessing over and above what he has promised. He has only promised us the need to work for our NEEDS.

When struggling through the first years of Bible college we had very little income. We needed a car to replace the old one that was without a transmission for the second time. We looked at all the cars we could afford and they were in worse shape than our present car. We had bid the salesman goodbye and were leaving the lot. As we neared the edge of the lot we spotted a beautiful white Plymouth Sport Fury convertible. We stopped and commented on how great it would be to have such a car. The salesman walked up and said, "You wouldn't be interested in that would you?" I told him we certainly would. He left for a moment and returned to tell us that his manager wanted to move the car as winter was near and they could seldom sell convertibles in the winter. They gave us the car for what we had to spend!

STRUGGLING, POOR BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS driving a Sports Fury convertible with bucket seats and leather interior! God truly blesses sometimes.

Scripture bears out this line of thinking. Abraham, David, Solomon for a few from the Old Testament. These men had great wealth. While these man had great wealth, there were MANY

that were barely getting by financially.

We often quote Matt. 6:33 to show that we will be given all we need. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Most interpret "all these things" as everything we want. NO! The context shows clearly that God is promising, not to provide all our wants, but to supply our NEEDS!

God promises to give to us the needs of life. Those things required to keep us alive.

DON'T TAKE ME WRONG! We as believers DO HAVE A LOT OF RIGHTS! I would like to remind you of some of these GOD GIVEN RIGHTS.

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE A WITNESS for our Lord: Matt 28:18-20

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HOLY: I Pet 1:15-16 "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PERSECUTED: John 15:20a "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;"

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Eph. 4:8 "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. " The following context of this verse shows that the gifts are to be used, not laid aside in disuse!

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE PRAYERFUL: I Tim 2:8A "I will therefore that men pray every where," (James 5:16 also)

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED: Gal. 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO ETERNAL REST: Rev. 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM SIN: Rom. 6:22 "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

Now that we know what our true Christian rights are, compare them to the rights that you tend to be worried about and see if your mind is running with God or the world.

Having said all this I trust that you understand that God has created us with the ability to work. Since the fall He has deemed it fitting that we make our living by the sweat of our brow, thus knowing what work is might well be very appropriate to anyone wanting his/her rights!

## I. THEOLOGY OF WORK

Technically, theology is a study of God or something closely relating to God. Work is an integrated part of God's plan for man, even before the fall.

A theology of work is a loose usage of the term theology, though I think in our present society with its emphasis on government help, welfare, etc. a theology of work is needed. A study of the thought of work as God sees it. If you object to the use of the term theology substitute the word philosophy.

This will not be a long work, as the Scripture is quite clear that all mankind is to exist by the sweat of the brow. We in our technological society have a distinct advantage to poor Adam. We can sit in the air-conditioned office and put in our eight hours - if we are so blessed. Adam had to pick up his regrets the day after being kicked out of the garden and start scratching for food and shelter.

In Gen. 1:4 we see that God evaluated His own work and saw that it was good. God worked! This should require us to acknowledge that work can't be bad!

I would like to take a slight side track and comment on evaluation of work for a moment. There is no tool of life that is more effective to help you in your work for the Lord. EVALUATION! Without evaluation, you cannot know how you are doing! That is almost as much a fact of life as is the law of gravity.

If you do not evaluate your work you will never know if you are doing a good job or a bad job. When teaching I told my students that I automatically evaluated their work - grades and tests!

As you go into life you should learn to evaluate everything that you do including your secular work. This will help you see your good points and your poor points. As you see the good you can continue to improve to do even better. As you see the bad you can find out why it is bad and make moves to correct the problems.

In Gen. 2:1-3 we find some information that may help you in your study of work. The Sabbath was GOD'S DAY OF REST FROM HIS WORK! There are four principles set forth concerning the Sabbath. 1. COMPLETION: God had finished His work and now was resting. Think of that

scene! Picture God resting. Quite a unique concept, the God of the universe resting. 2. CEASING: God rested after a hard work out. Q. Does God need rest? NO! The term has the idea of repose. 3. BLESSED: Two points. a. Some say it was to be a blessing to those that observed it. Point - the text does not say this. b. He blessed it. The text doesn't require blessing for more than one day. 4. HOLINESS: He set it apart or sanctified it. It is of interest that these points also fit Christ and the Lord's day, Sunday. 1. COMPLETION: The work of Christ was complete on the first day. 2. CEASING: Christ sat down at the right hand of God after finishing His work for an extended time. Heb. 4:10 "He also hath ceased from His own works, as God did from His." 3. BLESSEDNESS: Our joy is in Christ since He finished His work. 4. HOLINESS: We are set aside because of His work. As well as the first day.

In Gen. 2:15 we see that God had work in mind for Adam from the very beginning. We need not feel that we are worthless for God can find something for us to do! I don't think that there was a riding lawn mower with eleven attachments, however I don't think that this work would have been dissatisfying to Adam.

EVEN IN PARADISE THERE WAS WORK TO BE DONE! Now apply that. God created work just as He did the heaven and earth. Shouldn't we enjoy work as much as the mountains or oceans?

## II. THEOLOGY OF ETHICAL WORK

A few years ago the president of the school where I was teaching theology called me into his office and showed me a news headline. "Major Business Colleges Now Offering Courses In Ethics." My exclamation was, "IT'S ABOUT TIME!"

There is work and then there is ethical work. The crook that breaks into your home and helps himself to your belongings is working. He may even break a sweat, yet this is not ethical work. It is not work that is accepted by our society. I trust you will understand the need to take a moment to consider this topic.

Ethical work is work that is an acceptable mode of making a living according to the dictates of society. Herein is the rub. Our society is, in part, dictated by our legislators. They have defined ethical work by the programs that they have developed to "help" the poor.

Ethical work in 1997 America is working at some job that allows you to make the level of financial status that you desire. Now, within this thought is the fact that some won't take a minimum wage job because it won't bring them to their level of financial status. So, the government has developed all of the welfare programs to help these people that are disadvantaged to raise themselves up to their standards - not by working but by filling out government forms and staying at home and not engaging in work.

This study will attempt to look at ethical work, not what we have in America. This study will

look at the real world, the work a day world, the world that sees a days work as the prerequisite for a days pay.

To this end I would like to introduce a passage from the New Testament. II Thessalonians 3:6-15 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. 7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. 13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother."

I am not even going to give comment on this passage. It is quite clear that the writer of the epistle was moved by God to state that if you don't work, you don't eat. Now, before I be labeled sadistic etc. let me state that there is another set of teaching in the Word of God that is clear that if someone is unable to work, there should be help available.

The key is the thought of work. In our society the definition of the ability to work is stretched to the limit. We lived in an apartment complex years ago where many welfare recipients lived. The men of the house would go out into the parking lot and play football etc. with their bad backs almost daily. Unable to work - even in a sit down office job, but they could do all those pleasurable items like fishing, hunting, sports, working on cars, etc.

It should be obvious to the Christian that those in the church that do not work are to be shunned - that is church discipline! Few are the churches today that take steps of discipline in any case much less the thought of someone on perpetual welfare.

Welfare is not wrong! Welfare is for those that need assistance until they can get back onto their feet. I doubt that there is a person in the United States that wouldn't agree that we should help those in need, but there is growing opposition to the present system that seems to reward everything except work.

In keeping with this thought I have included as an appendix to this study a deacons fund policy that might give you ideas for your church in how to help those in need. This policy grew out of a young couple coming to our church in need of help. They said they were believers, were new to town, were unable to find work and needed gas money. The deacons gave the couple \$50. and we never saw them again - even though they thought they would like to attend our church.

### III. THEOLOGY OF ACCEPTABLE WORK

Romans 14:7-8 "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."

The believer that is sold out to live his/her life for God assumes that God is the sole center of the persons life. Romans 12 is clear that we are all to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to him. Based on these thoughts then we can understand the following philosophy of life that I would like to present.

Since we are God's, and since we have offered ourselves to Him, then NO MATTER WHAT JOB or work we do, we do because of HIM and not ourselves. Based on this then, when we go to work, what kind of job are we to do? Christ gave his life on the cross for us - He has bought us - the only quality of work we should EVER offer is our very best.

Since we work for God our very very best abilities should be used, our very very best efforts should be given, and our very very best attitude should be present! Now, when you get mad at that coworker - you are in need of speaking to your employer - God.

Even if you are working for a very poor employer - you are serving God and actually your real employer is God. He allows you good health to work, He allows you the abilities to hold the job, and He allows the employer to give you work.

Ephesians 6:5-7 is a good basis for this thought. It speaks to slaves - isn't that what you always complain about being at work! No, we are not slaves, but if a slave is to have the attitude of Eph. 6 then surely all free employees should have at least the same attitude.

(Eph 6:5-9 5 "Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether [he be] bond or free. 9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.")

You may have noticed I included a couple of verses for masters/employers as well - just in case the reader is not in the slave category.

The very best that you can is the type of job you should do. When living in Wyoming, the only job I could find was janitor work at a printing company. It paid well and I only worked two-three hours a day and it was adequate for the time. I must admit, however, there is absolutely no way that I could have gone into that job on a daily basis without knowing it was God that I was

working for. Had I been required to go into that job with nothing more to look forward to than a pay check, I don't think I would have gone. My key thought in that job was that it was a means of living, it was a means of having time to do the work of the ministry, and that it was a means for me to honor God by doing the very best that I could.

Each and every day that I had the job, on the way to work my prayer was that I might honor God by what I did, that I might do a good job for the Lord (not the employer - though I'm sure he enjoyed my work), and that I might present Christ in my actions.

It was during this time that I developed a systematic theology. Initially when I had so much extra time I decided to set down a systematic theology for my children's benefit. Little did I know that this effort would blossom into something as big as it has. It is on the internet being accessed by people all over the world. I have always felt that my being faithful in the janitor job allowed God to do something much bigger than sweeping floors.

#### IV. THEOLOGY OF UNACCEPTABLE WORK

Somewhere when teaching I ran across a quote that has stuck with me. "Christian mediocrity is still mediocrity." Doing a sloppy job as a Christian is still a sloppy job. Doing the job haphazardly as a Christian is still a haphazard job. Just because we are believers it does not mean that we can do a poor job and expect God to make up the difference.

Little needs to be said in this section. We are to do the best that we can, thus anything less is unacceptable. If we decide to view our occupation as something less than our best, then we are thumbing our nose at the Lord. He asks for the best, and that is what we should give to Him

#### V. THEOLOGY OF PEACEABLE WORK

The Scripture calls us to get along peaceably with others, be they believers or nonbelievers. Thus an application of our principle of work should be that we work peaceably with our coworkers and our employers. You may say, "You're asking an awwwwfffullll lot Lord!" There have been times when I have felt the same way.

Coworkers and employers can be a pain in the neck. I had been having a very bad day when my employer came to me - five minutes before I was to go home - and told me he wanted a certain job done. I knew that the job would take a couple hours at best. I worked peaceably with him, but I must admit I didn't get any spiritual blessing from it because I had an attitude problem for quite awhile.

AGAIN, if we are working for God - then the extra work that is laid on won't be a problem to us. (SEE I AIN'T PERFECT YET!) I have often thought that Paul placed the phrase "...that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." with the prayer and intercessions of the previous verse for my benefit. If I am praying for all men then I can have that peaceable life.

(I Tim 2:1-2)

God is the one we should work for, but the man that writes that paycheck deserves all we can give him as well. Everything we do honors God and I have seen more than one of my past employers notice the job I have done and know that it was God that brought that good job about.

## VI. THEOLOGY OF GODLY WORK

I would like to look at two aspects as we close. The thought of Godly work breaks well into two divisions. First of all the thought of the ministry and secondly the thought of work, jobs and occupations that ought not be held by Christians.

**MINISTRY:** For many years I have viewed the call to ministry as a special blessing to the person that receives it. They are called into a work or ministry that they truly enjoy. They can get up in the morning and know that they are going to enjoy what they do - not like some that get up in the morning knowing that they will have to clean bathrooms, or sew 3,000 seams, or weld 4,000 pieces, or what have you.

The minister of God that is paid for his work is the nearest thing to skirting the curse that I can think of. Actually anyone that enjoys their work is flirting with overcoming the curse to me. Not that the person is trying to get around God, but they are involved in doing what they want to do in life and get paid for it.

I'm sure many there are that are in this situation that are not in a full time ministry - indeed, if we are REALLY working with that attitude of "I'm doing it for God." we will enjoy what we do.

**UNGODLY WORK:** In this area I trust that I will not step on toes for there is a wide latitude as to what is right and wrong in our day and age even among believers.

I would naturally class any illegal work in this area. I also would class many other works here as well. There are occupations that are morally improper for the believer to be involved in as well. Then there are the areas where it may be legal, and it may be morally all right, but is it all right for a believer.

Among the illegal, we are speaking of crime, embezzlement, cheating, etc. The morally wrong would be those things that God condemns even though our society or government may not condemn. Prostitution for example is legal in some areas, yet not Biblically right.

The last area is less easy to decide. For example should a Christian sell lottery tickets? Some are probably trying to figure out what I am talking about. Many believers play the lottery, so why would selling the tickets be wrong. Many Christians view gambling of any kind wrong. It is placing something God has intrusted to them to be a good steward with. Putting it out to chance is not good stewardship.

Should a Christian sell alcoholic beverages? Should a Christian be a janitor in a pornographic printing company (NO I WASN'T). Should a Christian work in a store or business where the employees are expected to cheat the customer.

These are some areas where believers must go to their Bibles, Godly counselors, and God for guidance and advice. Then the person must make up their own mind.

I would encourage anyone in these areas to consider very carefully their decision in light of the thought that their testimony before the world may be hindered. If you are working in one of these areas, you may cause people to stumble, or you may cause people to not want to listen to you when you witness to them.

For example if you have friends that have high moral standards even though they are not Christians - and there are many people in this classification - and you take a job in an area where they feel you ought not, they will most likely not listen as closely when you talk of their sin and their need of Christ's work on the cross.

Even within the okay jobs, with the okay employers, with the best of intentions, we will find ourselves faced with moral decisions. Some examples might help you watch your steps. These are found in appendix two.

I have also included an appendix relating to Christian women working outside the home. This is found in Appendix three. There seems to be more and more controversy about Christian women working outside the home.

I trust that this has been helpful to some. It is not meant to be a complete study of work in the Bible, it is just a beginning for the person that wants to go deeper.

## APPENDIX ONE

(This policy was formed with the Congregational form of government in mind. It would be quite easy to adapt it to other forms of church government.)

In that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting other believers in need, and in that the Scripture is very clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting widows and orphans, and in that the Scripture is clear that we are to be in the custom of assisting strangers, we hereby institute this policy to assist us in this ministry to those in need. (See footnote at end of policy for references.)

Each person seeking assistance will be interviewed by two of our deacons/elders and their concurrence will result in help. There is no need to INVESTIGATE a request for help other than to talk with the person involved to gain a sense that the need is valid. (We will trust God to guide us in our decisions and allow Him to deal with those that misuse our ministry.)

1. The fund shall be financed by an offering taken in the missions bowl after the Lord's table service each month.
2. The fund shall be dispersed under the guidance of the deacons.
3. The funds will be distributed by gift certificate as much as possible, or by cash/check if the need is not available via certificates.
4. A grocery closet will be maintained at the church via the donations of the membership. It will contain sealed goods that can be stored for extended periods of time.
5. If the fund is depleted, and a seemingly valid case exists the deacon and pastor may go before the church for a special offering/general fund expenditure for the assistance.
6. A list of social service agencies will be maintained and a copy of that list shall be given to each person requesting assistance. (It is assumed by this policy that much of our tax money goes to support social services, so we should make use of those services for the assistance of those in need.)
7. A total value for each assistance shall not exceed \$50. (Groceries need only be approximated.)
8. The above is not to say that every person that requests assistance is to be helped. It shall be at the discretion of those talking with the person that may or may not determine to extend help from the church family.
9. If there is a choice between church family members and those outside the church, then the church families needs should be met first.

FOOTNOTE:

Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Acts 6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. I Tim 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world. Matt 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? 38 When saw we thee

a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.

Nave's topical Bible references for further study: De 15:7-18; Le 25:35-43; Ps 41:1, 112:9; Pr 3:27,28, 11:25, 22:9, 25:21,22, 28:27; Isa 58:6,7,10,11; Eze 18:5,7-9; Mt 5:42, 19:21, 25:35-45; Mr 9:41, 10:21; Lu 3:11, 11:41; Ac 6:1-4, 11:29,30; Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 13:3, 16:1-3; 2Co 8:1-15,24, 9:1-15; Ga 2:10; Php 4:10-18; 1Ti 5:8,16, 6:18; Heb 6:10, 13:16; Jas 2:15,16; 1Jo 3:17.

## APPENDIX TWO:

1. While working as a television technician a customer asked me to alter a circuit in their little color television. I looked the set over and found that I could do the requested work and proceeded. I plugged the set in and saw a bright flash in the neck of the picture tube which indicated that I had damaged the tube. Correct I was. I had blown the picture tube. It would cost over \$100. to replace the part.

I took my job in hand and told my employer what I had done. He thought for awhile and told me to call the customer and tell them that we had to order some parts and that we would call when they got in. This required two things: A lie to the customer, and a listing of parts on the work order, neither of which are morally acceptable to me.

I knew that I could not do as my employer - a man of usually high moral character - had requested. I asked him if it wouldn't be better to just be up front with the customer and apologize and tell them what was going on. My employer thought for a moment and agreed with my estimation of the situation. I called the customer and told him of the problem and he was quite understanding and even felt bad that he had requested we do the work.

2. You are being given free health insurance by your employer. The agent comes in and requests your signature on a health form. You sign the form and as you finish you notice that the form is already dated - three weeks prior to your signature.

What do you do? Do you chance not being covered with the FREE insurance? Do you upset your employers agent? Do you upset your employer? I trust you will do what is right.

3. Your employer tells you to tell a customer that a refund will be mailed out in two weeks. You know, however that the company policy is that you don't mail out the refund. Only when the customer calls and asks why they haven't received the refund do they send it out. Do you lie to the customer? Even though you know the company does this because they know that crooks don't usually call back? Even though you feel that this customer is really a crook?

4. You take a job at a Christian book store and on the first day you find out that they sell books that disagree with your beliefs. Do you quit? Do you sell books that you really don't agree with?

5. You take a job at a television repair shop. On the third day, over lunch you hear the other two employees talking of the employer as if he is the dumbest person on earth. You hear them indicate that they have cheated him. You find out that one of the men is not legally licensed in the state to work on television sets. Do you continue your job - it's their problem not yours - right? Do you quite? Do you tell your former employer why you have just quit?

6. As an older person with a lot of education you find that you cannot find employment. Many tell you it is due to your age or that you have too much education. Someone tells you to just fill out applications and don't mention the education. Do you do such a thing knowing that the applications state that you are swearing the information is true when you sign the application?

These are just a few examples of ruff spots I've run into over the years. There are all sorts of ways that the Devil will twist truth and squeeze right living to see if you will do wrong. I trust you will be on your toes in the work place as well as at home.

The moral of this section is watch where you are headed and ask questions before you move forward. Think about the ramifications of your actions. I have found myself in situations where I knew what was right, but wanted to go the easy route. Being Godly EVERY day is the only way to live your life.

The work world has some slippery corners to turn, and I trust that it is the Holy Spirit that is holding you up, not the Devil that is helping you fall down!

#### APPENDIX THREE:

There have been preachers that have taught and preached that the woman is to be in the home. Because of this many women in our churches have had feelings of guilt because they either wanted to, or had to work outside the home.

I stayed in the home of a couple overnight in Kansas and had a real good time of fellowship. When I went up for breakfast the husband was not out to the kitchen yet. The wife turned to me and ask, "Stan, do you think that it is alright for women to work outside the home?" I told her that I did and shared some thoughts with her.

She was almost in tears when I was finished. She had been under great pressure from her Christian community concerning her going to work. She said that she felt that the mothers place was in the home. I agreed with her, but within the Scripture I had shared.

She told me that she had been raised that it was wrong for the wife to work. Her husband had been in the hospital for heart problems and had been told not to work anymore. She had no

choice but to go to work.

She was quite relieved that there was someone that saw that she had no choice. I ask her if she had talked with her pastor. She said yes, and that he had told her about what I had told her. She was not even confident in what her pastor had said due to her strong upbringing in the church and the pressure from others in the church.

A working mother being a possibility is based on a couple of Scriptural observations.

1. Prov. 31:10-31. This passage makes mention of the wife purchasing property, caring for a household, planting a vineyard, selling fine linen that she has made and in all this finds time to be a good wife.

Notice should be made of verse 28, "Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." Verse 30 also gives the key to this type of woman, "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

2. The book of Acts mentions two ladies that were involved in working. Acts 16:14 mentions Lydia, "... a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira...." Acts 18:2ff mentions Priscilla and her husband. "...for by their occupation they were tentmakers."

It is always best if the mother can remain at home at least while the children are at home, but this is not possible in all situations (The children benefit greatly by having their mother present all the time.). We as believers should understand the Biblical record and not just our own personal preference.

I would prefer that all women remain in the home if they desired to, yet that is not realistic in some cases.

#### APPENDIX FOUR:

We won't take time to consider the following, but you might do some study in the area of the workmen of the tabernacle and the temple. These workmen were involved in God's work and they did a good work.

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m01550

TITLE: THE ODD COUPLE

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 7:1-10

OUTLINE:

## I. REALIZING THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

## II. REALIZING THE PROBABLE ALTERNATIVES

## III. REALIZING THE PROPER RESULT

### INTRODUCTION:

We all probably know of the movie and tv series the Odd Couple that is about two men that live in the same apartment. One is a neat freak and the other is a mess maker.

We also know that the whole basis of the show was the great antagonism that was set up between the two. The neat freak was always totally frustrated with the messes of the mess maker, and the mess maker was always totally frustrated with never knowing where the neat freak put his things.

We will see in this passage a very strange pairing of personalities. We will see Jesus Christ the Messiah of the Jews in touch with a Roman centurion. Jesus the itinerant preacher/healer and a Gentile officer. In this time the Jews had little respect for the Romans as a whole - they were the oppressors, yet in this account we will see the two brought together due to the close relation of this gentile with the Jews in Christ's adopted city.

We won't see the antagonism of the odd couple in this pair of personalities either. We will see the perfect melding of faith, and the God that honors that faith.

The parallel passages Matt 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10 have a few differences. Matt. seems to be a synopsis of the account while Luke, the doctor, gave the usual detail that he would be used to.

Matthew also was writing to Jewish people primarily and to mention a gentile centurion sending Jewish elders, would have taken more time and space to explain. Concerning the fact that Matt. pictures the centurion speaking to Christ personally, some say there is a contradiction between the accounts. Matthew is only using a way of speaking that he uses in Matt. 27:26 where he mentions that Pilate scourged Christ, when in reality his agents did the scourging.

The accounts are pretty much the same. Luke mentions that the servants returning home found the servant healed, while Matt. simply mentions that the servant was healed at that hour.

The context of the passage in time is immediately after Christ has delivered the well-known sermon on the mount. He has come from the sermon, being followed by some of his listeners and is confronted with this opportunity to express Himself in all His power.

## I. REALIZING THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

Vs. 1 "Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into

Capernaum."

Capernaum is a city on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. It is normally called a city in the Scripture showing that it was of some size. It is mentioned in the Gospels that Christ taught in the synagogue that was there - indeed, the one we will see mentioned later that the centurion had built.

Capernaum seems to have been where Christ returned from time to time and it is indicated that he had a place of residence there, whether his own or one provided for Him we don't know for sure. Most likely it was a provided residence for He and the disciples when they were in the area. Mark 2:1 mentions, "And again he entered into Capernaum after [some] days; and it was noised that he was in the house." One commentator mentions that it may have been Peter's house that was being made available to them.

Mark 1:29-34 mentions both the fact that Christ ministered in the Synagogue at Capernaum, and that Peter had a house there where his wife and wife's mother lived. "And straightway when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John."(29) Mark 1:21 lists this as capernaum. The account is also seen in Luke 4:38-41; Matt 8:14-17.

Christ was originally from Nazareth according to Mark 1:9, but Matt 4:13 records, "And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast of the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali," Take time to read the Luke account of this in 4:16-31 and you will see that Christ was run out of Nazareth and this is probably why He decided to live elsewhere.

Vs. 2 "And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die."

In the Roman army a legion was made up of 60 centuries and were led by six tribunes. Each Century was made up of 100 soldiers overseen by two centurions. There were different levels of centurions. I assume that there was one head and one lower centurion.

"Tertullian [one of the early church fathers] was born Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus in Carthage, the son of a Roman centurion."

The centurion in our account was a Roman officer, however he seems to have been very close to the Jewish community. This is seen in two items in Luke's account.

1. He was on speaking terms with the Jewish elders, which was something in this situation. The Jews were not all that loving to the Romans that were over them in Christ's time.

2. The man also had built the Jews a synagogue. This would indicate that the Centurion was close to the Jewish need - whether this was political, to get along, or whether this was spiritual and he was a proselyte, we don't know.

At this time in history a man could build a house and then give it to the people of a place for a synagogue and the Jews would view it as a synagogue. This may have been what the centurion had done - built a house with his own money and his soldiers labor - then given it to the Jews of the city.

Easton mentions in his dictionary that "The centurions mentioned in the New Testament are uniformly spoken of in terms of praise, whether in the Gospels or in the Acts. It is interesting to compare this with the statement of Polybius (vi. 24) that the centurions were chosen by merit, and so were men remarkable not so much for their daring courage as for their deliberation, constancy, and strength of mind.", Dr. Maclear's N. T. Hist.

Verse two mentions that this servant was dear unto the centurion. There was a closeness between the master and slave. This tells us a lot about the master I should think. A master does not normally view a slave with much emotion. The centurion had become attached to the slave over the time of their relationship. (We don't know, but assume that the servant was not a Jew.)

The term translated dear is translated precious in I Pet. 2:4-6 which speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ. "4 To whom coming, [as unto] a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, [and] precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded."

The servant's dearness to his master is also seen in the fact that he is sick unto death in HIS MASTER'S HOUSE. It was the custom in this day to have sick servants removed to infirmaries or slave quarters, not to the masters home.

## II. REALIZING THE PROBABLE ALTERNATIVES

Vs. 3 "And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant."

The term beseeching is related to one of the terms used of the Holy Spirit that has the thought of calling someone along side for encouragement or assistance.

He knew that there was nothing that he could do - that he needed outside intervention into the situation to save the servant's life.

Vss. 4-5 "And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."

It is clear that the Jewish elders held the centurion in high regard, and were really hoping that Christ would intervene.

Contemplate this picture for awhile. This centurion has authority over the city of Capernum and the population views him with high regard. The centurion must have been quite a man in his life before these Jews.

Now, consider those that have authority over us in our daily life. Can we say the same thing of them - that they are worthy of Christ's help, that they love us as a nation? Can we really say that of our city leaders, our state leaders, our federal leaders?

All are NEEDY of Christ's help, but I can't say that many of them are really WORTHY of Christ's help. I personally think this says something about our leaders today.

The comment that the centurion loved the nation of Israel is of some interest as well. The Roman empire was the greatest empire on earth in all of history to that time, yet the centurion loved the Jewish nation. He saw something in these Jewish people that he wanted to make his own. It would be of interest to know if he were a believer in the God of the Jews, and also whether he was a follower of the Messiah.

Vs. 6 "Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:"

Clarke mentions that the term translated Lord should probably be translated Sir rather than Lord. This would be the normal translation of the term when a Roman soldier is using this Greek word.

Gill mentions of this thought of the centurion being unworthy, "he might know full well the law of the Jews, that it was not lawful for a Jew to go into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile; and though he might be a proselyte of righteousness, and so his house was free of entrance; yet considering his own meanness, and the greatness of Christ, who was become so famous for his doctrines and miracles, he thought it too great a stoop for Christ to come into his house, and too high a favour for him to enjoy."

NOTICE: The centurion felt so strongly about his unworthiness that he jeopardized the possible healing of his dear servant. He really felt that it would not be right for Christ to enter into his home.

Vs. 7 "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."

The centurion did not feel that he was worthy of even speaking to the Lord. He had sent the Jewish elders to speak for him. The man knew much of the Jewish protocol I would think. The Romans and the Jews did not normally mix company unless there were political issues to be settled.

Vs. 8 "For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it]."

Verse eight is of interest to me. Why does it exist? Both Matt. and Luke mention this. I assume that he knew Christ would know what he was talking about or he wouldn't have said it. He knew Christ was under authority, yet in authority as he was. Remember this for later, as I want to comment on it briefly.

Vs. 9 "When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Wow! What a slam in the face of the Jewish people. The Jewish elders of the local synagogue were there as were other Jewish leaders I would suspect. I CAN'T SEE THIS KIND OF FAITH IN MY OWN PEOPLE! I think that the Jewish community must have perked up their ears over that one!

So let's take a look at the alternatives the centurion had. 1. Let the servant die. 2. Find some other alternative - the only one being someone that had power over life and death - that being Jesus of whom he had heard. 3. Approach the man called Jesus that was reported to have power over life and death, and risk being identified as one of His followers, or at the least being accused of associating with Him - which wasn't all that popular.

This approach meant three things at the very least. 1. Risking his reputation as a Roman officer in his city and with his superiors. 2. Risking losing status with the Jewish community under him and in surrounding towns. 3. Having a certain amount, if not a great amount of faith in the man Jesus.

Since Christ indicates that there was a great faith, I will go with His estimation of the centurion's faith. He had great faith in the Lord's power to heal. He in his heart KNEW that Christ could raise up his dear servant. How does that relate to the faith you have when you go to prayer?

Do you KNOW in your mind and heart that God is capable of doing this thing that you are asking? Or do you toss those prayers up by the dozens hoping that God will reach down and answer one or two?

When driving our son and daughter-in-law to the coast, it was raining like mad. This was back in our rainy season that brought about floods. As we were about half way to the coast, I just mentioned to the Lord that it would be nice if He would stop the rain for us while at the coast. As we entered Lincoln city, I shut off the windshield wipers. As we exited Lincoln city I turned on the windshield wipers.

I opened my eyes to what God had done and my thought was HE DID IT!

The centurion's faith was manifested in three ways: 1. Faith in the approachability of the Savior. He had confidence that his friends could go to Him and talk to Him even though he was not worthy of talking to Christ himself. 2. Faith in the healing power of the Lord. He had confidence that Christ could raise up the servant. 3. Faith in power of Christ to speak this miracle into being. He only asked that Jesus say the required word.

The Centurion asked if Christ would do this. His faith was Great - he knew Christ could do it. He didn't know if He would or not.

I think there is a principle here. Faith needs to be in God's ability to do, not in a confidence of His doing. Let me repeat, FAITH NEEDS TO BE IN GOD'S ABILITY TO DO, NOT IN A CONFIDENCE OF HIS DOING.

To illustrate this: If I need a different car for my ministry, when I pray my faith KNOWS that God is capable of providing me with a car. The fact of whether He will or not is up to Him. He will consider my need and His will and answer accordingly.

You say what is the difference whether my faith is in God's ability to provide and whether He will provide. If my faith is based on God's ability - that is fact - that is truth - that is God's attribute - He can do anything that does not contradict His character. If my faith is based on whether God provides or not then If I ask God to provide me with a needed car, and He doesn't provide, then my faith was not big enough to get God to do what I ask.

Notice the difference? Faith in God and His abilities is the key to our faith in prayer, not whether or not He does what we want.

### III. REALIZING THE PROPER RESULT

Vs. 10 "And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

With the proper faith, you will always get the proper result from God.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

1. The centurion knew that Christ was the answer to the situation.
2. The centurion knew that he had no right to expect Christ to come to the house.
3. The centurion knew that he had no right to expect the Lord to come to the house, yet knew that Christ could say the word and the servant would be healed.
4. The centurion understood a lot more about Christ than most of the other people around the

Lord at this time.

He knew: a. Christ was worthy of great honor - he a centurion was not worthy of Christ being in his home. b. Christ had great power over death. c. Christ had people under His authority. d. Christ was under Someone else's authority. Namely the Father's.

#### APPLICATION:

##### 1. CONCERNING CHRIST:

I see clear expression of who Christ is in this passage.

a. He is an approachable Savior.

b. He has power over life and death.

c. He is a compassionate Savior.

d. He is interested in ALL people not just the Jews.

e. He is a working Savior. He had just taught for hours to a large crowd yet had time to be concerned over the desires of a gentile. Any preacher will tell you that Sunday is not a day of rest, that it is a day of labor. When teaching you are on the spot. You are supposed to have all the answers. Christ had it made in this area - He had all the answers!

##### 2. CONCERNING PRAYER:

A well focused, well defined request is needed as we go to the Lord with our requests. Lord bless us isn't very specific and we need to focus on our need.

Years ago one of the Radio mission agencies was preparing a large transmission site in a tropical area. They had the site built except for the generator to power the transmitter. The generator was on the way by truck and they needed to pour the cement foundation and pad for it. The forecast was for heavy rains the day that they were to pour the pad. The mission workers met for prayer that morning as they saw the clouds rolling in heavy with rain.

The prayer meeting finished, they went to work on the pad. They worked and worked until the work was complete. As they were observing their accomplishment and the nasty weather all around them, some of the mission leaders were flying in to watch the setting of the generator the next day. The plane circled the area so that the leaders could see what their workers had accomplished. When the plane landed the workers on the ground were told that the plane had been in rain the entire time they had been flying around the site. The only dry area was over the mission compound.

### 3. CONCERNING FAITH:

I would like to read some brief quotes about George Mueller:

"Few men of modern times have been given to know the meaning of faith in personal experience more than George Mueller, the founder of the Orphan Houses of Bristol, England. Mueller's whole life and life's work were a demonstration of implicit faith in God and His unfailing faithfulness.

"Mr. Mueller often likened faith to some of the organs of the body. Faith, he would say, is the eye, for by it we look to the Lord Jesus. An eye that is dim is still an eye, and an eye, though it be tear filled, is an eye none the less.

"Faith is the foot also, for by faith we go to the Lord Jesus. A foot that is lame is still a foot. It may cause a halting walk and delay progress, yet it does not prevent eventual arrival at a set destination. He who walks slowly nevertheless walks.

"And faith is the hand with which we lay hold of the Lord Jesus. A hand may tremble, but it is still a hand. It was a trembling hand that touched the hem of the Savior's garment, yet that faith resulted in the healing of a stricken body.

"Faith, then is that disposition of trust that looks toward Christ, and lays hold of Christ, finding in Him the answer to every need. It is founded not upon feelings but upon the promises of God, and His Word cannot fail."

4. CONCERNING AUTHORITY: He was under, yet in, authority as a Roman Centurion. Christ was under, yet in, authority as the God man.

The centurion, I believe, was stating he wanted to be under Christ's authority. I know you can do it, but I bow to your authority over me - do it or not do it according to your will. I know you have authority over death, but I also know the authority over you may limit what you do.

This relates back to faith in Christ's power to do, not in what He does. God is sovereign, God is all powerful, and God is our authority.

5. CONCERNING ACTION: The centurion did not sit at home wringing his hands in worry. He set the logical course and acted. Had he not acted the servant would have died.

Apply that to many churches today - people are not acting and churches are dying.

SO WHAT?

We have talked of Christ in this study.

We have talked of prayer in this study.

We have talked of faith in this study.

We have talked of action in this study.

SO WHAT? IS THE QUESTION BEFORE YOU NOW?

I want to leave you with that question.

So what does this study have to do with your life?

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m01600

TITLE: SIN

I'd like to consider sin briefly. Today we seem to term sin in ways that make us feel comfortable. If we offend people we call it personality differences. If we disobey rules or laws we call it "EVERY BODIES DOING IT" or else we call it "THAT'S A DUMB LAW." If we sin we call it missing the mark. If we disobey God's specific commands we call it displeasing God.

GOD CALLS IT ALL SIN! True it is missing the mark - but it is also an affront to GOD'S character and nature! It isn't just displeasing to Him it is out and out distasteful to HIM. It isn't something that we can shrug off - GOD HATES INDIVIDUAL TYPES OF SIN AND HE HATES ALL SIN!

I have for many years felt that the foreign mission problem was a lack of prayer, and I have not changed that evaluation. I have realized however that the lack of prayer is only a symptom of the real problem. The real problem is SIN in the lives of believers.

I John 1.5-9 mentions, "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

First John speaks of the confessing of sin. I believe that we have made this one too easy for the believer. I believe that the Psalmist had the right idea when he said, "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." ps 38.18; "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." ps. 51.2

Consider well the words of Paul concerning the Lord's table. I Cor 11.27-30 "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Some are sick and some sleep or are dead. Those words should ring in some believers heads. Many today are walking in sin on a daily basis and they have the audacity to walk into the Lord's table with their dirty shoes and attempt to worship God on holy ground where they ought not even have their shoes on.

Don't mistake what I say. God is not out to get us. he is indeed merciful to the extremes as the Psalmist mentions, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. [but] He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever." ps 103.8-11

Be forewarned there is no guarantee on how long His mercy will be extended to the believer that remains in sin and fails to clean up his act.

CONCLUSION: Christ died for our sins - past, present and future - not only to save us, but also for the sins that we have been involved with in recent days.

The sins that we have been involved with in recent days demanded that Christ shed His blood for us. It is for His work on the cross for us - past, present and future that we gather to remember as we come to the Lord's table. Christ's death - His giving of his body and blood are something personal to each one of us that have trusted Him as our Savior.

I rather think part of the reason for the Lord's table is to remind us to take time to inspect our lives - to remove sin and to restore fellowship. This is not only a remembrance of what He did for us, but should also remind us of what we did to Him. It was our sin that placed Him on the cross.

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m01650

TITLE: CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE

"BREAD"

When I said the word BREAD, what came to your mind? Maybe a loaf of Wonder bread from the store? Maybe a loaf of home-baked bread fresh out of the oven?

My wife has baked our bread off and on through our marriage. The family used to like to cut a freshly baked loaf and spread on the butter. We are so used to it now that we seldom take notice

when she takes fresh bread from the oven.

Possibly you thought of money when I said "BREAD."

Why is bread important to the average American today? THE EDIBLE KIND!

If you are thinking that bread isn't all that important to us you are probably correct. Many Americans could go days without bread and not miss it greatly. However make them go very long without a big Mac and you will have trouble.

If you were an Old Testament person, your mind would form a picture of a wafer of bread about a fingers width thick and about a hand spread around. Somewhat similar to a small frisbee. The bread was cooked on hot rocks or at times in hot sand. Possibly an account of Egyptian bread would give you a picture of what the Biblical Jew would think when he heard the term "BREAD."

(From Unger's Bible Dictionary p 154-155; quoting Maspero, Dawn Of Civilization p 320) "She spread some handfuls of grain upon an oblong slab of stone, slightly hollowed on its upper surface, and proceeded to crush them with a smaller stone like a painter's muller, which she moistened from time to time. For an hour and more she labored with her arms, shoulders, loins, in fact, all her body; but an indifferent result followed from such great exertion. The flour, made to undergo several grindings in this rustic mortar, was course, uneven, mixed with bran or whole grains, which had escaped the pestle, and contaminated with dust and abraded particles of the stone. She kneaded it with a little water, blended with it, as a sort of yeast, a piece of stale dough of the day before, and made from the mass round cakes, about half an inch thick and some four inches in diameter, which she placed upon a flat flint, covering them with hot ashes. The bread, imperfectly raised, often badly cooked, borrowed, from the organic fuel under which it was buried, a special odor, and a taste to which strangers did not sufficiently accustom themselves. The impurities which it contained were sufficient in the long run to ruin the strongest teeth. Eating it was an action of grinding rather than chewing, and old men were not infrequently met with whose teeth had gradually been worn away to the level of the gums, like those of an aged...ox"

Now, that adds meaning to the term "BREAD" when Scripture uses the term doesn't it!

We today, need bread to scrape up the gravy after we have finished off the roast, mashed potatoes, green beans etc. RIGHT! We do not NEED bread today with all that we have.

Many people across the world and indeed some in our own country do NEED bread to exist. Very few American's know this type of need.

My brother had the habit of removing all the outer crust from his bread when he ate it. He only liked the inner softer part. If our mother had been alive to see it, she would have said, "Now

George, eat that crust there are people starving all over the world and they would love to have that crust!" He would probably have replied, "Well, send it to them."

In our day of steaks, roasts, Arby's, McDonald's, lamb etc. we really cannot identify with the term "BREAD OF LIFE". Bread does not mean life to us today.

In this study we want to try and place our selves within the context of bread being a necessity of life so that we can understand what the Bible is trying to tell us this.

Let's turn for a few moments to John chapter six.

Take a moment and read Jo 6:25-29.

Christ has been approached by people that had evidently been at the feeding of the 5000. He introduces them to the idea that there is not only physical food but that there is also spiritual food.

Indeed, his emphasis is on the Spiritual food! The spiritual food leads to eternal life while physical food leads only to life.

Do we have that concept in our minds? Do we really believe and live out the principle that physical bread is only for life - while SPIRITUAL BREAD IS UNTO LIFE!

What a bold statement concerning Man's need.

Read 6:30-35. Christ is told by the people that Moses had given the Jews manna from heaven and Jesus corrects them by telling them it was not Moses that gave the bread.

He goes on to tell them that the Father has sent them THE BREAD OF GOD! In verse 35 Christ makes the statement, "I am the bread of life." "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE."

You might say, "Christ is the necessity of life." He is the sustainer of life. He is that which gives life.

Indeed, in verses 47-51 He makes this fact even plainer than before.

Read 6:47-51. He contrasts the Israelites that ate manna in the wilderness being dead, to Himself as the eternal life giving bread. Indeed the life giving bread is His flesh and He gave it for the "life of the world."

Let's think about the contrast of the Manna of the wilderness and Christ the Bread of Life.

MANNA BREAD OF LIFE

1. It came from heaven Christ came from heaven
2. It saved lives physically Christ saves souls eternally
3. It was sufficient in given Christ is sufficient - amounts NOTHING needs to be added (not even works)
4. They weren't to take to much Christ is the only answer
5. It gave physical life Christ gives eternal life
6. Partakers died physically Partakers live eternally

All is done now on Christ's side.

He died, was buried and rose again for our eternal salvation - if we will only believe and accept that sacrifice that He made for OUR SINS!

We also have another picture in the Old Testament that is directly related to the Lord's table. The passover meal of the book of Exodus pictures the remembrance that we gather for in the Lord's table.

The context of the next passage is the occasion of the coming of the last plague upon the Egyptians when Pharaoh would not allow Moses to lead the children of Israel out of bondage.

God is setting forth the requirements for the physical salvation of Israel's first born. Read Ex. 12:3-17. The passover meal was to be a celebration or a remembrance of the taking of the children of Israel out of bondage.

This text is full of pictures - Egypt is a type of the world, Pharaoh is a type of Satan and servitude is a type of sin. The whole occasion is a picture of salvation!

For a moment I'd like to look at the Passover meal and salvation. Remember if you will, that the Last supper where the Lord's table was instituted was actually the passover meal remembrance required by the Old Testament. Christ was celebrating the passover when He told the disciples to remember Him and His work with the elements of the cup and loaf.

#### PASSOVER SALVATION

1. A perfect lamb was in view                      The perfect lamb was in view

I Pet 1:18-21 mentions, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and gold, from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers,

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God."

- |                                    |                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. The lamb was innocent           | The Lamb was innocent                                                                                         |
| 3. The lamb was killed             | The Lamb was crucified                                                                                        |
| 4. The lamb's blood was placed     | The Lamb's blood was on the cross over the doorpost                                                           |
| 5. The blood saved the firstborn   | The blood saves us                                                                                            |
| 6. The bread was to remind them of | The bread is to remind us of their freedom from bondage<br>our being freed from sin through the Bread of Life |

As God viewed the blood over the door post of the Israelites so He will view the shed blood of Christ as we stand before Him.

The bread of the Lord's table reminds us of Christ's time on the cross dying to provide the payment for each of our sins.

The story is told of a man that had a dream of seeing Jesus being whipped with a whip with lead embedded in the ends of the lashes. Christ was bleeding and in much pain. The man dreaming ran forward to stop the beating. As he reached the spot of the whipping, the man with the whip turned. The man saw that it was himself.

Jesus suffered on the cross for your sin and my sin. WE PLACED HIM ON THE CROSS. The Jews crucified Him, however the Scriptures are very clear that Christ laid down His life and that no one took it from Him. He was completing the work that the God the Father had sent Him to do. HE DIED FOR MY SINS! HE DIED FOR YOUR SINS!

Yes, Christ is truly the BREAD OF LIFE and without a personal relationship with HIM we cannot see the glories of God and the heaven that He has prepared for us.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior you will only glimpse the glories of heaven as you bow before Him in judgment and then you will behold the torments of the Lake of Fire for eternity.

If you are today a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you are free to share eternity with Him forever.

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m01700

Daniel is speaking with Gabriel the Arch angel when Gabriel declares to Daniel: Dan 9:23, "...for thou art greatly beloved...." Again in Dan 10:11, an angel, probably Gabriel again declares, "And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved...." Then in 10:19 the same angel states, "And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not. Peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong...."

It would seem since the angels are messengers, that these statements of Daniel being beloved were from God. God's estimation of the man Daniel must have been very high to send such a message three times via a very special messenger.

The question that arises is, why was God's estimation of Daniel so high? There are two distinct and probably intertwined possibilities as you read through the book of Daniel. 1. Daniel was a man that was determined to stand for God and God alone, no matter what the consequences. 2. Daniel was a man of prayer of the highest order. When you have time just read through the book of Daniel and notice the prayers of this man of God.

I'm not saying that just because we gather together to pray that we will increase God's estimation of ourselves, but I rather believe that we will. God desires that we approach Him with our needs and problems. If we are doing what He desires us to do, then we will definitely please Him.

NO, we do not want to attend prayer meeting to impress the Lord, but to do what He desires us to do.

Daniel, I believe had the strength to take the stand for God that he did due to the fact that He was a prayer warrior.

As we come together for prayer, I'm certain that there are some positive benefits: 1. God will answer the prayers that are presented to Him, thus we will see needs met and problems solved. 2. God will bless us in personal ways for praying for the saints and their needs. 3. We will naturally gain a certain amount of fellowship as we interact with one another. 4. The church will benefit because many are praying on a regular basis. My wife and I attended a Bible Church in Denver that had about 75 people. They wanted to have an Awana program, but knew that to gain workers they would have to cancel their Wednesday evening prayer service. This they did and the Awana program began. The Awana program prospered and children were saved, but we noticed that there were definite increases in problems in the church. Indeed, attendance began to drop and problems increased. The church after a year decided to go back to having a prayer meeting along with the Awana program. The problems decreased and attendance began to increase. Do you suppose there is a relationship? 5. It will ultimately give each of you a more personal burden for missions and the church as you pray for the people involved and see their struggles and problems.

There are probably other benefits as well. I trust that prayer time will become very meaningful to each one.

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m01750

Turn with me to Prov. 9:10 for just a few moments. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." "The fear of the Lord": Most view the fear of the Lord as "reverential fear" or just having a reverence before God.

Isa 6:1-5 seems to indicate more than just being reverent. Isaiah, when confronted with God said, "Woe is me for I am undone."

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

Knowing what God is and who He is, brings us to a proper reverence - respect - and fear. "is the beginning of wisdom": Fearing God is ONLY the beginning of wisdom! Before you count a man wise - see if he fears the Lord.

"the knowledge of the Holy One IS UNDERSTANDING": Only as we KNOW GOD can we have proper understanding.

How can we know God?

- a. Talk to Him:
- b. Learn of Him:
- c. Share with Him:
- d. Rely on Him:
- e. Know His family:
- f. Do His work:
- g. Allow Him to work in you: Allow him to do as He wills, and see what He can do through you.

In the church if we are successful in helping people know ABOUT God, we have been a failure. If we have been successful in helping people KNOW God, then we have done the job that God wants done.

May you seek in our life to find a proper fear of God. May you seek in your life to know God.

Wisdom and understanding - there is an easy formula for you to gain them. FEAR AND KNOW GOD.

I personally believe that the majority of Christians in our churches today, KNOW ABOUT GOD, but that few KNOW GOD. We are in a day where little is being done spiritually. It normally is due to the believer seeking to know facts about their God rather than serving and communicating with their God.

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m01800

I would like to talk briefly about New Years resolutions. They have been defined as something that comes in one year and goes out the other.

I would like to challenge us with a resolution for the coming year to be made on an individual basis and with some very serious commitment to keeping that resolution.

Before we get to that I would like to share some things that will introduce us to the resolutions. In looking through our Christmas cards we were struck by some of the comments that were forthcoming and the reality or lack of reality behind the comments. Let me share a few with you just to set our direction this in this study.

This card came from a Bible college graduate and pastor of about seven years. "Christmas is magic - Christmas is peace - Christmas is love" That was the front. The inside read as follows: "Wishing you magic to light this festive season, peace to brighten each tomorrow, love to keep you happy always!"

A comment from a young lady that is living with a boyfriend: "We are doing better as we (my immediate family) struggle to live for Christ!"

A comment from a father that is living with a woman and allows his teenage son to bring his girlfriend home for the night. The father has daughters living with men after divorces and remarriages and one on cocaine. "In spite of what appears to be an unbearable situation the Lord continues to bless me and my family."

A comment from a wife that had mentioned that the family had flown to California for vacation with family members and spent two days at Disney land and then returned home after a jaunt to Arizona. "What a year of growth as we have experienced God's answer to our prayers and daily needs." Daily needs include a two-day trip to Disney land? Vacations aren't wrong and I don't want anyone to say that I said that! They however are not needs!

Just where are we headed as believers in this world. How many comments have we made that sound as foolish as some of these? Are we really serious about our Christianity?

I would like to read the card we received from a man that has been through divorce and several marriages and then accepted the Lord. I think the card is descriptive of a man that knows his Lord and is operating in reality.

"Where would we be without Jesus? He was born of a woman so we could be born of God... He humbled Himself so we could be lifted up... He became a servant so we could be made heirs... He suffered rejection so we could be His friends... He denied Himself so we could freely receive all things... He gave Himself so He could bless us in every way! MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR KNOW EVERY BLESSING OF HIS LOVE"

I trust that most of us are operating in reality and not finding ways of rationalizing wrong living into looking as if we are walking with God.

I have never in my life made a New Years resolution. I have often wondered why in the world anyone would. I've never known anyone to keep one that they had made.

I looked up resolution and found that one of the first definitions is not what we think of in relation to New Years, but is actually very fitting of the real life resolutions. "the act or process of reducing to simpler form: as a: the act of analyzing a complex notion into simpler ones...." Isn't that what is done. You look at that dumb resolution and reduce it to some simple rationalizations that will pass for keeping the original resolution so that you feel good about it.

The real idea is that you are going to do something in the coming year and you are going to see to it that you do it. You will be resolute about it!

Resolute means, "marked by firm determination" (both quotes are from Webster.) It has been said, "A resolution is always stronger at its birth than at any subsequent period." (14,000 Quips & Quotes for Writers and Speakers)

The determination of a resolution usually dwindles with the sleep that follows such foolish acclamations. Or as it has been well said, "Most of the leaves we turned over in January have already started to fall." (ibid)

In our thinking in this study I would like for us to put aside the usual thought of broken resolutions and concentrate on the thought of deciding to do something that is very serious and very important.

In light of what our Christmas cards revealed I think it is safe to say that some Christians are very certainly affected by the world in which we live.

As to the resolution I am suggesting, it is simple. Resolve this coming year to consider all of your normal activities in light of whether they are Biblical or worldly. Consider every activity even if it is small. Would you enjoy meeting the Lord doing that activity? Is it really something you want

to be doing when The Lord returns for us?

This resolution is something that you can make in secret, as far as man is concerned anyway, and is something that only a little thought each day will help you accomplish. If you want a scripture to go with this thought you can look at Rom. 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...." If we are being affected by the world, and I believe most of us are, we need to be renewing our mind on a continuing basis to see to it that the Lord wins over the world.

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m01850

Ps. 108:13, "Through God we shall do valiantly; for he it is who shall tread down our enemies." In the Psalm David is speaking of his human enemies, yet I'm sure that he realized those enemies were motivated by the master enemy that we all face on a daily basis, the Devil. David was aquatinted with the Devil's methods, I am sure.

The enemies we face today are varied in each of our lives. Some face financial problems. Some face family problems. Some face peer problems. Some face fear problems. Some face health problems. Some face job problems. Some face -- you fill in the blank. We all face some sort of problems, almost on a daily basis.

All of these different types of problems are shown in the book of Job, and in the first chapter it is evident that the Devil has power in all of these areas of the believers life. The joy that we can know from Job is the fact that there was nothing that the Devil could do without God's specific permission. Any problem that we face, we can know we face because God has allowed it to come our direction to test and strengthen us in our walk with Him.

David states quite clearly that we can do valiantly if we do it through God. Valiant according to Webster means, "possessing or acting with bravery or boldness." Valiantly is Strong's number 2428 (twot 624a) and is the Hebrew term "hayil" which means "might" according to the Theological Word Book of the Old Testament. It is also translated "men of wealth," "man of power," "able men," "man of might." This would indicate the aspect of powerful as well as courageous.

Indeed, the power of God being behind us can certainly give us courage to face the things that the Devil brings our way. I think that courageous determination might be a good outworking of the term. Facing all problems with a courageous determination to get through them with God's help. This results in those around us seeing and realizing that our God allows us to be brave and courageous in the face of problems.

The last phrase of the verse mentions that He - God will tread down our enemies. He expects us as individuals to face our problems head-on and do what we can to eliminate them, but ultimately we need to be calling upon Him for his assistance and strength!

Martin Luther as he was about to enter the hall where he would be judged was stopped by an old knight that had fought many valiant fights. The knight said to Luther, "Poor monk, poor monk! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captains have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee." (From D'Augigne as quoted in "6,000 Sermon Illustrations" by Foster.)

"...go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee."

Let's remember that, "Through God we shall do valiantly; for he it is who shall tread down our enemies."

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m01900

Ps 119:19 "I am a sojourner in the earth; hide not thy commandments from me." A statement of the psalmists walk, and a request of the psalmists heart.

"Sojourner" has a number of shades of meaning. It certainly has the idea of temporary. It has the idea of stranger (The old King James uses stranger). It has the idea of pilgrim. It has the idea of wandering. It has the idea of being heavenly minded.

The idea is seen very clearly in Heb. 11:13 ff. Abraham was described as a pilgrim and wanderer.

A couple we met years ago described their life with the Lord as "just passin through." They came to earth to pick up their ticket to heaven and they were "just passin through" this life. I think that most Christians are looking to settle in for the duration of time, instead of seeking the eternal things of God.

Sojourner - "The root means to live among people who are not blood relatives; thus, rather than enjoying native civil rights, the "ger" was dependent on the hospitality that played an important role in the ancient near east." (Theological Words of the Old Testament) In short it is one living in a land that is not his own and depending on the protection of the people of that land.

Does that describe us as believers? Certainly! We are living in a land that we can never possess and are under the protection of that Land Owner - God!

The term is used in a prophecy of the Jews in Egypt before the Exodus. Gen 15:13, "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a sojourner in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years."

The second thought of the verse is the great desire of the Psalmists heart, "...hide not thy commandments from me." The believer that is truly desirous of walking with the Lord will always yearn to know what the Lord desires of him.

It should be our desire to know everything that the Lord wants us to do and not to do so that we can do and not do!

The word hide means simply to hide or conceal, however there is a very interesting distinction. There are terms other than this one to describe hide, and conceal. This term has with it the idea of protection. Hide or conceal with the thought of protecting that which is being hidden. David uses the term to describe his own hiding from king Saul when Saul was hunting for him in I Sam 20:5 ff. Elijah also hid himself by the Brook Cherith in I Ki. 17:3.

It would seem that the Psalmist was asking that the Lord would not feel that He had to hide His commandments from him.

If we are walking with the Lord, we never have to fear that the Lord will not respond to our petitions for His will and direction. We can know of a certainty that God will respond and reveal all that He desires.

May we all have the "PILGRIM" concept in our lives!

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m01950

TITLE: WHO IS THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

OUTLINE:

I. CHRIST IN PROPHECY

II. CHRIST IN ACTION

A. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

B. THE ROCK

III. CHRIST IN SON SHIP

INTRODUCTION:

When I was growing up I attended a Christian church and was taught all of the Bible stories. I must say that I don't recall ever hearing the Gospel. I used to go to Sunday School class and cram the memory verse into my mind just long enough to spew it out at the teacher as soon as she arrived, and before it slipped from my mind. That way I'd get my star for the morning.

In looking back to those days, I am reminded that my view of God was that He was the all powerful being of the Old Testament. I related all of the stories to Him. As far as Christ, I'm not

sure that I really related Him to being a part of God. I don't think that there was ever a conscious realization that God and Christ had anything to do with one another.

When I became a believer, I realized that Christ was God - that He was full deity as well as full humanity, but it was many years before I realized that He had anything to do with the Old Testament.

Even in early college days, I relegated God the Father to the Old Testament and God the Son to the New Testament. I trust that you do not leave this study with this concept.

I trust that you will understand that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all three active in both Testaments - Indeed, they all three have always - for all eternity - been active.

## OLD TESTAMENT VIEW OF CHRIST

Let it be said first of all that the Lord Jesus does not appear in the Old Testament by name for He had not been born of Mary as yet. Jesus is His earthly name, Christ is His fulfillment of prophecy name and The Son is His eternal name, and we will see that His Old Testament name was Lord.

The fact that He is not named as Jesus in the Old Testament: 1. This does not negate the fact that He could be in the Old Testament in his divine existence. 2. This does not negate the fact that He is mentioned in prophecy.

Christ's appearances in the Old Testament are called Christophanies. When God appears it is a Theophany. Actually the two may be the same and Christophany the more appropriate term. I have not done a complete search on the subject, but personally suspect that all appearance of God in the Old Testament were Christ preincarnate, thus all would be Christophanies.

We want to look at Christ in three different ways. First we want to briefly look at Christ in prophecy.

### I. CHRIST IN PROPHECY:

Gen 3:15 was the first indication of one to come. He is mentioned many times throughout the Old Testament. The Jewish people were always looking for the Messiah. Ge 3:15 "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." We will not dwell on this point for this is a well known fact.

The Messiah in the Old Testament was prophesied and the Messiah in the New Testament is revealed. There have been many books written concerning all of the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ. This is a long study of its own.

Primarily in this study I'd like to concentrate on

## II. CHRIST IN ACTION:

A. THE ANGEL OF THE LORD: We want to look at the Angel of the Lord this. We will look at the verses and see some of His attributes and I think that it will be clear that the Angel of the Lord was Christ Himself in His preincarnate ministry with man.

I might give a brief overview of the Trinity and Their ministries to man. God the Father seems to have been the instigator of the overall plan of God, while Christ seems to be the implementer of the overall plan of God. The Holy Spirit seems to be the one that gives power to the plan.

This division of powers, so to speak, does not detract from the doctrine of the Trinity, it is only a refinement of the doctrine. The three persons of the Godhead are totally equal, and totally God, yet for some reason known only to God there was a dividing of duties and activities. As you look at the New Testament, you will find that The Son is directed by the Father, and is empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is also clear the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell believers.

Let this not detract from your understanding of God. We don't want to divide Him up into so small a piece that we can hinder how we view Him, but at the same time we want to understand and know this God that we serve.

1. The Angel of the Lord had physical attributes: I don't want to take time to read all of these passages because we would be here a long time past hunger. I will read some passages, and just comment on others. You can read each one when you have time at home.

These attributes actually show limitation rather than deity, but then that is just what Christ did when He took upon himself flesh and blood.

a. He could speak. Gen. 16:7-8 He spoke to Hagar the slave of Sari in the wilderness when He talked to her of her coming child Ishmael.

b. He could be seen. Gen 16:13 In the same context it mentions that Hagar also saw the Angel of the Lord.

c. He could eat. Gen 18:1, 8 In this account three men appear to Abraham. One of them is identified simply as the LORD. The term LORD is the Hebrew Yaweh or Jehovah and is always related to the Angel of the Lord or Christ of the Old Testament. Though the text does not specify that it was the "Angel of the Lord" most scholars agree that it is.

d. He could see. Gen 18:16 In the same text the Angel of the Lord is referred to as looking upon Sodom. This is the well-known Bible account of Abraham haggling over the cities that God was about to destroy.

e. He could move. Gen 18:16 Not only could He eat, talk, and see, but he moved and walked

with Abraham.

f. He was limited or limited Himself. Gen 32:24-26 Again, as in the previous text in this text the man is not identified as the Angel of the Lord but most agree that it is the same being that appeared to Hagar. Jacob meets the Angel of the Lord in a wrestling match and Jacob prevailed. "Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me."

He was limited in strength yet, he was able to, seemingly, supernaturally touch Jacobs hip and cause it to go out of joint.

g. He was limited in time. Gen. 32:26 He was concerned with the sunrise for some reason, so was operating within time in some manner.

2. The Angel of the Lord had Divine attributes:

a. He made great promises that only God could make and keep.

Gen 16:8 He told Hagar of great things from her child to come.

b. He foretold the future. Gen 16:12 He told Hagar that Ishmael would be, "a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

c. He was compassionate. Gen 18:23-32 In the haggling with Abraham over Sodom and Gomorrah, he seemed to show compassion for those that would be destroyed, or at least a compassion for Abraham and his concern for his relatives and the cities.

d. He could deal in judgement. Gen 18:1-33 There was a decision to totally destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, but he made a deal with Abraham to spare if Abraham's deal came to pass.

e. He had access to heaven. Gen 22:11 In the account of Isaac, as Abraham was about to offer his son, the Angel of the Lord spoke. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said...." We see the ability to communicate again.

f. He could prosper individuals. Gen 24:7,40 When Abraham sent his servant to seek a bride for Isaac it mentions that the Angel of the Lord would prosper the undertaking.

g. He could appear in dreams. In Gen 31:11 when He appeared to Jacob it was in a dream.

h. He seems to have been omnipresent. Gen 31:12 Unknown to Jacom and Laban He had

observed what Laban had done to Jacob.

I. He kept men from evil. Gen 48:16, "An angel who redeemed me from all evil..."

j. He could do the supernatural. Ex 3:1-4 It was the Angel of the Lord that appeared to Moses in the burning bush.

k. He wasn't confined to the human form. We saw this in the previous example and it is also seen in Ex 13 and 14 referring to the pillar of fire and smoke that lead the Israelites through the wilderness. (Ex 13.21 and 14.19) This also was the Angel of the Lord.

l. He could keep believers. Ex 23:20 records that He was to keep the people of Israel as they moved toward the promised land.

m. He could draw or lead people to places. Ex 23:20 He was to bring them into the land.

n. He could kill enemies. II Kings 19:35 This passage mentions that He killed "an hundred fourscore and five thousand...." Assyrians.

o. He could kill Israelites in Judgment. I Chron 21:15-18 Mentions choices of penalty for David's sin. A plague of killing was one of the choices.

p. He was sent by God. I Chron 21:15,26 During the destruction that resulted from David's sin the Angel of the Lord is sent by God and is shown to be distinct from God the Father.

"And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the Lord beheld, and he repented of the evil, and said to the angel who destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. and the angel of the lord stood by the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite."

q. He could be concerned in the delay of judgment. Zech 1:12-14

r. He was worshiped. Ex 3:1-5. This is in the account of Moses and the burning bush which was the angel of the Lord.

Angels of the normal kind do not allow worship according to Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9.

There are other references that we did not cover.

3. The Angel of the Lord had eyewitness accounts: We have seen most of these in our study already so we won't cover them except to mention them.

Abraham saw Him, ate with Him, and haggled with Him. Gen 18:1-33; Gen 22:11-18

Hagar saw and talked with Him Gen 16:13, "she called the name of the Lord who spoke unto her"

Jacob wrestled with Him Gen 31:11-13; 48:16

Moses worshiped Him Ex 3:1-5; 13:21 cf. 14:19

All of the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness were led by Him. Ex 13-14.

Joshua confronted Him Joshua 5:13-6:2

The Assyrians were killed by Him II Ki. 19:35

David was punished by Him I Chron 21:14-18

The Israelites were killed by Him I Chron 21.14-18

And others - Dan 3:15-28; Zech 1:12-14

4. The Angel of the Lord gave personal testimony of His being God:

"And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are striped, speckled, and spotted; for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred." Gen. 31:11-13 cf.

"And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If Go will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on." Gen. 28:19,20

5. The Angel of the Lord had to have been Christ preincarnate.

SOME CONCLUSIONS:

a. The Angel of the Lord must be God if he has the attributes of God.

b. The Father is not the Angel of the Lord. (The Angel of the Lord was sent by the Father.)

c. The Holy Spirit is never mentioned as appearing except at the coming of Christ and we have no indication that he has ever appeared. Nor do we have any indication He was the Angel of the Lord.

d. The Son has appeared and this is consistent with the thought that no man has ever seen God, as in all His glory - man has seen God in human form in the Old Testament and as full humanity in the New Testament Jo. 1:18

In speaking of Christ Col 1:15 mentions, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation;"

Christ is the visible part of the trinity due to His becoming man. God in all of his glory has not been seen. Christ mentioned that anyone that had seen Him had seen the Father. (Jn 14:8-9)

e. The Angel of the Lord is not in the Gospels thus it can be assumed that it was Christ for he was incarnate during that time.

If you look in a concordance you may find references to the Angel of the Lord in the Gospels, but these state an angel not the angel.

f. The Father sent both the Angel of the Lord, (I Chron. 21:15); and Christ, (Jn 4:34).

g. Paul mentions in I Cor. 10:1-12 that the Lord Jesus was in the wilderness with the Israelites. This was the Lord preincarnate. He was there (Ex. 13:21 cf 14:19) thus there is no reason to think that the Angel of the Lord was not Christ preincarnate.

(Misc. texts of interest: Jud. 13:15-18 cf. Isa 9:6; 28:29 Mal. 3:1)

You might find a study of the term "LORD" in the Old Testament interesting. It is the word for Jehovah and is related to the Angel of the Lord. Jehovah is the Angel of the Lord, is LORD, is Christ, is Messiah. Bancroft in ELEMENTAL THEOLOGY has a section on the Jehovah of the Old Testament revealed in the New Testament. (P 145ff 1)

Might we draw some application from our study thus far?

1. Everything we know of the Angel of the Lord is directly transferrable to God. His power, His compassion, His leading, His care, His keeping of the believer, and all those things we know, but all these texts further prove all these things about Him.

2. We tend to see God the Father as the God of the Old Testament and Christ as God of the New Testament. Not so. Christ is always NEW and OLD. He is the manifestation of God to mankind, be it before or after the incarnation.

3. Much of what we've seen of Christ preincarnate shows Him actively involved in the lives of God's people. In this age we have that involvement of God via the Holy Spirit.

4. Some of the Old Testament saints had a personal meeting with God! What an awesome

thought, to have a meeting with God. The pillar of fire and smoke - not just fire and smoke, but God!

B. THE ROCK We will study Christ as the Rock of the Old Testament in another study. (see Rock in the topical index)

Next some comments about

### III. CHRIST IN SON SHIP:

Some today suggest that Christ was not the Son of God until He became man. This thought suggests that there was no "Son" relationship until Mary bore Christ. This is not to say He isn't God - only that the term Son did not apply until His birth. Logically then would there be no "Father" relationship. It would be required by logic. Prov. 30:4 proves to most that there was a Son relationship prior to the incarnation of Christ. "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

Dr. John MacArthur states that this reference is looking forward to when Christ would be the Son but that the son ship did not begin until the incarnation.

"As was noted, Son is an incarnational title of Christ. Though His SON SHIP was anticipated in the Old Testament (Prov. 30:4), He did not become a Son until He was begotten into time. Prior to time and His incarnation He was eternal God with God. The term Son has only to do with Jesus Christ in His incarnation. It is only an analogy to say that God is Father and Jesus is Son - God's way of helping us understand the essential relationship between the first and second Persons of the Trinity." (HEBREWS p 27)

Strong speaks of the eternal generation of the Son, "Not a commencement of existence, but an eternal relation to the Father, - there never having been a time when the Son began to be, or when the Son did not exist as God with the Father."

Rom 8:3 Tells us "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh," This seems to show the son being sent, that indicating that he was Son when sent, not after He arrived.

Jn 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Begotten Son...."

I Jn 3:8 "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." This seems to indicate that He was the Son before He was manifested to man.

Heb 13:8 "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

If He is the Son now then also in eternity past.

The use of the term Son with the Father and Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula and elsewhere would be curious if the term Son is only for the incarnation as some believe. One might decide that the term Father was also for the incarnation only. Indeed, the Holy Spirit's name might also be for the incarnation only.

Indeed, to follow MacArthur's logic we might suggest that the Holy Spirit is a name to allow us to understand the Holy Spirit. His name is actually not Holy Spirit, but God. That makes the Baptismal formula "baptize you in the name of The God and of The God and of the God."

Technically the eternal generation of the Son deals with His eternality. It was a doctrine that was formed as a result of some of the thinking of Arius and his idea that Christ was a created being.

The only, known to me, Old Testament ref. to God as Father is in Isa. 9:6 which speaks of the "COMING" Messiah - the Son.

However, it seems that it would be difficult to view three persons of the trinity running around eternity past in an infinite area not having names for one another and then in 33 AD deciding that one would be The Father, and one would be The Son and one would be The Holy Spirit. Especially when the Spirit is called the Spirit before the incarnation. Genesis one for example.

Since Christ was slain from the foundation of the world in God's mind it would be consistent to view Christ as the Son at least at that point. (Heb. 4:3; I Pet. 1:19-20; Eph 1:4)

Walvoord mentions that the eternal Father Son relationship has been the thought of the Church Fathers since the Council of Nicea (p 39) but now all of a sudden we have a man that discovers new unknown doctrine. NOT!

Walvoord lists several positions to further humorize the situation.

1. He mentions that Wardlaw placed the idea into existence that Christ became the Son at the time of the incarnation.

"...SON SHIP is inseparably linked with the incarnation and, while Christ existed from eternity past, He was not a Son until the incarnation." P 39 of Walvoord quoting Ralph Wardlaw, Systematic Theology, II, 32-60

2. Some mention that the SON SHIP came only after the Father declared Him his beloved Son at the baptism.

3. Some have suggested that Rom. 1:4, "And declared to be the Son of God with power...." shows that the relationship came at the resurrection.

4. Some suggest that the son relation came at the exaltation. Heb. 1:3 is given as evidence. The problem is that He is called a Son long before this in His incarnation.

5. The eternal SON SHIP position presents the following references.

Gal. 4:4, "But, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of woman, made under the law."

Jn 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Begotten Son ... For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn...."

Isa 9:6 mentions that a son will be given and it is clearly speaking of Christ.

Ps 2:7, "I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

This seems to tie not only the SON SHIP but the idea of begotten to the decree. This would place both in eternity past.

Walvoord states, "According to this passage, Christ is declared to be the Son of God and begotten in the day of the eternal decree. This is, in effect, a statement that Christ is eternally the Son of God as the decree itself is eternal." (This text is quoted three times in the New Testament. Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5) Walvoord has a lengthy section on this pp 36-95.

#### APPLICATION:

1. The primary emphasis is that Christ isn't the new kid on the block. He isn't just an after thought to the God head. He has always been there, and He has always been the Son, and He always will be the Son, which as I understand, some dispute eternal future SON SHIP.

We tend to relegate God the Father to the Old Testament and Christ to the New Testament. Both are operative in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. In fact the Holy Spirit was active in both Testaments as well.

2. We should be encouraged by all of the items that we have seen that relate to God.

#### THIS IS GREAT FOR THE BELIEVER

He is interested in us.

He is leading us.

He cares for us.

He is concerned about us.

He will fight our battles.

and He will fellowship with us.

Yet, we ought to be concerned as well.

NOT SO GREAT FOR THE LOST OR SINNING BELIEVERS

He is a God of judgment.

He is a God of punishment.

3. Since we have seen that there is a God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, we ought to be careful to consider all three in our thinking and study. Beware anyone that concentrates only on one person of the trinity for their prayer life and study.

A balance is needed.

I have known good men that hardly ever preach from any books of the Bible other than the Gospels. They immerse themselves in the teachings of Jesus HOWEVER much is for the kingdom. Christ also gave Paul his material FOR THE CHURCH! Why in the world ignore it? Yes, the gospels are important, but so is ALL OF SCRIPTURE that is given by inspiration!

May we see God as He really is.

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m02000

TITLE: Between the Rock and A Hard Place

INTRODUCTION:

As a young boy our family went fishing quite often. The best fishing spot for us seemed to be on the dam along the rocks.

During and after World War II when there were so many government projects of construction under way, they built large canals which connected large canyons in the hills. These canyons were then dammed up on the open end and large reservoirs of water were created and were

connected by these canals for irrigation and power production.

This dam we fished on was such a dam. The dam was constructed of dirt fill. Rocks and concrete were thrown over the water side of the dam to prevent erosion. The dam was narrow and the road was barely wide enough for two cars to meet. Usually one would pull over and stop to allow the other by.

One evening we were fishing and a cloud burst hit. We packed up as quickly as possible and got into the car. I was very afraid of heights and water at the time, so as my father started to pull the car forward and it slid sideways into the rocks you know who was terrified.

We all got out of the car and Dad tried to get the car onto the road. Finally some other men came and pushed him back up onto the road, however they told us the road to the west was washed out. Naturally we were headed west.

The only choice was to turn the car around on that slick clay dam. There were small turn arounds, but they were dangerous under perfect conditions. On one side the rock and water, and on the other side a probable fatal drop to the canyon floor.

Yes! My father was between the rocks and a hard place.

As Christians we find ourselves so often in hard situations. We find ourselves between a rock and a hard place.

Hopefully we can, in this study, change our thinking slightly and find that rather than being between a rock and a hard place, that we are really between the Rock and a hard place when we have trouble.

Take a moment and read I Cor. 10:1-4.

1. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;" Paul seems to be speaking of the people wandering in the wilderness and the fact that they followed the pillar of fire and smoke through their travels and that they all passed through the Red Sea when they were coming out of Egypt.

2 "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;"

3 "And did all eat the same spiritual meat;" Spiritual meat would seem to be speaking of the provisions of food by God to the Israelites in the wilderness.

4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

This verse is the problem verse that we want to look at this morning. If our thinking thus far is correct in this passage, then the spiritual drink would be speaking of the water that the Israelites enjoyed while in the wilderness.

God indeed, supplied every need that they had while they were in the wilderness. The question arises then in the last section of verse four, what Paul is saying when he states, "for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." The spiritual rock must refer to the rock which gave forth with water in the wilderness. Paul states that this rock was Christ and that it moved with them through the wilderness.

We see a couple of items that need to be answered. a. What is meant by Christ being the Rock?  
b. What is meant by the rock followed them?

We can do one of two things at this point. a. Assume there is a problem and try to figure out what Paul meant by these very cryptic statements, OR b. Assume that Paul was still speaking in plain language and that he was stating that this rock that gave forth with water was actually Jesus Christ and that Christ followed the people through their travels so that they would have water.

The final option seems to be the most logical, yet some expositors try to find some deep meaning to these simple plain statements of fact.

Before we go on we need to understand a couple of items that are recorded in the Old Testament concerning this rock that Paul was speaking of.

When in the wilderness the Israelites had need of water. The first time Moses was told to strike the rock, which he did and all was okay (Ex 17:6ff) The second time Moses was told to speak to the rock, but he struck it and God said you won't enter land. (Nu 20:8ff)

Now, lets realize that some people question whether I Cor. 10:4 is speaking in a literal sense when it states that, "the rock was Christ." In speaking of this phrase Barnes states, "This cannot be intended to be understood literally, for it was not literally true." (Barnes P 182)

Think about that one for a moment! This is poor theology. This is poor thinking as well. He is setting aside logic in his statement. He offers no attempt to prove that it isn't literally true. I could take any phrase of Scripture, for example "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and then state, "This cannot be intended to be understood literally, for it was not literally true." If I did such a thing I would be as foolish as Mr. Barnes was on this point.

The author of the Living Bible seems to agree with this type of poor thinking. I Cor. 10:4 "He was there with them as a mighty Rock of spiritual refreshment." Why would they seek to make this into a spiritual refreshment, when the context is talking of real things? It seems that they don't care for making Christ into natural materials, such as rock and water.

However - Consider the following.

1. Christ came as a human being in the N.T. - natural material.
2. Christ appeared in the O.T. as both a pillar of fire and as a pillar of smoke--natural materials-- (Ex. 13:21 cf. 14:19 shows the smoke and fire to be Angel of Lord or Christ.)
3. Many believe the burning bush and the other appearances of God to Moses were also the angel of the Lord, or Christ.
4. Lenski and others boldly hold to a strict literal interpretation concerning "the rock was Christ."
5. Note the text "all ate the same spiritual food;" "all drank the same spiritual drink," "from a spiritual rock which followed them;" Based on this let us analyze. What spiritual food - what spiritual water. From the context the most practical answer is the food and water supplied by God in the wilderness. Was it something to feed their hungry and thirsty souls? NO It was literal food and water - supplied from God.

Paul is saying the source was spiritual. Now--the phrase "the rock was Christ" changes nothing. Because this phrase is in the verse, some feel obligated to spiritualize the text and say "No, Christ wasn't really a rock."

If you read the context of the passage, you will find that there is no reason to spiritualize anything. Paul is just calling the readers attention to those people in the wilderness and encourages the reader not to fall into the problems that the Israelites had fallen into.

Conclusions:

There is no reason to believe Paul's statement is anything short of being a literal pronouncement of what he believed to be the facts.

A few thoughts from Lenski's work on I Corinthians may help solidify this conclusion in our minds. Jewish tradition states "the rock which Moses struck rolled along on the journey of the Israelites...." p392 "Yes, Paul says, a modicum [small amount] of the legend is true: a rock did accompany Israel throughout the desert wandering, a rock out of which they kept drinking all of the time." P393 Lenski says this was not just a rock, but a "mass of rock". "This supernatural rock that never allowed Israel to perish of thirst in the desert - as any other similar expedition would quickly have perished - was Christ, the Son of God," p 393 "The people of the old and the people of the new covenants are one people, they are all under Christ. For this reason he gave them similar blessings: first a type of baptism, then the sacrament of baptism; first a type of spiritual eating and drinking [spiritual in source], then the sacrament of divine food and drink in the Lord's Supper." P 394 (This shows the type/antitype for Baptism and the Lord's table.)

"followed" in I Cor 10:4 is past, continuing action. The side note in one of my Bibles suggests "Or, went with them."

Now: What did Paul base such a bold statement on? "the rock was Christ" The rock which Moses struck was Jesus Christ before His incarnation. What could Paul possibly base such a statement on?

Let us see:

1. Paul knew the Jewish tradition, so would have relied on that for information unless the Lord had shown Him something different, either in the wilderness or at the time of writing. If this is the case the Holy Spirit would not have allowed him to include things from tradition that were in error without giving some indication.

2. Paul knew the Old Testament quite well from his days as a Pharisee and later studies. Let's consider some facts that were at Paul's fingertips and mind.

a. Rock was a term used interchangeably with God and/or deities of the pagans.

Let us check a few references. At the close of Moses' life God reminded him of his wrong in striking the rock. Deut. 32:51 KJ "Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of MeribahKadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel." NASB "because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel." ASV "because ye trespassed against me in the midst of the children of Israel...."

Moses was told to strike the rock the first time Ex. 17:1-9. Note: Moses' sins at the rock.

Nu 20:12: unbelief, "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

Nu 27:14: rebellion, "For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin."

Deut. 32:51: trespass, "Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel."

Ps. 106:33: rash words, "Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his

lips."

The indication is that there is something more than just one disobedience or striking a rock rather than speaking to it.

Note: "you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel." (Deut 32:51) More is also indicated in Numbers 20:12, "because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Nu 20:12)

Aaron died before the people were near to entering the land and Moses later.

Num 20:24 states that Aaron was rebelling against God's command. "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah."

The account of the incident mentions nothing of a command to Aaron, but he was in on things somehow. The text seems to take a slant of the two men doing something very wrong against the holiness of God.

Let's relate this to our phrase in I Corinthians. If I Cor. 10:4 be taken literally, we have Moses striking the Messiah. He was striking God Almighty. This was unacceptable to God!

It is very interesting to note that the term rock begins to appear in Scripture at this point in time when Moses was dealing with the rock.

In future years it became a title almost synonymous with God. Deut 32:3,4 "Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." I Sam 2:2 "There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God." (cf. Isa 44:8; Hab. 1:12; II Sam 22:2,8; 22:32; 22:47 and others.)

Note of interest: The Hebrew "Tzur" (rock) is the basis of Tzar, one of the titles of Russian rulers. The Tzar was considered God personified. This word Tzur, or rock as it is translated, is closely identified with deity from Moses' day. (The term "czar" at times is said to have come from Caesar and that it was originally was spelled Tsesar. This is not only the basis of Czar but also of the German emperors the Kaisers. This seems to be later than the Hebrew word however.)

Indeed, Moses applies the term generally to the pagan gods around them as well. Deut 32:31 "For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." cf. Deut 32:37 also. It would seem that Moses and the Israelites may have recognized the significance of this rock in their midst.

b. O.T. writers other than Moses related the term rock to God.

1.) The Psalmist:

Ps 18:2, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust...." Ps 18:46, "The Lord liveth; and blessed by my rock...." Ps 28:1, "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock...." Ps 42:9; Ps 61:2; Ps 62:2; Ps 62:6; Ps 71:35; Ps 89:26; Ps 94:22 ; and many others.

2.) Isaiah the prophet calls God a rock several times. a.) Isa 8:13,14 God is to become a rock of stumbling. (Relate this to Rom. 9:33; I Pet 2:8 and Ps 118:22) b.) Isa 17:10 The Jews had forgotten their rock of refuge (God). "Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:" c.) Isa 26:4, "For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock." We sing Rock of ages don't we? This is the reference for it. d.) Isa 28:16,17 "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. "Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place."

It makes me wonder how the Jews missed some of the things the Lord declared to them. This reminds even me, a gentile, of the wise man/foolish man accounts in the Gospels.

3.) Daniel saw a rock in his vision as bringing the nations of the world to an end and this was speaking of Christ. Dan 2:34

4.) Zechariah mentions the head of the corner (or cornerstone). Zech. 4:7

It is obvious that the O.T. Jews viewed God as a rock.

God had the attributes of a rock to them. They knew that the rock in the wilderness that watered them was more than so much granite or limestone.

c. Christ may have revealed this fact to Paul personally.

As you settle in to accept this phrase "the rock was Christ" as a literal statement of fact you might want to reconsider some tried and true texts in light of this information.

For example:

Does this statement affect what Paul said in Eph. 2:20 about Christ being the cornerstone of a "holy temple in the Lord."

Does this statement add meaning to Peter's thoughts in I Pet. 2:1-10 where Peter quotes Isaiah's text on the stone of stumbling for the Jews.

Does this statement add meaning to Matthew's thoughts in 21:42-44 concerning the rejected stone.

Does this statement affect the interpretation of Matt 16:18 where it says, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church;" (Some believe that Christ pointed to Himself when He said, "upon this Rock:")

Does this phrase add new meaning to that old childhood bible story of the wise man and the foolish man? (Matt. 7:24ff and Luke 6:48ff) Christ was speaking of "receiving" His message. Was He speaking of the wise man accepting Him?

Does this phrase add new meaning to John 4:13 which states that Christ is the living water?

Or John 6:35 which states, "Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Does this phrase help you picture what the devout Jew of Paul's day thought when he heard Christ mentioned as rock - cornerstone etc. they must have been reminded of the O.T. Jews concept of God the Rock.

Some today have tried to make Christ into a 90 lb. weakling.

We need to reconsider who He really is.

He is the Rock of the O.T. He is the Angel of the Lord

He is the anointed He is the Prince

He is a prophet He is a refuge

He is a rod He is a ruler

He is a Savior He is a Sceptre

He is the creator He is the end of the Law

He is the Power of God He is the temple cleanser

He is God almighty He is Holy

He is King He is a lion

He is a Fortress He is a judge

He is the Ancient of Days. He is the foundation

He is the God of Abraham He is the God of Isaac

He is the God of Jacob He is the God of the whole earth

He is the Lord!

Not only is He all of the above, He is that little baby in the manger that we like to think of on a yearly basis.

At the Christmas season we relegate the God of the universe to the manger and consider His Birthday. I trust that as you consider the Christmas season, that you will remember that wrapped up in that little bit of cloth was the God that is all of the things that we have just mentioned.

If our Lord is a 90 lb. weakling then our attitude will be of weakness and powerlessness and boldness in our ministries.

If, on the other hand, we realize He is the God of creation, we will have confidence and boldness to proclaim Him the redeemer that He is with great power.

We will have confidence and boldness to proclaim Him the Rock and refuge that He is.

Yes, He was the Servant

Yes, He was the Lamb

Yes, He was the Nazarene

Yes, He was the Child

Yes, He was the Teacher

Yes, He was the suffering One

Yes, He was the one that was humiliated before the cross

Yes, He was Jesus

BUT that was only thirty-three years out of eternity.

Why should we concentrate and focus upon the quiet Jesus when we have the Christ of all eternity to consider.

Let us find a balance between "Jesus", and "Christ", and "Lord", and not overindulge in one area or the other!

Yes, we must understand the teachings of Jesus.

Yes, we must understand the Christ of eternity.

And yes, we must make Him the Lord of our lives!

**ALL THREE ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT!**

Conclusion:

It seems from our texts that when the Israelites had water needs they were between the Rock and a hard place. They relied on God for His provision.

We as believers have the same choice. When we get into hard times we have the choice of tuffing it out by ourselves or turning to stand on the Rock - Jesus Christ. You say, "Oh my, that is a beautiful thought. It sounds so nice."

This week you go out and become totally frustrated with your job and you remember the sermon. "Stand on the Rock - Jesus Christ!" Yes, That's what I'll do "I'll STAND ON CHRIST."  
Uh....Ohhhh How do I do that?

By knowing what he has taught us, and using it to control ourselves and our situations.

For example:

1. When you are faced with tremendous pressure consider Christ and his life here on earth. Jesus was under pressures that few of us ever know and yet He functioned quite well without psychosomatic fits of fatigue. He had the answer. He made it a point to find a time to be alone with God. Being alone with God won't relieve the pressure, but it will relieve the tension caused by it.

2. When you are questioning whether to serve God in a particular manner consider Christ's example of being about His Father's business even as a young boy. (Luke 2:49) He never lost sight of serving God, His Father, first. With this goal in mind it is easy to make the decision of serving Him.

3. Don't be misled into believing everything is easy to cope with. when you're between a rock and a hard place the pressure is on - you feel like you're going to crack - you feel like "if one more thing comes along I'll shatter into a million pieces!" If you are tuffing it out you may. BUT, remember - when you are between the Rock and a hard place you won't shatter, you will be held up by Christ your sustainer. We, as the psalmist, can say with equal boldness "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies." (Ps 18:1-3)

Remember! The Lord is our rock!

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m02050

TITLE: TURNING A PROFIT

Let us consider something logically.

IF we believe that man cannot go to heaven without the Gospel of Jesus Christ

AND

IF we believe that Jesus Christ wants us to tell every man woman and child on earth that they can go to heaven

THEN

WHY do we charge \$44.95 for the Bibles, books and studies that tell the reader of this glorious gift of salvation?

If we really believe that God wants the world saved, and we really believe that we have the salvation message, why would we want to profit from it?

If we really believe the information that God has led authors and artists to write and produce, can change peoples' lives, why would we want to allow only those that can afford to buy it to have it?

If God is interested in the entire world, why are we not giving so that we can produce INEXPENSIVE BIBLES - at cost - for shipment to foreign countries?

It constantly amazes me to see the commercials for the books, tapes, videos and software that promise to change your life - THAT ARE ALL SUPPOSEDLY BASED ON GOD'S PRINCIPLES FROM HIS WORD - on sale for various prices aimed at turning a profit for the

publisher and author.

Then there are the many BIBLE colleges that are training God's chosen for the ministry to the world - at several thousand dollars a year. It soon will be the church's practice to send prospective ministers/missionaries out on deputation to finance their schooling, then after they have finished they can go out again to raise support to go tell the world of the Lord.

Let's see, that is five years for school deputation, four years for school, and then five years deputation for the ministry - that is only fourteen years to prepare for the ministry. And we have church leaders wondering about the cost effectiveness of missions today - wait till tomorrow!

If today's practices are really true to the practices of Godly people, Jesus is the biggest failure that ever walked the earth. He gave away all that teaching, he healed all those people and never charged a mite for any of it. What a failure! He didn't even copyright any of that stuff so the disciples could have made tapes and records to sell to build a strong financial base so they could go out to the world with the Gospel.

He didn't even teach the disciples good stewardship by charging them for their three-year education - not even room and board!

You say this sounds like sour grapes? You could be right! But then I believe that the Gospel should be free to all. I believe that the life changing power of the Word should be made available to all the world, not just to those that can afford to buy it.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Judas was the only follower that turned a profit on the Lord and we all know how history views him.

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## BIBLE INSTITUTE

Webster's second definition of institute reads as follows: ":something that is instituted: as a (1): an elementary principle recognized as authoritative (2) pl: a collection of such principles and precepts; esp : a legal compendium by an organization for the promotion of a cause: ASSOCIATION <a research ...> <an...for the blind> c: an educational institution and esp. one devoted to technical fields d: a usu. brief intensive course of instruction on selected topics relating to a particular field...."

It is assumed in our context of the Bible Institute we would opt for the final "c" and "d" definitions, realizing that we desire to have that emphasis upon the Bible rather than any other technical field.

Let us try and define what a Bible Institute is. We will look at the history of the movement

as well as the practical current application of that concept.

There are several groups in the period of the reformation that required that their ministers memorize the entire New Testament as "PART" of their training for the ministry. We might assume from this that the hardness of the course was not an easy road to walk.

Most of the sources checked list A.B. Simpson's Bible Inst. that was founded in 1882 in New York City and later moved to Nyack and D.L. Moody's Moody Bible Inst. established in 1886, as the first "Bible Institutes." There were similar institutions by other names much further back in history.

It should be noted that Mr. Moody was involved in the YMCA and its training program.

The Halle founded by Frederick III, in Halle, Germany was the prime mover in the pietist movement and the Moravian group. The pietists introduced the Bible institute to England and some believe this was the forerunner of our present schools.

"One cannot resist emphasizing the link between the Moravian church, with its pietistic tendencies, and the contemporary Bible college movement. The mission emphasis and necessity of trained workers, which so occupied the thinking of the Pietests, led to the founding of schools not at all unlike the early American Bible institute." (P 309; "CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: ITS HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY" by Gangel and Benson)

Peter P. Person in his "AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION" page 209 mentions of the early circuit riding preachers of the west,

"Their 'professional' training consisted of a short course in Bible study. The training institutions that prepared these workers were in reality Bible institutes. The teachers were, in many instances, refined and cultured men having earned advanced degrees. Some of them were Greek, Hebrew, or Latin scholars. The training they dispensed was not a protest against the schooling they themselves had been given, but rather a temporary solution to a pressing problem."

Mr. Person goes on to make a very interesting statement of the growth of the Christian educational system.

"Gradually, strictly academic courses were added to the curriculum. The prerequisite of a high-school education for entering the seminary became a general practice. Gradually the prerequisite was expanded to two years of college, and finally the theological seminaries became graduate schools."

The requirement for a high school education grew out of the fact that most applicants had

the same and it seemed wise to take this step of change.

Several books mentioned Harvard, William and Mary and Yale as schools set for the same purpose as Moody and Nyack. (Gangel & Benson for one. P 310)

It seems that both Simpson and Moody viewed the need as, trained laymen to bridge the gap between the common man and the clergy.

"We want our best scholarship and talent in the mission field, but we want all who can go; and with a destitution so imperative, the Church of God should be willing to welcome the humblest 'prentice hand,' and dispense with full technical preparation wherever she finds other qualifications for humble usefulness." (This was Simpson just prior to the founding of his school. P 380 of "AN INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION" by Hakes)

"I believe we have got to have 'gap men,' men who are trained to fill the gap between the common people and the ministers." (Moody just before the founding of his school. "AN INTRODUCTION TO EVAN. CHRIS. ED." Hakes)

Hakes continues to describe the schools that were set up.

"The first schools, therefore, were concerned primarily with equipping dedicated young people with the essential knowledge of God's Word and the practical skills necessary to become effective Christian witnesses in home visitation, city mission work, Sunday school teaching, and foreign missionary service. The great majority of students in the early days were admitted without high school preparation. Many were mature persons in their twenties and thirties. But in spite of their non conventional academic standards, these schools met a need and were successful in training many hundreds of servants of Christ." (Pp 380-381)

Hake goes on to describe the desire to raise the standards of the Bible institute-college to keep up with changes in the educational needs of the country. The high school graduate was becoming more prominent and the need to upgrade the curriculum to accommodate them was part of the change. Many Bible institute-colleges became liberal arts colleges while the rest maintained their "Distinctive elements in Bible college education..." and opted to stay as Bible institute-colleges.

The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges became the "means by which Bible institutes and Bible colleges might achieve academic standing while preserving their central thrust of preparing young people for Christian service through a Bible-centered program of education." (P 381; "AN INTRO. TO EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION)

The Bible institute played a large role in the workings of early fundamentalism.

"In 1910 'Fundamentalism' started as a protest against the rising tide of 'Modernism.' Fostered by the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California, it advocated the following five test-points of true Christianity...." (P 534-535 of "A HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH" by Lars P. Qualben)

The fundamentalists were not uneducated people, but men that were very able to contend for their faith.

"The evangelicals also met liberalism with a strong literary apologetic. In 1909 Lyman and Milton Stewart, California oil millionaires, gave \$300,000 to publish a set of twelve paper-bound books called "THE FUNDAMENTALS". About three million copies were circulated widely among ministers and students. These scholarly essays by recognized evangelical scholars were edited by A. C. Dixon, with the help of R.A. Torrey. J. Gresham Machen wrote many popular books, such as "Christianity and Liberalism (1923), AND SCHOLARLY WORKS, SUCH AS HIS "THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST (1930). (From "CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE CENTURIES" by Earle E. Cairns; p 481)

George W. Dollar in his "A HISTORY OF FUNDAMENTALISM IN AMERICA" mentions that the Bible schools of early Fundamentalism did not emphasize the liberal arts and that indeed, they could not if they were to remain with a "Bible-centered curriculum." He indicates that the Bible schools such as Moody Bible institute and others were of collegiate level. In speaking of some of the smaller schools he mentions, "These were hardly of collegiate standing but did not claim to be so." (Pp 70-71)

So! To what conclusions can we arrive at from what we have seen?

Let us begin by listing some things that a Bible Institute is not.

1. It is not a liberal arts college or university. It might be of interest to those really interested in these terms to study their history also.
2. It is not controlled by government or outside sources. It is controlled by its board of directors.
3. It is not interested in an emphasis other than the Bible and Bible related subjects.

From the Webster's definition we might assume that there is a specialized emphasis on the Bible as opposed to the liberal arts. The above statement would be backed by the comments from Church history books as well.

It is indicated by Mr. Dollar that the Bible school movement was not an attempt to move away from collegiate levels of training - only to move away from the liberal arts, liberal

doctrinal positions, and to move toward the Bible orientation of training.

It might do well to mention that Mr. Dollar saw in his research an attempt to move to a practical aspect of training as well. There is nothing to indicate in what he said that there was an emphasis of the practical over the academic.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

1. Academics are not of themselves wrong nor are they to be absent from the Bible Institute.

2. Practical knowledge is not of itself wrong nor is it to be absent from the Bible Institute. The question would naturally arise as to how you build the practical into the student while in the classroom and not in the ministry. Practical knowledge is limited to being taught in an academic way within the classroom in the Bible Institute.

By way of practical use of the Scriptures and practical application of the Scriptures to the life, yes it is a vital part of the Bible School movement.

3. There is strong indication that the level of training, while being in the area of Bible and Practical use of that Bible, is to be of collegiate level. That is why many of the Bible school movement have offered academic degrees.

4. A final thought from Mr. Hake will end this study.

"The population of the world, which should be viewed from the perspective of Calvary, is four times larger that when William Carey began the modern missionary movement. In another twenty-five years living persons for whom Christ died will number close to four billion and by the end of the century, seven billion. [Mr. Hake wrote his book in 1964.] The task to which Bible schools are committed and to which they have contributed largely is so stupendous that they cannot afford to strive for less than the best in quality of preparation." (Pp 389-390)

#### APPENDIX ONE

Hake mentions the definition of a Bible College from the Association of Bible Colleges.

"Bible college education is education of college level whose distinctive function is to prepare students for Christian ministries or church vocations through a program of Biblical, general, and professional studies. Included in the concept of Christian ministries are such church vocations as pastor, missionary, Christian service director, minister of music, and other specialized forms of Christian service by both lay and 'professional' workers."

He also lists a policy statement from the same association concerning the Christian liberal arts college.

"1. SIMILARITIES. Both the Christian liberal arts college and the Bible college should be committed to a Biblical philosophy of education. In both, Christ should be the center of integration. Both are concerned with the personal development of students. Both seek to broaden and deepen the educational foundation of incoming students by general education.

"2. DISTINCTIVE OBJECTIVES. From this point the Bible college and the Christian liberal arts college become distinctive in their objectives. The liberal arts college goes on from a foundation of general education in the humanities and sciences to prepare students by liberal arts majors for many professions and vocations. The liberal arts therefore distinguish the chief subject matter of the liberal arts curriculum.

"Bible colleges, on the other hand, are specialized. Their distinctive function is to prepare students for Christian ministries and church vocations. This they do through a program of Biblical, general and professional education. The bible major therefore is at the heart of the Bible college curriculum. However, a Bible college may offer liberal arts majors provided these are in addition to and do not displace the required Bible major or alter the objectives of Bible college education.

"3. CENTRAL PURPOSE. The central purpose which characterizes Bible institutes and Bible colleges is to prepare students for Christian service at home and abroad either as full-time or lay workers. The first bible schools in America were established for this purpose." (pp 383-384 Hake)

He goes on to make a very good statement concerning the Bible college and the Bible institute.

"One other distinction needs to be made - the difference between the Bible institute and the Bible college. Essentially, the two types belong to the same family of educational institutions, and the distinction in types has come to be more or less superfluous, as is the case with other types of college-level institutions of specialized education. Both seek the same goals and both are committed to a Biblical philosophy of education. Where there is a difference it is usually one of length of program. The Bible institute is generally a three-year, non-degree-conferring institution, while the Bible college offers four- and five-year programs leading to degrees. The longer period permits the Bible college to include one more year of general education that can be incorporated in a three-year program. The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges recognizes that both types of schools can operate according to college-level standards, and so membership is open to both."

## APPENDIX TWO

So, to what definition have we come for a Bible institute?

May the following be suggested?

SINCE:

1. a Bible institute is ministering primarily to high school graduates,
2. a Bible institute is maintaining a strong Bible emphasis,
3. a Bible institute is training young men and women for ministries in full or part time lay ministries, and
4. a Bible institute is sharing a strong world-wide missions emphasis,

THEN:

1. a Bible institute is a college level training program,
2. a Bible institute is teaching primarily Bible centered and Bible related courses,
3. a Bible institute is transforming students into workers able to minister full or part time in church related ministries, and
4. a Bible institute is challenging and training its students toward fulfilment of their part in the great commission, both here and abroad.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THIS DEFINITION:

1. We should teach academically on the college level.
2. We should endeavor to teach practical experience through our Christian Service department as well as internship programs when available.
3. We are to teach the practical value and application of the Word of God in all areas of Christian living. This includes all class work. Any way to make the Word practical to life should be used.
4. All classroom work should be related to the world's need for Christ and how the learning relates to filling that need.
5. We should train the student to be able to communicate the worlds need of Christ to all people no matter what their educational, cultural or economic level.

## APPENDIX THREE

In light of the current criticism of education and educational institutions of all levels and breeds it may be well to consider how we should relate to the Christian education of our day.

1. Education is not wrong, nor is it sinful. It is the misuse of education and knowledge that is wrong. It is the lustful seeking after knowledge that is wrong.

2. God leads different men and women to prepare for their life's work in different and varied ways. One may not need Bible education at all, for he may have received his training from God Himself through years in the Word and through godly men that have taught them in informal settings. Others due to their environment in younger years may need extensive education to be established in their beliefs and to be able to do the work that God has called them to.

Realizing that God leads different people in different ways should bring us to the realization that we are all prepared by God for the purpose for which God has planned for us.

Realizing this should cause the believer to reexamine his condemnation and critical attitude toward those that have higher education.

3. The seeking of man's education and degrees for the purpose of adding to one's "pride of life" is very definitely not appropriate. It might be well to add that it is believed by this writer that very few men with higher education sought that education for these purpose's. It might also be added that most of this writer's acquaintances have accepted higher education at the definite leading and provision of God.

4. Since wisdom is a by-product of properly used knowledge, and since wisdom is held highly in the Proverbs, then we as believers should seek to properly use that knowledge which God has given us to wise ends.

5. The other problem that arises out of this study is that some are proud of not having a higher education. Higher education is for the betterment of man, be it Christian or secular. Pride of life is wrong according to I John, whether it be lack of something or excess of something.

A quote may help us understand.

"Being proud of ignorance is ignorance.

"Being proud of education is ignorance.

"Being joyful of God given knowledge is wisdom." (sld 9-12-89)

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A study of Epaphrus: Col 1:3-8; 4:12,13; Philemon 23; Acts 20:28.

TITLE: Qualification may not mean quality - or - A lamb in lambs clothing is a lamb. A wolf in lambs clothing is a wolf. A shepherd in shepherds clothing is a shepherd, unless he's a fink.

Let's consider church leadership for a moment or two. This applies well to church leaders - pastors or missionaries that you are considering.

Please take a moment and read: I Pet. 5:1-5; Acts 20:28

Let's say that you want to buy a car. Let's say that you have enough money to buy any car that you want. Let's say that you are setting out to buy that car of your dreams. Let's say you are standing before the car salesman and you are about to tell him just what you want him to order. Let's do that for a moment and let ourselves be worldly for a moment.

Yes, I'm telling you to be worldly for a moment. ONLY A MOMENT!!!!

What kind of car is it? What color is it? The salesman has a list of all the possible options -- what are you going have him put on the car? What radio will you have? On one of the news magazines they showed cars with stereos in them that cost more than the car. What engine will you get? What color will you order?

Now that the dreaming is over let's think for a moment. If you had the money. If you had the desire. If you were committed to having this car would you accept delivery of a Maroon Chevette? NO! NO! NO!

If you were to set down a list of qualifications and desires for your church leadership would you settle for something less than you ordered?

You say no, but I believe that many churches today are accepting a standard that is much lower than they desire!! Or else their desires are far from Biblical.

The Word gives a great number of QUALIFICATIONS for church leadership and we all hear of these from time to time taught from Timothy and Titus, however the word also sets forth some Godly men as examples of some of the QUALITIES that these men should have.

I would like to explore some of these QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP with you. I'd like to look for a few moments at EPAPHRUS. NO IT ISN'T A SKIN RASH!!!

Epaphrus was a man of God that the Holy Spirit moved Paul to include in the Biblical record

only so very briefly. He is mentioned only three times - only five verses deal with Epaphrus yet we are able to see within these few verses a real man of God.

## INDEED, WE WILL SEE A NUMBER OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Please turn to the book of Colossians.

This book was written by Paul during a stay in Rome under Roman guard.

It was written about the same time as Phileman, Eph., and Philippians.

Read Col 1:1-8.

## QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

### 1. Soulwinner: (vs 5)

The indications are that he had given these people the Gospel. He may have started the Church. Some think that he may have heard Paul when Paul was at Ephesus in Acts 19:10.

This does not mean that he MUST be at every visitation get together, it does not mean that he is the only soul winner in the church, it does not mean that he is to win souls from the pulpit. All of these are good things in and of themselves, but are not required.

I have known men that were excellent pastors and won souls only now and then, and I have known men that were excellent soul winners that would not have made good pastors. God fits the man for the job to which He calls him.

### 2. Teacher or discipler: (vs 7)

Discipler: (vs 5-7) (They knew Gospel, love, hope of heaven.)

We see here a pair of qualities which need to be used as a path to maturity for new believers.

Many of the evangelistic organizations today suffer in this area. They lead the person to Christ but never bother to teach them anything of the Christian life nor do they bother to lead or direct them to a sound church.

Recently a large campaign was held in Ireland. Instead of setting up a New Testament Church they turned the converts back to their Catholic or liberal denominational churches.

Indeed, in our churches today there is a real need in this area as well. I must wonder how differently my life might have been had I been disciplined in any manner. The man that led me to

the Lord gave me absolutely no information for my new life in Christ. He did not prepare me for anything. I went into the Navy for four years of typical sailor living, because I had no idea what the Christians life was to be like. I felt I should read the Bible, but started in the genealogies and that did not last long.

### 3. Faithful Minister: (vs 7)

One who placed the body of believers as important - always there to help - to minister to needs - not far off or unapproachable. Servant: (vs 7)

### 4. Servant: (vs 7) This man was a servant of Christ.

(From Exposition of Colossians and Philemon commentary by William Hendriksen; Grand Rapids; Baker Book House; 1964; p191) "A servant of Jesus Christ is one who has been bought with a price and is therefore owned by his Master, on whom he is completely dependent, to whom he owes undivided allegiance and to whom he ministers with gladness of heart, in newness of spirit, and in the enjoyment of perfect freedom, receiving from him a glorious reward."

This man was a servant of Christ "ON OUR BEHALF"

Some translations read "your" but the concept is the same. He served Christ to THEIR benefit. He wasn't in it for what he could get or be.

We met a man in Oregon that was planting a church. He was making his living pumping gas. He worked at the gas station and worked with the church for eight years. The church was his life and all that he did was to further the church. He was in it so that he could benefit those he ministered to. In this case Epaphrus was ministering to Paul in prison so he was benefiting Paul.

We have four qualities so far.

You might ask, "what is the difference between qualifications and qualities?"

Qualifications = "The act of qualifying, or the state of being qualified." (Funk and Wagnells)

Quality = "that which makes something such as it is: a distinguishing element or characteristic." (Funk and Wagnells)

We had a maroon Chevette. It had the qualifications to be a car but its quality was questionable. It had four wheels, a motor, a body, seats etc. but the dealer had it more in the first 90 days than we did. There is, you see a difference.

Let me illustrate the distinction that I am making, in another way. While in the service, I was the

only experienced tech on the ship. Indeed the only tech. We received one day fourteen men just out of electronics school. Our ship was only allowed five or six men so I decided that I would have it made with this many men under me. Not so!! These men were qualified as techs -- they had passed all the tests at school indeed some of them were very high in their classes. However, the quality of workmanship was very poor --- in fact within a month the ship was a total mess electronically. We went into the yards for a few weeks and it took me every spare moment to get all of the problems cleared up. One fellow had spliced cables together for me but the unit did not work so I looked at it and found that he hadn't soldered the wires together.

QUALIFIED? YES - QUALITY? NO, NOT FOR MANY MONTHS!!!

5. Boastful of his church: (vs 8 "also declared unto us your love in the Spirit")

He had been speaking to Paul of his church and its GOOD POINTS!

We were in a small church in Bend, OR a few years ago that we have spoken of to many of our friends. It was a church that had an over abundance of talented, excited, dedicated people. I could mention the fact that they met in an upstairs, that it was too small, or the fact that they didn't have a piano but I didn't. The positive was what was on Epaphrus mind. Indeed if you read the rest of the book you will find that the church had problems which Paul addressed. He was excited about his church. He was telling others of his church.

Our church people today need to get hold of that one!! Dwell on the positive. Do you tell others of your church? Are you making declarations about the great people here? Or do you dwell on the problems?

Let's turn now for a moment to Col. 4:12-13 - Read it.

6. Local boy: ("one of your number") Why haven't we taken this idea to heart in our churches today? When we need someone to work with the youth we so often look outside our own assembly. Our church in Lexington, NE took one of their own on as their youth man. Why not? They are used to the pastor, they fit right into the fellowship, and the kids know them already. They are already accepted in the community. You know their life. Their doctrine - their faults!

The New Testament church operated for the most part on people from their own group. All church leaders came from within not from without.

Not only for youth workers but why not for pastors or elders as your church government dictates? Train the men of your church so that when the pastor moves on you have a homegrown replacement on line. Send him to college if you need to. (Some might argue that he might leave (There was a small town in NE years ago that had a student that wanted to become a missionary Doctor. The church trained him for medical missions and he returned to town and set up a practice.) - so what you've trained a man to serve God. Train another!)

You don't need to totally finance him but help as you can.

One church in Oregon that we've been to has laymen that are so trained by their pastor that they can, and do go out to fill the pulpit of churches without pastors. Their pastor is committed to training his people to do the work of the Lord as Eph 4 tells us to do!

7. Committed to Christ: (Bondslave - "servant of Christ" kj) He had placed himself at his Lords disposal for his Lords use.

Stephen in Acts 6:24 was a deacon. He soon was preaching and died at the hands of the Jews in chapter seven. He was sold out to serve Christ.

Paul seems quite impressed with this man.

Phil 23 "Epaphrus my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus"

Col 1:7 "minister of Christ"

"dear fellow servant"

Col 4:12 "Servant of Christ"

I fear that commitment is a passing thing in our society and in our churches.

I have in recent months heard of several men turning down churches because of financial deficiencies. Finances should be involved in deciding if God is calling you to a church but it should not be the deciding factor.

Someone in chapel where I taught mentioned a man that was leaving his church because he wasn't making enough. His salary was \$48,000 a year.

8. Thoughtful: He knew that Paul was writing to them so he ask him to greet them for him. This shows a certain amount of feeling toward the people. Epaphrus must have liked the people and felt that he wanted to greet them. God is interested in men that are interested in their people - TRULY INTERESTED!!

9. Prayerful: Paul didn't need to mention this in his letter but he was impressed enough with Epaphrus prayers to encourage the people on with the fact that someone was praying for them. One of the encouragements we've had over the years is knowing that so many are praying for us!

We used to send out over 200 letters to enlist the prayers of the saints when we were missionaries - we needed it!

Paul, to the best of my knowledge mentions no one else as a prayer. He was impressed! By the way can you imagine going to prayer in a prayer meeting with this man and Paul present?

His prayer:

CONSISTENT: "always" - specific choice to do it on a regular basis. Luke 18:1 "Men ought always to pray and not to faint"!!

SPECIFIC: "for you" (from Bib Sac; p60; Jan-Mar 1979) I ran across something in a Theological Journal awhile back. "A story is told about an old pastor who every Saturday afternoon could be seen leaving his study and entering the church building by the back door, and about sundown he would be seen going home. Someone's curiosity was aroused enough to follow one day and watch through a window. It was in the days when the family pew was an institution of the church. The old pastor was seen to kneel at each pew and pray for every member of the family that was to occupy it on the Lord's day. WHAT A PRAYER LIST! He called each member by name as he poured out his heart to God for his flock. His was a ministry of power and his people reflected the grace of God on them. Blessed is that church which has such a praying Shepherd."

We need people committed to pray for the people that they minister to!

I ran across a quote from Charles Haddon Spurgeon that relates well at this point. "The minister who does not earnestly pray over his work must surely be a vain and conceited man. he acts as if he thought himself sufficient of himself and therefore need not appeal to God. Yet what a baseless pride to conceive that our preaching can ever be in itself so powerful that it can turn men from their sins and bring them to God without the working of the Holy Ghost."

I was at a church near Portland, OR years ago where the pastor was preaching on commitment and in his invitation he mentioned that he had prayed for each one in his congregation before the service. That is the type of men we need in our pulpits today!!

I had spoken in a small town church in Colorado and the pastor insisted on filling my gas tank. He filled the tank and we talked for awhile at the station. We said goodbye and he started walking toward his house. I told him I'd take him home. He said, "No, I'd rather walk." I insisted - he said, "No I'd rather walk - I know the people along the way home and I like to pray for them as I walk by their house. Some of them are lost and I want to pray for them."

SINCERE: "striving" This word comes from the athletic arena - used of the athletes intense effort in reaching for the prize. Verbal form of "agony" used of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44) just before his arrest.

I watched the iron man triathlon a few years ago and they showed a woman that was near the finish line. She couldn't control her legs and couldn't walk so she got down on her hands and knees and crawled across the finish line - that is agony!

Daniel 9 probably is a prayer which involved striving - read it some time.

This term strive is the term we gain our English word "agonize" from. It was more than just a five minute quiet time. He was agonizing over these people!

PURPOSEFUL: "that ye may stand" He was asking for Gods help in this for them.

It has been said, that if the church is ever going to be victorious it will have to learn to advance on it's knees. REPEAT PRAYER IS NEEDED TODAY TO SAY THE LEAST!

10. Concern: Note should be taken of Epaphrus great concern for his people. He was very concerned with their need of maturing.

11. Sincere: Paul knew that this man was on the level -- he wasn't just putting on a front to impress the folks.

Some Christians I meet today - church leaders - are so caught up in their airs that they don't listen to the answers you give them to their questions. This is quite evident when you answer the same questions twice in your first conversation.

I recently overheard a conversation between a leader and a not so regular attender. The leader would ask a question and in the middle of the answer the leader would be interrupted and then when he returned to listening to the man he would ask another question. The man had not finished his first answer. This went on for about four cycles and finally the man walked away. The leader was not at all interested in the man - only in pretending to be interested.

We had a missionary over for dinner. He would ask a question and as you paused between sentences of your answer he would ask another question on another topic. A couple of times I went back and finished an answer then answered the next question in the hope of his picking up on what he was doing. He didn't.

Some today feel a lull in the conversation is a mortal sin. Personally quiet is not all that bad at times indeed sometimes it is appropriate.

I recently heard of "Leather Man" in the eastern part of our country (Pennsylvania.) in the past. He was a man that never talked to anyone. He wore a heavy leather outfit and would not take help from anyone. He would eat from time to time when people offered. He had no known past and lived in caves in the wilderness. He never was known to speak yet people both children and adults would walk out to his camp and just sit with him by the hour. SILENCE IS GOLDEN AT TIMES!

In Alaska the one of the Indian tribes enjoy just sitting around in a circle in silence. They enjoy one another without talking.

12. I sense also that there is one more quality in this man. He was missions minded. He was on the forefront of missions. He was working with Paul and seemingly involved in church planting.

I fear many today fail to see past the ends of their own lives when they look at the harvest fields.

Few today are directing and leading their churches toward missions. Many are stunting their church's growth and prosperity by stunting missions.

Missions is to be a vital part of all our lives. If you aren't praying for and supporting missions then you aren't in the mainstream of God's program - you are on the outskirts and many churches there are on the outskirts!

Epaphrus was a man of many qualities!

The book of Philemon (vs 23) tells us that he was a prisoner with Paul in Rome so we can see that he was committed to his Lord all the way.

As I review his qualities the two that stand out most are the qualities of prayer and concern for his people.

He was concerned about the people in his church as well as the people in nearby churches. The other churches mentioned are Laodicia and Hieropolis. These two cities and Colosse formed a triangle. They were only a few miles apart. (about 12) He had probably met these people - maybe had taught them indeed man have started the churches.

In Col 1:7 the term for deacon (minister) is use of Epaphrus. He evidently was a deacon at his church. History and tradition indicates that he went on to become an elder there at Colosse and later was martyred there.

I'm told that his name means "lovely" (from the Open Bible) A shortened form of Epaphroditus meaning "handsome or charming". A fitting name for such a man of God.

**SOUNDS LIKE THE KIND OF GUY THAT YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE AROUND YOUR CHURCH! RIGHT?**

So many church leaders today are qualified yet I wonder how many of them are of this quality. This was a layman and he had these qualities!!

One of the first elder qualifications is "if a man desire the office." Many church leaders are not there because they DESIRE the office.

We do not have prayer warriors in many of our pulpits today.

We do not have concerned men in many of our pastorates today.

When I told my father that I was going to become a minister he said, "Well I guess there's good money in that." At the time I thought yes, in the liberal denominations but not in the fundamental circles.

Today I feel that it is coming into fundamental circles.

I fear that the ministry is becoming an occupation to many young men. Not a bondslave's life of service for his Lord with his Lord's people but a job and career.

Peter gives a proper picture of an elder in I Pet. 5:1-4. Read it sometime.

Epaphrus had many qualities. Indeed these qualities should be aspired to by all believers, but they ought to be resident in all of our church leadership!

In the years to come I trust that you will look for

men of prayer

men of concern

men of service

men of Christ

men that are desirous of being a shepherd.

Recently I saw an interview of a shepherd here in the western U.S. They ask him of his life and he described the small wagon that he lived in month after month and the danger that he faced to protect the sheep. He spoke of the long months of crying over the loneliness before he finally got used to it. They ask him why he was a shepherd. His reply was this, "The sheep needed to be cared for and I chose to be a shepherd."

We need men in our pulpits and our board rooms that have chosen to be shepherds -- men that desire to care for the sheep.

May your future shepherds be so dedicated. May your future shepherds be so concerned.

Christ is pictured as a shepherd in the New Testament. May our shepherds be like our heavenly shepherd!

We must take our application one step further before we close.

If you were to compare YOUR life to that of Epaphras how would YOU compare?

Paul chose the term "SERVANT" for Epaphras:

(From Bib Sac; Jan-Mar 1979; p57) "The term proclaims the servant's unconditional surrender of himself to do his Lord's bidding. Such a one has learned to say,

"Oh, teach my will, my selfish will, To be completely thine.

"Oh, may I yield my all to thee; It is no longer mine.

"Oh, may my will, my stubborn will, Submissive be to Thine;

"The inward man obey with joy The law of love divine.

"No one who has not yet come to the place of full yieldedness of himself to his Lord will ever know the joy of fruitful service and effective intercession such as Epaphras knew. The yielded will lies at the basis of the God-used life."

If Paul were writing about you today could he use the term "servant" of you?

Can you in your own mind say, "My life is a God-used life."? If you can't say "Yes" then you need to spend time getting to know your Master and seeing what He wants you to do.

Some brief notes on Col 1.4.

The term translated faith is the normal term for faith used in the New Testament. Thayer mentions of faith, "conviction of the truth of anything, belief; in the New Testament of a conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervour born of faith and joined with it" (Thayer)

1.6 fruit is "karpophoreo" meaning bear or bring forth fruit. This is not soul winning, though soul winning is a part of it. Fruit in the New Testament would probably have the thought of anything that a believer does that is beneficial to his Lord and God, be it soul winning, be it teaching, be it pastoring, be it counseling, be it helping someone out, be it janitoring at the church, be it going to work every day with the thought of serving God in whatever manner possible.

1.7 minister is the term "diakonos" which relates to the church office of deacon. The Lord set up a system of church government via the New Testament which ought to be followed.

Church government is in place for a number of reasons:

(1) to oversee the church business

(2) to oversee the flock of God

(3) to assist in protection of the flock

(4) to assist in the discipline of the flock

(5) to see to it that God's business is done in a Godly manner in His Church

4.12 servant is the term "doulos" which normally is translated servant. This is not "wife you serve me" servanthood, it is bought and sold servanthood. It is Christ bought, and your normal and reasonable service is to serve Him.

Laboring fervently is "agonizomai" which comes from the term we gain our term agonize from. Epaphras was not just working, he was agonizing for the people in prayer.

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m03050

TITLE: So What's In A Name?

HOW IMPORTANT ARE NAMES?

"When a girl starts calling a man by his first name, she may have her eye on his last name."

INTRO.

My father's name was George Derickson --pause-- Doesn't that have meaning to anyone? Well probably not - you probably identify him as Stan's father which is only normal. However in Dawson County Nebraska that would identify me as George Derickson's son. His name has much more meaning to people in Nebraska than my name. Here my name has much more meaning to you than his.

George Derickson was the county treasure for over 20 years. He was known throughout the state as a very honest, hard-working man. Truckers from all over the United States connected with two of the larger nation wide haulers knew George Derickson. If they were in need of permits or licences they knew they could call any time night or day for help and they knew they could count on him to go to the office to take care of them.

He had a good name! When his son received a speeding ticket his son knew his name would be in the local paper--his only thought was bringing a black mark against his fathers name. He knew his father's name was not deserving of such a black mark.

A man's name is one of the few things in life that identifies him from all the other millions that have walked this earth.

A name identifies - a name brings forth a mental image of its owner. For example:

Michael Angelo - what came to mind?

The Cistine Chapel?

The Statue of David?

Martin Luther - what came to mind?

Reform?

Lutheranism?

Martin Luther King - YOU SEE - IDENTIFICATION!

YOU SEE YOU VISUALIZE AND IDENTIFY WITH A NAME!

GOD!

GOD!

GOD!

GOD!

WHAT IMAGE DO YOU HAVE WITH THAT NAME?

Let's consider, in the next few minutes God's name indeed, God's good name! Let's turn to a very interesting text in Ezekiel. Turn to Ezek. 20.

A little background information to the text. Context - God speaking to captives in Babylon about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. He has spoken to them of the coming scattering of Israel and he mentioned the coming restoration for God's people the Jews. The stated purpose of the destruction is that "They shall know that I am the Lord."

TEXT: Ezek 20

20:1 And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth [month], the tenth [day] of the month, [that] certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the LORD, and sat before me. 2 Then came the word of the LORD unto me, saying, 3 Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye come to enquire of me? [As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, I will not be enquired of by you.

8.1; 14.1 are similar situations. The elders have come to Ezek. Why have they come to him. The only reason that I can think of is that they are hoping that the message of this prophet will change.

It is like the appeal process in the sentence of an obviously guilty criminal. They keep going back to the courts in the hope that the message will change. The problem in America is that it probably will, but in Israel's case there was to be no change. This was God that was speaking not the American judicial system.

#### DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WAS ON THE WAY!

Many Christians are like this - they don't like what they are hearing so hope for a changed message. Some skip from church to church until they find a church that doesn't step on their toes. A church where the pastor is so general in his preaching that anyone can be comfortable. A church where everyone wants to go - have you figured out why some churches are big and why some churches are small?

Some Christians go from councillor to councillor trying to find one that will say what they want to hear. A friend's wife left him years ago. She went from councillor to councillor. She couldn't find the help she felt she needed for her situation. Finally she found one that said divorce the slob. She did. She was happy. She had found someone that would tell her what she wanted to hear.

In verses 4-8a God asked them to leave their idols, but of course they did not.

(4 Wilt thou judge them, son of man, wilt thou judge [them]? cause them to know the abominations of their fathers: 5 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day when I chose Israel, and lifted up mine hand unto the seed of the house of Jacob, and made myself known unto them in the land of Egypt, when I lifted up mine hand unto them, saying, I [am] the LORD your God; 6 In the day [that] I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which [is] the glory of all lands: 7 Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I [am] the LORD your God. 8 But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt:)

8b-9 "then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. 9 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they [were], in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt."

Verses 10-13a reminds the people of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, but they rebelled with an idol.

Let's read on, 13b "then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. 14 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out."

The term translated wrought means to act. "But I acted for my name's sake" would be a good translation.

In 15-21a God mentions that He wanted obedience but they rebelled.

21b-22 "then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the wilderness. 22 Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the heathen, in whose sight I brought them forth."

Verses 23-38 mentions that God wanted them to serve Him in the land, but they rebelled.

Let's read verse 39 "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols, and hereafter [also], if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols."

In verses 40-43 God mentions that He will one day have obedient people.

Let's read verse 44 "And ye shall know that I [am] the LORD, when I have wrought with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD."

Then verse 49 cracks me up. They have come hoping that he will change his message, and they find that he hasn't, so what do they do? Do they get on their faces before God and repent? NO! They say of Ezekiel, well he can't be speaking the truth, he is just speaking parables.

49 "Then said I, Ah Lord GOD! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?"

God wouldn't do that to us! We are so great. God is just having Ezekiel tell us stories. In their ignorance they can only mock God.

**DO YOU GET THE FEELING THAT GOD'S GOOD NAME HAS MEANING TO HIM?**

There are other references to this thought as well.

Isa. 48.11 "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory unto another."

Jer 14.20-21 "We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers; for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us; for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy

glory; remember, break not thy covenant with us."

Jer 44.26 "Therefore, hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt: Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth."

HE WANTS TO KEEP HIS NAME CLEAN!

The Old Testament writers tell us much about God's name. it is a very interesting study.

We will only have time to skim the surface in this study.

Let me quote several texts in the Bible for you.

"He sent redemption unto His people: He hath commanded His covenant forever: Holy and Reverend is His Name." Ps 111.9

"His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: And man shall be blessed in Him: All nations shall call Him Blessed." Ps. 72.17

"So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory." Ps. 102.15

"O Lord Our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens." Ps. 8.1 (verse 9 also)

"Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praise unto thy name." Ps 18.49

"I am the Lord, that is My Name" Isa. 42.8

The term Lord appears more than 5,000 times in the Old Testament. YHWH= JEHOVAH in the Old Testament.

The translators of the Septuagint Bible translated the term YHWH with the Greek term "KURIOS". The Septuagint Old Testament is a Greek translation of the Old Testament for Jews that could no longer read Hebrew, but were speaking Greek.

The term "kurios" WAS TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AS THE TERM "LORD."

The Lord of the Old Testament is the Lord of the New Testament.

"I AM THE LORD, THAT IS MY NAME."

"I AM THE LORD, THAT IS MY NAME."

In the Old testament the Lord's name is very important, because He is the one and only true God. There are many other Gods but He is the God above all "false gods" - He is the only true God.

In the New Testament God's name is also is very important as well. Turn with me to the book of Acts for a moment. Acts 4.10-12

Peter is speaking in their defense concerning the fact that they had healed a man. Isn't that always the case - When someone is going great for the lord the religious community gets into an uproar.

"Be it known unto you all and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you well. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

NONE OTHER NAME - NO OTHER NAME - NO ONE ELSE - not Alla - not Mohammad - not Sun-Moon - not Joseph Smith - not Jim Jones - not David Koresh - no not even the late Bagh Wan Shree Rashneesh.

NO ONE! ONLY JESUS CHRIST! HE AND HE ALONE!

(From I HAVE WALKED ALONE WITH JESUS by Oswald J. Smith)

"Pundita Ramabai, the noted Indian Christian leader, was such a one. [someone that has accepted Christianity not Christ.] she herself tells the amazing story. Converted from Hinduism and other false systems of religion to Christianity, she accepted baptism and joined the church, and for eight years she lived a most consistent life. But Pundita Ramabai was not a Christian. She herself says that she has never experienced the new birth. Christ as her personal Savior she did not know. She had accepted Christianity, but not the Christ of Christianity.

"But there came an hour in her life when, for the first time, she saw herself as a lost sinner needing a Savior, and then came the great change. From that hour all life was different. She then knew the Christ of Christianity. She was born again; not merely converted, but regenerated by the Holy Spirit."

"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" Jo 3.3b

A religion won't work! Even Christianity won't work! ONLY CHRIST WORKS!

You see the Lord of the Old Testament is unique, just as is the lord of the New Testament! Indeed, it is the same person of the Godhead.

I'd like to look at how we treat God's name as Christians.

Do we defame His name?

Do we profane His name?

or

Do we bring honor and glory to His name?

How do we defame the name of God?

May I suggest a few ways that I've observed in recent years?

1. A spiritual bumper sticker attached to a speeding car. (Pause)

A Jesus First sticker doesn't mean you have to be out front - the speed limit is still 55 or 65.

Might we mention radar detectors? Christians are supposed to obey the law, not break it. Just because you find ways to break the law, there is still a command of the Lord to obey it.

2. Business dealing of the church which are not right and proper. While waiting to speak to someone in a church I could not help but overhear some raised voices coming from one of the back offices. It was impossible not to hear as it was somewhat heated and fairly loud. The discussion centered around the question of whether the church board conducted business with Christian ethics as basis for their business. One person was upset because they didn't and the other was trying to make excuses for the board.

3. Personal dealings that are not right and proper are a black mark upon God's name. **WE ARE TO BE ABOVE REPROACH!**

4. Proclaiming a wrong or obscure gospel. Many today when they share the gospel, wrap it up in so much other stuff that you can't recognize the gospel. Hopefully, they think, they will slip it in on the unsuspecting person that happens to listen to them.

Speaking of defaming God's name and His work in this world, I ran across an article in the "Irish Press" newspaper. It was decrying the operation of an evangelical Christian group WITHIN the Roman Catholic Church in Dublin. Now remember this is in 1981. The article was written to come out against cults such as the Moonies, Hare Krishna and in this context we find, "Although their fundamentalist beliefs and their evangelical approach associates them with Protestantism, the \_\_\_\_\_ is mainly active within the Catholic Church. They do not see themselves competing with it.

The article went on to state that the leader of this fundamentalist group felt all in Ireland were born into an institutional relationship with God - that they should not be asked to leave the church that they were raised in.

The gospel must be kept short and sweet. Apart from the world and apart from False Doctrine!

- a. Christ died.
- b. Christ died for our sin. (He was the Old Testament Lamb of God.)
- c. We need to realize that it was our sin that caused Christ's death and repent or admit it, then turn to God.
- d. You need to accept that sacrifice for YOUR sin. (Lay your hand on the head of the sacrifice and say that it has to die because you sinned.)
- e. He must become the Lord and Master of your life.
- f. He arose from the grave to guarantee that we too might have eternal life.

5. Proclaiming false or pet doctrines.

We vividly see the false doctrine in groups such as the Jim Jones group or other cults, but do we see the false teaching within our own groups. Do we really compare all we hear with the Word to see if it be true?

Pet doctrines are a real problem as well. We've heard of a church that went charismatic. Their pastor preached for weeks on the same doctrine over and over - week after week - relying on the Holy Spirit for his messages. Doesn't the Holy Spirit have other things to teach His people?

Proclaiming a true gospel on public and private property as graffiti is not right. A few years ago we noticed someone had spray painted "trust Jesus" on overpasses, buildings and sidewalks. We assumed it was a local attempt to bring attention to the Lord, but we found out we were wrong. We were moving to Nebraska about this time and saw the same sign in the same hand all across this half of the United States.

6. Improper sacrifices. (We will look only at the negative for now.)

- a. We can bring our giving with an improper attitude.
- b. We can neglect our giving.
- c. We might neglect to offer ourselves a living sacrifice.

d. We might neglect to give praise and thanksgiving.

e. We might neglect to do good.

7. We defame God by calling all kinds of people "Christian" when they are not born again, nor Christian.

A dear old woman we knew years ago came to church one Sunday morning telling people of how wonderful a movie she had seen was. It was about a Nun that had done some very good things that affected people. The woman's comment was, "Several people became Christians because of what she did." I had watched the movie and there was no hint of conversion or anything else.

Our pastor at the same time introduced the movie CHARIOTS OF FIRE as a good Christian film. "Christian" is a title reserved for those that have accepted Christ as their Savior. Many today, that Christians term "Christian" are actually lost and on the way to hell.

IT IS VERY SAD INDEED TO KNOW THAT SOME OF THESE PEOPLE AREN'T WITNESSED TO BECAUSE WE HAVE GIVEN THEM THE TITLE WITHOUT THE MESSAGE. Just because someone is doing good things, it does not mean he is a Christian. Just because someone is a nice person, it does not mean he is a Christian. Just because someone talks nice, it does not mean he is a Christian.

We are much too loose when we look at people today.

8. Christian music is a serious problem today. Some of it is purely out of line. Did you know they have Christian videos on the market. I recently saw punk gospel. Some say, well they are reaching people - we have a friend that works with troubled youth for the state of OR. When one of the Christian punk groups came on the youth were making fun of the Bible thumpers. They were making fun of them - they weren't being reached.

We went to a car wash for a Christian College and as we left we heard a stereo blaring out, someone screaming the term "Father" at the top of their lungs. We now also have half hour infomercials for Christian music that will change your life at only \$16.95 plus postage.

As humans we tend to value our own names. This is Scriptural as we see in Prov. 22.1 "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,"

As humans we tend to build our name up and keep it clean.

I'd like to read something that I'm sure is in public domain. I do not know who wrote it. "You got it from your father, it was all he had to give. So it's yours to use and cherish for as long as you may live. If you lose the watch he gave you, it can always be replaced. But a black mark on your name, son, can never be erased. It was clean the day you took it, and a worthy name to bear.

When he got it from his father, there was no dishonor there. So make sure you guard it wisely, after all is said and done, you'll be glad the name is spotless when you give it to your son."

There is a note to be learned by all young people at this point. Your parent's name is very important and you and your actions reflect upon that name.

A friend of ours shared with us that when his father was on his death bed his son came to the grandfather and said, "Grandfather, thank you so much for giving me a good name.

As we value our names so God greatly values His name. If God values His name so highly then how much more we should value His name.

Most of us as kids know how we felt about our DAD. MY DAD IS BETTER THAN YOUR DAD. OH YEA! MY DAD CAN WHIP YOUR DAD! OH YEA! MY DAD CAN CLEAN YOUR DAD'S PLOW! OH YEA! WELL MY DAD CAN \_\_\_\_\_ .

God is our Father. God is our Dad. Do we lift up His name? Do we lift up His name in front of our friends? Are we building up the name of our God?

If not then why not - It is so easy!

Let's see if we can discover ways of building up His name.

#### HOW DO WE BUILD UP GOD'S NAME?

1. Bringing proper sacrifices. There are several mentioned in the New Testament for the believer to bring to God. The general principal is seen in the Old Testament. a. Lev. 21.6 b. I Pet. 2.5 states that we are to offer sacrifices. 1.) Rom 12.1-2 states that our bodies are to be offered up a living sacrifice. 2.) Phil. 4.18 shows that giving is considered a sacrifice. It speaks of a gift to Paul as a "sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." 3.) Heb. 13.15-16 mentions praise, thanksgiving, material things and doing good as sacrifices as well.

2. By serving Him. Deut. 18.5 mentions the Levites serving in His name. "For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all the tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever."

3. Worship is linked to God's name in the life of Abram. Gen 12.8b; 13.4.

4. Testifying of what God has done for us both to other Christians and to the lost as well. Joshua 9.9 "And they said unto him, from a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the Lord thy God; for we have heard the fame of him and all that he did in Egypt." We are to spread His name the world over.

The Lord had done something very special for us once and I was thinking about telling my nonchristian employer about it but decided that he wouldn't understand. Then I decided that I should do it and maybe it would be an opening to witness. The opening to witness didn't come at that time but he knew of my God and what He had been doing for me.

5. Build for Him. In the Old Testament it was the temple. (I Kings 5.3-5; 8.17) In the New Testament it is to be the body of Christ. Some might mention church buildings - Yes, they can be good for God's name and certainly should be kept up so the Lord is not embarrassed. However there is a report out as to how much was spent on church buildings in one year. I figured up that if that money had been given to missionaries it would have put around 40 couples on the field fully supported for twenty years. HUUUUMMMMM!!

6. BLESSING HIS NAME. Job 1.21 "And said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord."

7. Honor His House properly. Jer. 7.10,11 shows the misuse of His house. "And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord."

How do we treat church buildings? Do children learn reverence from the way you treat your building?

8. Bringing proper gifts to Him. Ezek. 20.39 "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter [also], if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols"

9. Offerings. Let us turn to Malachi for a few minutes. 1.11 offerings given in His name. "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name [shall be] great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts."

10. Mal. 2.2 Honor His Name. "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay [it] to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay [it] to heart."

11. Mal. 2.5 Stand in awe of His name. Really understanding who He really is. A pastor once said this is to know God, not just know about God. "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him [for] the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name."

12. Mal. 4.2 Fear His name. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings...."

Is your God a great God?

Is your concept of God proper?

"I am the Lord that is my name"

He is loving

He is kind

He is powerful

He is full of grace

He is merciful

He is interested

He is Savior

He is Supplier

He is companion

He is friend

He is knowledgeable

He is knowable

He is one you can talk to.

We are invited into the presence of Almighty God to pray. If you were invited to the White House and were introduced to the president would you greet him, Oh hi dear Bobby? No. (Pre 1996 election humor there.) So why do so many address the Lord of Lords as "Oh deeeear Jeeesssuss" today? Now that's defaming the name of God.

Just a point "Jesus" is used in the epistles almost 300 times. Only about 10 times is this name used alone. Almost always "Jesus" is used directly with "Christ" or "Lord." To narrow to using "Jesus" you must narrow to the gospels. That's narrowing your concentration too much. Beware anyone that narrows his concentration to anyone part of the Word. It's Jesus Christ the Lord.

He is the King of Kings.

He is the Lord of Lords.

He is the Ancient of Days.

He is the Wonderful Councilor.

He is the Mighty God.

He is the Eternal Father.

He is the Prince of Peace.

Phil 2.5-11 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. {fashion: or habit} 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; 11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "

#### APPLICATION:

Have you called upon the name of the Lord for your eternal joy in heaven? Have you given yourself to serve in the name of the Lord? Have you made Him the Lord of your life?

God said, "I am the Lord, that is My Name" (Isa. 42.8) The destruction that Ezekiel prophecies and describes was so "That they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. 6.14)

God allowed His beloved temple to be destroyed. God allowed His beloved city to be destroyed. God allowed His beloved people to be taken captive. God allowed His beloved people to be killed. God allowed His beloved people to be scattered. So that those having eyes could KNOW that He is Lord.

Can God's judgment be far away from America? We call ourselves a Christian nation yet thumb our nose at God by perpetuating homosexuality and killing of babies. We as an American people defame God.

I really think God is serious about how we reflect upon His name.

If you know the Lord are you really living for Him or are you walking your own walk and doing your own thing, rather than following what He has directed you to do?

If you don't know Jesus as Lord please don't leave this place today without settling this question in your life.

Let's commit ourselves to upgrading our view of God.

Let's commit ourselves to knowing God.

Let's commit ourselves to not defaming His name.

Let's commit ourselves to building up His name.

Let's commit ourselves to honoring His name.

Let's commit ourselves to Him.

Remember what God said in Isaiah. "I am the Lord, that is My name" (42.8) Let us say as individuals, I am the Lords, that is my name!"

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m04000

TITLE: WHO GOES THERE? OR IF I HAD THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF US I WOULDN'T HAVE ASKED, AND IF I HAD KNOWN YOU WERE ONE OF THEM, I'DA RUN YOU THROUGH - SO I'M AWAITING YOUR QUICK REPLY.

TEXT: Joshua 5:13-6:5

OUTLINE:

I. THE SUPERNATURAL SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (5.13-15)

II. THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (6.1-5)

III. THE VICTORY SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (HEB. 11.30)

We as believers are locked in a SPIRITUAL WARFARE yet we don't know it all too often. The Bible is plain that there are forces warring around us on the spiritual plane - we need to realize it and live like it!

II Kings 6:15-17 "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that [be] with us [are] more than they that [be] with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and,

behold, the mountain [was] full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

I believe that this text shows the spiritual warfare that I have mentioned.

INTRODUCTION: While in the navy we had mock war games. We would have different types of scenarios. One scenario was a frog man attack. Frogmen - they were the Navy's elite - sort of like the Green beret. I believe they call them the Navy Seals now days. They were highly trained - select - high brow - self impressed - I trust there aren't any here today! They were to sneak aboard our ship and destroy our communications.

I never figured out why they weren't to swim underwater - attach charges to the ship and blow it out of the water, but they were to come aboard and destroy our communications gear.

Anyway one evening we were to be attacked. We didn't know when they were coming - that would be too easy. One of the radarmen noticed five tiny blips aft of the ship. We had no idea if it was the frogmen or not. We alerted the men on watch and a number of others gathered around. The frogmen started climbing up some ropes.

The watchman didn't want them to get aboard so he was looking for a way to stop them. His only nonlethal weapon was several trash cans of garbage. Well, Need I say more?

Several men started throwing garbage over the side.

The ship won that war game and the frogmen lost. I'd like to talk about a real battle this morning. One in which God intervened. Please turn to Joshua five. Joshua is a book that records the conquest and division of the Promised land. It covers the days of Joshua as he serves his God and his people.

The key verses of Joshua are probably 1.2-3, "Moses, my servant, is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."

#### I. THE SUPERNATURAL SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (5.13-15)

Joshua 5.13, "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, [Art] thou for us, or for our adversaries?"

Joshua is locked in a physical war that is taking up most of his concentration. A soldier appears to him and he automatically reacts as would any soldier - who's side are you on? I really don't think, if Joshua had been 10,000 times more spiritual than he was, that he would not have walked up to a soldier that he did not know and ask him if he was on the adversaries side or on His side.

I rather think Joshua may even have challenged him with sword drawn!

Nothing disrespectful of God's power and might and involvement in our battles. I do not think that there was any reproach upon Joshua for approaching the captain of the host as he did.

Indeed, it was only natural for him to approach a soldier in this manner. Some make a case for Joshua's low spiritual profile in this text. They suggest that if he had been on top of his spiritual life he would have recognized it was God. I don't believe that these people are correct.

Do you get the feeling that the commander of the Israelites may have been in prayer when this occurred? "lifted up his eyes." The text does not say this yet in the situation that was present I have to think that any person with any spiritual sense would have been preparing for battle on the spiritual level and asking God for His continued blessing on the physical level.

Some try to make a lot of Joshua feeling that this was HIS battle and that the appearance of the captain of the host was to let him know that it was God's battle and not Joshua's.

Very true this is the Lord's battle, however there is little indication, if any, that Joshua was having an ego trip or wave of feeling important.

Verse 14 "And he said, Nay; but [as] captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"

Yes Sir! Joshua reporting for duty. Indeed, Joshua found the proper position as well as attitude immediately. He did not ask for credentials nor did he ask for a second opinion. He fell on his face and asked for his orders. He knew he should be on his face and he knew this was his Lord.

Indeed, Joshua was not rebuked for worshiping - it was correct and proper! This was the angel of the Lord. We know Him to be the preincarnate Christ.

There are believers today that have accepted Christ and are saved, yet they have never turned their lives over to God to lead and control. They call Him Lord, but they are still lord of their own lives.

It is important to understand that if you are controlling your own life, you are not walking with God. He must control your life for you to be walking with Him.

There is a wealth of evidence in the Scriptures to show that the Angel of the Lord of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ Himself. There is nothing to indicate that this captain of the Lord's host is anyone less than the Angel of the Lord. If this was a normal angel Joshua would have been rebuked for worshiping as was John the apostle in Revelation 22.8-9.

Joshua 5.15 "And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy. And Joshua did so."

Sound familiar? Exodus 3.2-5 mentions a similar incident in the life of Moses. How is it that Christians are allowed into the presence of God yet we go in and stomp around with our grubby mukluks on? I'm not saying we have to take our shoes off to pray, but I think we do need to realize that we are on holy ground and ought to begin by removing our dirty grimy spiritual shoes so that we are not an affront to the Lord.

Sin in our lives must be akin to wearing shoes on Holy Ground to God.

Not only is this battle being waged on a spiritual level but it also has a human side to it.

## II. THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (6.1-5)

Joshua 6.1 "Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in."

It is not mentioned whether they had set a siege at Jericho, though that would be the first natural step of warfare in this day. That sounds like what is going on in the text.

It seems that possibly the Jerichoians may have been reacting to some stories that they had heard about the Israelites through the years.

You don't need to turn to it but in 2.9-11 Rahab recounts the attitude of the people and it is not a feeling of superiority! Over 40 years had passed and they are worried about the Israelites.

Joshua 2.9-11 "And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that [were] on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we had heard [these things], our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he [is] God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

No, not chicken - just very wise to heed what they had heard!

Joshua 6.2 "And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, [and] the mighty men of valour."

"have given" happens to be a past tense. it was already done - in God's mind the city of Jericho had fallen and was in Joshua's hands.

Our salvation is just as sure as this statement of God to Joshua! He has given us eternal life - It is finished in God's mind.

Just as sure. Joshua only had to wait seven days for the fulfillment of God's statement. It did come to pass - our salvation is just as sure a promise!

I wonder how would you and I react if God gave us orders like this? Sure!! It's easy for you to say Lord. You don't have to go out and make a fool of yourself marching around that city. Do you have any idea, Lord, how much fun those Jerichoians are going to poke at us.

I can hear it now, HEY YOU ISRAELITES, ARE YOU OUT FOR YOUR MONDAY MORNING EXERCISE?

WHAT IS THIS SOME SORT OF AEROBICS CLASS YOU DREAMED UP JOSHUA? WE'VE HEARD OF WALKING THE MALL, BUT AROUND THE CITY?

Many of God's people have done strange things in the name of obedience to the Lord. Noah and his ark - Ezekiel playing war in the dirt like a child.

One of my students at Frontier shared in class that God had directed her to do several things - the things seemed silly to adults - she was criticised for doing them. Her maturity outweighed that of her adult critics. Don't be afraid to do what God tells you to do - even if it seems silly.

Joshua 6.3-5 "And ye shall compass the city, all [ye] men of war, [and] go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. 5 And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long [blast] with the ram's horn, [and] when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

This battle should be of interest to us!

1. God had given the victory.
2. God could have walked up - that is if He walks - and kicked that wall down. He could have scraped the earth with the back of His hand and leveled the city. He could have stepped on the city, however this was a spiritual battle. He could have called 10, 342 angels and two cherubim and a partridge in a pear tree down from heaven to dismantle the city piece by piece.

Yet, he relied on Joshua and his soldiers to walk around the city six days and then holler their heads off on the seventh.

Actually I'm not sure they didn't just let loose with a war cry and then watch the walls crumble. It may well be that God's spiritual forces did tear down the walls.

One must wonder if the Lord didn't just want a shout of victory. Remember that shout was a step of faith. Would you have shouted or may be just mouthed a shout in case it didn't work?

Is that not a giant step for God to make - to come to mankind to seek assistance in His program? God still relies on us - remember - we are in a spiritual battle - we are soldiers of the cross.

Yes, a spiritual battle settled by human activities to gain God the victory and the glory!  
IMAGINE - God relying on us for the victory. Who says God is not brave!

JOSHUA MET GOD ON HOLY GROUND!

JOSHUA HEARD GOD!

JOSHUA OBEYED GOD!

Where are you today? Have you met God for your salvation? Have you heard God concerning His will for your life? Have you stepped out in obedience to that will?

At times you may feel you are walking around the city day after day accomplishing nothing!  
Remember the detail - God deems it important. The daily walk around the city is what God uses to prepare for the crumbling of the walls.

God lead me to Bible college - as the days went by I wondered if He would ever use us. It was many years before God chose to place us in a full time ministry. As I've looked back there was a lot accomplished on those daily walks around the city!

Don't be discouraged about those daily walks around Jericho. If God called you to walk around for a few years - learn and walk. God has specific reasons for you doing it. He has purpose in everything that He does. He has purpose in everything that He has you do.

MEET - HEAR - OBEY!

If you have met and if you have heard then OBEY, don't look for anything else until you have obeyed that which He has told you to do!

### III. THE VICTORY SIDE OF THE CONFLICT (HEB.11.30)

Heb 11.30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

True the text in Joshua goes on to tell of the victory that was Israel's that week but the physical

fall of Jericho was not the only exciting thing that happened that day.

Hebrews tells us that the walls fell because of faith!

THEY FELL BECAUSE OF FAITH AND NOT WHAT THE SOLDIERS OR JOSHUA DID

FAITH IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, SO SAYS THE HYMN WRITER! Does faith really overcome your world for you? Do you find yourself operating in the area of faith? Are you trusting in the Lord in all areas of your life?

APPLICATION:

1. God intervenes in human affairs. He is needed to get the job done in our churches today.

We need to be seeking the captain of the Lord's host if we are going to wage a proper war against the world.

2. The sword being drawn would seem to indicate that He stands ready for whatever battle He calls us into.

3. He appeared right on time. Not a day early nor a day late.

4. The captain was not on either side - He was the leader of God's side! He was there to enlist Joshua and Israel's aid in the battle. If you are fighting battles - join God's army and fight along side God! Remember the armor mentioned in Ephesians is for the soldier not God.

5. God reveals His will for our OBEDIENCE not for our consideration. Joshua didn't call his officers to discuss the plan - they obeyed. If God has called you to do something don't consider it - don't seek council - DO IT!

6. Details are important! Six days once around the city. The seventh day, seven times around and holler your heads off!

THEY DID IT WITHOUT HESITATION.

Did it ever cross your mind why the Israelites so willingly submitted themselves to such activities as walking around the city seven days in a row?

Could fear of the Lord enter into the picture? Do you think it might have had something to do with the fact they had just come through the Jordan River on dry land? After seeing a pile of water (3.16) stacked up I think I'd think twice before I decided not to follow God's direction.

I think many Christians need to see the pile of water, and to go across the Jordan on dry land. We

see no fear of the Lord today!

We are so self sufficient today, if God performed the miraculous for us we'd just assume it was something we did or something we bought.

What has God told you to do?

Have you yielded and submitted without hesitation as Joshua did?

They had seen God work and they were willing to take Him at His word.

It also crossed my mind that in 5.10 it mentions that they had just kept the passover. Since this was a generation that submitted itself, just prior, to circumcision we must assume that they were interested in the whole idea of the God of Abraham.

They had seen their parents die in the wilderness because of disobedience, they had seen their needs met for many years in the wilderness, they had seen the pillar of smoke and fire in the wilderness so why wouldn't they know what the passover was all about.

Naturally they had knowledge that the passover was when God spared the firstborn of Israel in Egypt.

There are many reasons that they would obey what God had instructed them to do through their leadership, but I must wonder if they didn't have a proper fear of the Lord.

I have to ask myself something. After five days of marching around the city - wouldn't we be tempted after not seeing anything happen - to move the seventh day up a day and get on with the program?

At least go to the wall and inspect for cracks and reevaluate the situation. Are you sure he said seven days Joshua? You know, the wall hasn't even cracked yet - why go on?

You know, I'm not learning anything here at \_\_\_\_\_ church! Why go on?

You know, I'm not seeing anything happen here at \_\_\_\_\_ church! Why should I keep coming?

**JOSHUA MET, HEARD AND OBEYED!**

Many there are today that have met Christ is salvation, but I fear few there are that have really heard Christ.

If believers were hearing we would have more laborers.

I recently read that some believe the hype from mission agencies is wrong - that we won't have manpower shortages in missions.

From an article in Christianity Today Dec. 11, 1987, "Two popular notions running rampant within evangelicalism are, frankly, more rumor than reality. One is the so-called leadership crisis, which portrays a generation of saintly "go-getters" retiring with no one in the wings to replace them. The other concerns the state of missions, or more specifically, the perceived lack of missions interest on the part of the church in the West.

"As in the case of our leadership "crisis," grim scenarios are presented as immediate realities (in this case, an evaporating pool of missionaries) if the church does not wake up and offer its best and brightest to the future advancement of God's kingdom." [originals of these articles are in missions file.]

Harold Smith goes on to tell of the great movement of dedications at Urbana and the spreading pool of workers. He mentions, "The missionary vision of the church is alive and well. And while missions challenges will always be with us, thanks to Urbana, so too will those who are eager to meet them."

I trust that the church is not relying on this source of future missionary leadership. The leaders are not coming forth. Some, yes, but the thousands needed, NO!

Another article that I recently saw was mentioning the fact that at Urbana there was concern about the large gap between the dedications and the people going to the field. Talk about hype! Urbana hypes the young people up instead of the Holy Spirit! If God was really working and believers really listening there would be no gap for Urbana! There would be no manpower shortage! One organization has committed 1/2 million dollars to follow dedications up and to try to get them to follow through. HUMMMMMMM! If the Holy Spirit can't do it how can money do it?

In Christianity Today Feb. 5, 1988 James Reapsome tells us, "Several missions agency representatives say Urbana '87 will be effective in actually producing a growing cadre of new missionaries IF IT MAINTAINS A VIGOROUS FOLLOW-UP EFFORT WITH DELEGATES. IVCF [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship] has committed \$500,000 for this purpose, which will involve a two-year, five-part program: a letter to the delegate's pastors, 55 regional conferences within the next three months, nearly 1,000 support groups, one-on-one counseling with a missionary on each student's campus, and a series of seven letters mailed over a two-year period.

"Such efforts are necessary, for signing a commitment card does not insure follow-through by the delegates." He adds in parenthesis "(Of the 8,000 Urbana '84 delegates who filed out commitment cards indicating an interest in overseas missions, IVCF computers have been able to track only 1,000 who have since served overseas.)"

Yep, it really sounds like Urbana is going to take care of our leadership problems - if we can spend enough money to get those commitments to follow through.

If we were bringing forth honest commitments, we would have the workers.

If believers were hearing we would have excessive finances.

If believers would only tithe churches would be able to do wonders for missions.

If believers were hearing they would be sharing their faith with the world freely.

And then we must wonder of that small percentage that are hearing - how many are really obeying.

Christ challenges us in Luke 14 to discipleship. He uses the negative approach to make His point.

Let's read Luke 14:25-33 "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have [sufficient] to finish [it]? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish [it], all that behold [it] begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Christ said that:

A person must hate his family and his life or else "he cannot be my disciple"

A person must bear his cross and follow or "he cannot be my disciple"

A person must forsake all or "he cannot be my disciple"

The people heard Christ, point blank, make these statements.

The only proper response was to forsake all and follow Him.

They met him - they heard him - we aren't told if they obeyed. The fact that we aren't told makes me believe that very few if any obeyed.

The same challenge is before every Christian today - ARE WE WILLING TO FORSAKE ALL FOR CHRIST?

Are we willing to leave our families?

Are we ready to lay down our lives either literally or give our life to His work? Life expectancy is close to 80 - you 20 year olds are you willing serve God for 60 years?

Are we ready to bear whatever He brings along? Have we really counted the costs?

IF YOU HAVE THEN YOU NEED TO KNOW ONE MORE THING.

7. God is a God of predetermined victories. Let me repeat that for you. God is a God of predetermined victories.

Verse two Jericho was Joshua's before the battle plan was laid!

A side note to this thought is that the Jerichoians had also given the Israelites the victory. "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us," (2.9). Rahab used a personal pronoun when she said "I know" yet in the rest of the text she was including the people as well. They knew they had had it.

He is a God that has already given you the victory in all the battles that He has planned for you as you yield to Him and His service.

I trust all of you have met Christ.

I trust all of you have heard Christ.

I trust all of you are obeying Christ.

The song writer mentions, "On every hand the foe we find drawn up in dread array; let tents of ease be left behind, and onward to the fray; salvation's helmet on each head, with truth all girt about, the earth shall tremble 'neath our tread and echo with our shout. Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory! Oh, Glorious victory that overcomes the world."

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT TODAY?

IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MANY CHRISTIANS I HAVE MET.

IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T SOUND LIKE MANY CHURCHES I'VE ATTENDED.

HOWEVER IT IS THE TRUTH - ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS WALK WITH GOD IN FAITH

AND OBEDIENCE.

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M04050

OUTLINE:

I. THE WORD GOSSIP SPEAKS

II. THE WORD OF GOD SPEAKS

INTRO:

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

GENERAL INFORMATION:

TITLE: Talebearer

SALARY: The fruit of the labors is usually reward enough.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE: FAR AND WIDE

SUPERVISOR: NONE. (Who can control a sharp tongue.)

LENGTH OF SERVICE: As long as ability to function is retained.

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MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Sharp tongue.
2. B.A. degree. (Not a Bachelor of Arts degree, but a degree of Bad Attitude.)
3. Large receptive ears.
4. Devious mind.

DESIREABLE QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Ability to sense truth, then ignore and avoid it.
2. Ability to sense falsehood, then enlarge upon that foundation.

3. Able to function like a vacuum, sucking up all dirt, juicy tidbits, error, deceit, and corruption.
4. Ability to not allow facts to fog the incoming information.
5. Able to process all relevant information, categorize it into topics and usable conversation.
6. Able to communicate effectively so as to draw out information from sources and then to spread freely the accumulated information.

DUTIES:

1. Develop effective communications system between the members of this organization, so members can be open and honest with one another.
2. Train promising young communicators in the art of gathering and dissemination information.
3. Spread, SHARE, sow, and sharpen, your newfound information with any and all listeners.
4. Gather, glean, group, go after, grope for, and grapple with all that is false.
5. Outline, overlook, ogle, overemphasize, and absorb that which you hear.

Anyone fulfilling any and/or all of these qualifications is invited to take a front row seat for this study!

The title of this study is an acrostic.

Go

Out

Slay

Some

Important

People

Please read Pr 2:10-17.

## I. THE WORD GOSSIP SPEAKS

As we consider the item of gossip today we want to relate honestly, up front, that the word never appears in the Scripture, however the thought of the misused tongue is very prevalent in the Word of God.

The term gossip has not always meant what we feel it means today. "gossip" comes from the French term "god" meaning "god" and the term "sibb" meaning "kinsman." It has to do with god and family.

I would like to read a short quote from "WORD ORIGINS AND THEIR ROMANTIC STORIES" by Funk. "There was a time when everyone loved a gossip. Among the Early English it was the office of some godsib to be the sponsor at a baptism. The god part of the word stood for 'god' and sib means simply, 'related.' A godsib was a godmother or godfather who acted as sponsor at a baptism and therefore became related to another through God." Queen Elizabeth was the gossip at the baptism of James VI (6th) of Scotland. A little later the word came to mean a 'boon companion,' [boon means close or intimate] but in Shakespeare's day it evolved into the word gossip as we know it. When women became close friends gossip is sure to follow.

It would seem that the original meaning and even into later times the term had a good meaning and good connotation. It is in more recent years that we seem to have turned it into the more vicious idea of spreading rumors and backbiting.

Gossip is a very negative term in our society and has no place in the Christian realm of living.

## II. THE WORD OF GOD SPEAKS

The word (translated froward) under study is "tah-poo-kaw" according to Strong. (Young goes with "tahpukoth")

Strong mentions that it means "a perversity or fraud" Something twisted or false.

The root of this term (Strong's 2015) has the idea of "to turn" according to the Theological Wordbook of the OT.

The root of the word is used in several ways:

- a. Of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Turning the cities to rubble.
- b. Of the miracles or troubles if you will, that Moses did before Pharaoh. River to blood, peace into turmoil etc.
- c. Of the symptoms of Leprosy. The term is translated "turn" as in the hair turning white because of the disease. Lev. 13: 3, 4, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 25, 55 Notice the turning from one condition to another condition.

d. Of things POSITIVE.

Jer. 31:13 "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow."

Ps 30:11 "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;"

The term is used of turning something. In the case of transmitted information, it would relate to the turning of a tale, if not the turning of truth to falsehood and normally from one condition to another.

I would just like to list a few references and make a few observations about them as we go.

De 32:20 "And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith."

This is in the context of God rebuking His people.

This first indication of the word froward is certainly in a negative vain. A froward generation is usually viewed as a people that are doing their own thing. This is indicated in the text as well for they are people with no faith.

They are turned away from God, or we might say, they are turned away from truth to falsehood. I think Moses had America in mind – people without faith and doing their own thing.

This lays ground work for the froward tongue - a tongue that is turned from truth.

Pr 6:14 "Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

This verse shows that the person that is froward in heart comes up with mischief and the person sowes discord. What a truth in relation to the gossip.

Gossip seldom results in anything except discord and trouble, not only for the person that speaks it, but for the person that hears it, and naturally for the person about which the gossip is about.

Pr 8:13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."

This lists the froward mouth with things that the believer is to hate. Evil, pride, arrogance, evil way and the froward mouth.

That applies to the person that is the receiver in gossip. You aren't to enjoy it, memorize it, and

relate it, but you are to HATE IT!!

Pr 10:31 "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out."  
OUCH!

When I was in boy scouts and they were teaching us artificial respiration - NOW this is not CPR, this is artificial respiration. Way back in the medieval medicine days - before CPR, cat scans and all the new discoveries – we were to save drowning victims in a totally different way - they told us to be sure that the tongue of the person was clear of the air passage. They said if you are alone and there is no one to hold the persons tongue out of the way that you should use a safety pin to pin it to their shirt collar. LIKE A BOY SCOUT AT THE BEACH WILL HAVE A SAFETY PIN! I used to cringe when I heard that, but to cut out a persons tongue! Double ouch!

This text contrasts the froward tongue that is to be CUT OFF, with the mouth of a just person that brings forth wisdom. SOME CONTRAST.

The thought of "cut off" could be taken quite literally, but at the least, we should apply the thought of cutting the person off before they spread their rumor, lie, tale, or what have you.

Your options are many: Ask them to not tell tales out of school. Ask them to stop what they are telling you. Tell them to shut up if the above two don't work. Your job is to stop it, or if all else fails, get up and walk away from the person.

Pr 10:32 "The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness." God relates that this froward speech is related to wicked people. The indication is also very evident that what comes from that mouth is unacceptable!

Listen to that believer! It is unacceptable. Don't involve yourself in it!

Pr 16:28 "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." The froward man "soweth strife", and that is just what a gossip does. It causes strife among the troops! "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."

Pr 16:30 "He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things: moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass." He works at what he does! He must shut his eyes and consider how he will do it. The result of his thought and action is EVIL!

There is another Old Testament term of interest. Again, I will just read and comment.

Le 19.16 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer...."

Pr 11.13 "A talebearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter" Some contrast. Telling secrets can only hurt. This verse has idea of the previous verse when it

spoke of "going about."

Pr. 18.8 "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts." Hurtful, cutting, bleeding, painful, and hard to repair. Not for believers to be involved in!

This term is used of Jews murmuring about being brought out of Egypt. Might we say complaining? Might we say complaining about the way the preacher preaches, etc. etc.

Pr. 20.19 "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; therefore, meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips." This also is the word slanderer. Don't meddle - don't mess with, don't involve.

This one is really something! Pr 26.20 "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." Again, murmur - if you murmur you add fuel to strife. Do you really want to do that?

Pr 26.22 repeats 20.19

The idea of gossip should be distasteful to you Christian! The idea of gossip should cause you to remove yourself from it. The idea of gossip should move us to take action against the gossip. The idea of gossip should be revolting to us and we should see to it that we as believers stop it, or remove ourselves from it rather than get involved in it.

#### APPLICATION:

Let's just hit a few situations and see how we should handle them.

1. What if I hear something juicy COMPLETELY BY ACCIDENT? Am I bound to not repeat it? I wasn't listening, but it just happened into my ear!

**YOU ARE NEVER BOUND TO REPEAT ANYTHING!**

There is a real fallacy in the thinking of man. We assume that the human brain can not possibly keep a secret. There just isn't that capability in our minds.

Anything that comes in must come out. WRONG! Let me prove that to you. The brain can keep secrets very nicely. When I was fairly young, I had been a bit of a pest with my B-B gun and my mother decided to punish me by taking it away from me.

In my mind I wasn't too worried, because I knew I could find it and use it as long as I put it back before she came home from work. One slight problem. I couldn't find it the next day. I searched our house several times from top to bottom. We lived in a small one bedroom duplex so I know that I should have been able to find it.

One day many months later I was bugging my mother about getting the gun back. She wouldn't give it to me. I decided this would take some drastic action. I hid her wedding rings. I found that action was forthcoming very quickly. She made it quite clear that the rings were to be returned yesterday! I did find my gun where it belonged later that day.

The point? She never would tell me where she had hidden the gun. She kept a secret for a number of years without ever telling me. Indeed, she never told me. WOW! Talk about the mystery of life. So you see secrets can be kept.

2. What if someone else told me as if it were general knowledge?

If in question call the person involved and tell them that you were told something, and that you wanted to know if it were for general knowledge. If it wasn't you will stop the gossip, and you can call the original gossip to ask them to stop spreading information that they shouldn't be spreading.

3. What if I heard it in FELLOWSHIP time at church?

IT IS PROBABLY GOSSIP!!! How dare we call gossip sessions fellowship!

Don't allow church activities to succumb to the spreading of gossip. There are several prime areas to watch:

Fellowship

Women's groups

Women's Sunday School Classes

Ladies missionary groups

Women's prayer chains

Ladies Aid societies

NOW BEFORE I AM STONED!

Men's prayer breakfasts - I have attended a couple where I was ready to speak out or leave when the gossip ceased.

Men's Sunday School classes

Board meetings

Men's groups

We might add:

Youth group

Youth activities

Might we just summarize by saying that there is a possibility of gossip at any get together of two or more Christians.

4. What if it didn't hurt anyone?

The responsibility of anyone telling a story that is false is to go and correct that story everywhere it was told, even if it didn't hurt anyone!

Even if the story was true and no one was hurt there should be an apology for having spoken out of turn.

5. What if I heard something and it was true, but it was supposed to be a secret, and I told others about it?

The responsibility would be to apologize to those involved - even if it didn't hurt anything - even if it didn't cause problems - even if you thought it was okay.

The point of all this is that gossip is an item that has no place in the Christians life. Not even a little part or place.

There is no reason for any believer to get caught up in things that almost always lead to trouble and hurt.

If you become involved in passing things on then you may well be passing on lies.

Gossip hurts deeply and I trust that you will learn this by being taught this morning rather than having to learn it through the experience of personal injury from it.

Gossip can be anything that is repeated that ought not be repeated.

The froward mouth can be anything that causes hurt or embarrassment.

Your tongue is yours to control. Use it wisely!

CONCLUSION:

It might be good for us to get back to that original meaning of gossip as believers. That meaning of the French words, "god" and "sibb", in other words let our conversation be godly toward our spiritual siblings - our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

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M05000

TITLE: "SPUR OF THE MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING: Lu. 16:19-31

OUTLINE:

I. THE STAGE IS SET 19-22

II. THE PUNISHMENT IS SET 23-26

III. THE LIMITS ARE SET 27-31

Ironside entitled a sermon on this text, "A MISSIONARY - MINDED MAN IN HELL" - You'll see why as we go along.

Lu. 16:19-31 KJV

19. "There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

20. "And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores,"

21. "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores."

22. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried;"

23. "And in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

24. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

25. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

26. "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there."

27. "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house"

28. "(For I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

29. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

30. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

31. "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

My great grandfather was working one day and just fell to the ground dead. No pain - just dropped dead as they say. I heard of another man that pushed back from the dinner table - he pulled out his pipe and slumped - dead.

We recently heard of the two friends that were flying over Microsoft in Washington and the pilot slumped over the controls dead leaving the friend to land the plane without any knowledge of flying.

A friend of my wife's was talking with her husband. He just died - No pain - no struggle - just taken from this life in an instant.

This man's father many years before went to the doctor with a cold and the doctor gave him a shot. The man never left the table that he was sitting on. He had an allergic reaction and was dead in moments.

The account we will be looking at in this study is one which tells of two men that were suddenly taken by death - a spur of the moment occasion for them! Indeed, is not death quite often a spur of the moment occurrence? Indeed, our time could be today - we don't know!

Christ is about to relate quite an account. Turn to Luke 16:19-31 with me and we will look at a very interesting account of two men. Two men that died somewhat unexpectedly.

19. "There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

"CERTAIN" rich man! A specific person. In verse 20 we are told of Lazarus another person.

This is not a parable. It is an account of real people. Parables do not name people. There are very few theologians that even suggest that this is a parable. An account of two men that died unexpectedly.

A "certain" - Do you suppose it was someone that Christ's listeners knew? I suspect that it was.

The richness of this man stands in stark contrast to the poverty of the Beggar. The clothes and food, contrasted with the beggar and hunger.

I have a cartoon - one side of a mountain with a sign pointing to fat city shows a man throwing a washing machine off his truck and he is pictured as thinking "JUNK" while on the other side of the mountain a man is loading the same machine onto a pickup. The sign is pointing to Third world and the man is thinking in his mind, "TREASURE."

We could stop here and have a study on a couple of topics. RICH VS POOR. STUFFED VS HUNGRY. Hundreds of people in our own country are HUNGRY on a regular basis.

Sumptuously = "1. Involving or showing lavish expenditure. 2. Luxurious; magnificent" Funk and Wagnell.

I had worked at the same business for a number of years in Denver. When we left Colorado to pastor in Nebraska one of my friends at work that also was a member of our church asked us over for dinner as a farewell. When we arrived, the couple was in very nice clothes and the house was spotless. We sat for awhile before dinner and the wife brought out small gifts for each of the kids. We then went downstairs for dinner. When we stepped into the room we were about floored with the beauty of the table setting.

The wife had spent hours preparing for our short visit. The table was set in the most perfect way. All the best dishes, the best silver and the best cloth. Before the dinner was over they had given Faith a set of teaspoons. The dinner and evening were just great - to us sumptuous.

One translation mentions "He habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day." (NASB) At any rate this fellow was what we might call a fat cat. Could we dare put that into today's English? He always had a three piece suit on and dined only at the Hyatt Regency.

Recently we were attending a reception given by Regular Baptist Press, in Columbus, OH. We wanted to meet a cousin of mine while in town. Faith called to tell her we were in town. She said she would meet us and asked where we were. When Faith told her the Hyatt Regency, her response was OHHHHH! Faith was quick to tell her we weren't staying there - just attending the reception - in fact we used the hotel's rest rooms to change into and out of our good clothes.

Or could we say - He wore Jordaches and drove a BMW. RICH!

20. "And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who was laid at his gate, full of sores," 21. "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores."

A CERTAIN beggar named Lazarus. Again the term "Certain".

What do we know about Lazarus?

1. A beggar - he made his living by begging at a gate, indeed if you call that a living.

Some suggest that this was a city gate. Others suggest that this was the gate of the rich man. This seems to fit into the text quite well. Later we will see that the rich man seems to know Lazarus so this would fit also.

2. He had to be carried to the gate. A certain gate each day - carried would indicate he was in very poor physical shape as well.

3. Full of sores - we get a cold and we don't want to come to church or go to work! He had to go no matter what.

FULL of sores - evidently all over. OUCH!!

4. Desired to be fed from the crumbs from the rich man's table. Another translation reads, "longing to be fed" (NASB)

He really wanted some food. Evidently begging wasn't as profitable then as it is now. I hear a good panhandler can make \$20-30,000 per year.

Have you ever watched THE LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS? Have you ever said, "Boy, I'd like to just have what they pay in taxes on that house!"

The less fortunate always seem to desire the crumbs of the rich man's table. However, Lazarus desired or longed for only some crumbs of food.

5. The dogs licked his sores. Not only could he not get around on his own - it would seem that he may have been unable to even move enough to push the dogs away. If he was this immobile, his sores may have been from his lack of moving - bed type sores.

We get the feeling that the rich man and Lazarus knew one another. Later we will see the rich man knew Lazarus by sight.

Here Lazarus desired the scraps from the man's table.

WHAT A CONTRASTING PAIR!

While we were interim pastor in Wyoming, we were living on about \$400 a month missionary support. One of the couples invited us to their home for lunch after church. When we arrived, we were ushered into the "informal dinning room" that was off the kitchen. The formal dinning room was about our house length away from where we were. Their house was huge! Everything was so elegant and rich. The kitchen was build just exactly the way they wanted it. All of the cupboards

had metal racks and storage areas built in so you could pull them out to see what you were looking for. Even this contrast is limited when you think of the rich man and Lazarus!

22. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried;"

The beggar died! He was carried away by the angels. Does that give you a hint of what may happen to us when we go to be with the Lord? That is a peaceful picture to draw up in your mind. A man full of pain that couldn't move on his own and angels come to carry him away.

Now, I know it was his spiritual being that was carried away, but I have such a soft peaceful feeling knowing his pain was over - no more - ever!

My pain isn't bad - just a real pain. I was feeling very odd one day and I couldn't figure out what was wrong. I have cracked cartilage in both knees, bad back and a few other aches and pains. I was walking out to the car after work when it dawned on me what was wrong. I hadn't had any pain that day! What a thing to look forward to! To leave this old worn out pained body and be carried away by angels! NEAT! Can we really relate to that? AMEN!

The rich man died also and was buried. One must wonder if his death was related to the death of Lazarus. One must wonder if Lazarus starved to death.

The Contrast between the two continues to develop. One is carried away by angels and the other "WAS BURIED." The statement seems to indicate that there were some very specific differences.

The beggar's body may have just been stuffed in the ground with no ceremony, while the rich man was buried with all the honors available.

Let's consider the contrast between these two for a moment.

THE RICH MAN THE BEGGAR

WAS RICH WAS POOR

HAD EVERYTHING HAD NOTHING

WAS WELL FED WAS HUNGRY

WAS PHYSICALLY WELL WAS CRIPPLED AND FULL OF SORES

LIVED WELL BEGGED AT THE GATE

WAS BURIED FADED AWAY WITH THE ANGELS

Notice that this is all in the physical realm! Man naturally operates in the physical realm and many never desire to enter into activity in the spiritual realm!

OUR TEXT IS ABOUT TO THRUST US INTO THE SPIRITUAL!

The rich man had it all here on earth. The beggar man had nothing here on earth.

You may be today operating in the physical realm and having a ball. You may have a neat car. You may have the latest clothes. You may have a neat house.

You may have 2 VCR's and a big screen TV. You may have guns and jewelry. You may have everything that you want.

I had a student come to my office when I was teaching that was excited with what God was doing in his life. He related to me all of the exciting things that he was learning. He told me of all the great things that God was doing in his family life. He then shifted to tell me of all that he had had at one time, house, cars, guns, etc. He said, "Stan, I had all that!" BUT now look what God is doing for me!!!! He was struggling financially, but God was working in his life - that is what was important.

The richman fared "SUMPTUOUSLY"!

The richman fared LUXURIOUSLY!

The richman fared MAGNIFICENTLY!

HE HAD IT ALL!

HE HAD EVERYTHING OTHERS ARE DESIROUS OF!

YET

Verse 23. "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." He had it all and now he was in Hell! He had it all and now he had nothing! Not much of a position to desire all of a sudden is it?

I'd like to share a poem from the book Hell is No Joke by Mr. Sumner (Zondervan 1959).

"Catherine Danggell expressed it,

Hell! The prison house of despair.

Here are some things that won't be there:

No flowers will bloom on the banks of Hell,

No beauties of nature we love so well;

No comforts of home, music and song,

No friendship of joy will be found in that throng;

No children to brighten the long weary night;

No love nor peace nor one ray of light;

No blood-washed soul with face beaming bright,

No loving smile in the region of night;

No mercy, no pity, no pardon nor grace,

No water, oh, God, what a terrible place!

The pangs of the lost no human can tell,

Not one moment's ease - there is no rest in HELL!

"Hell! The prison house of despair.  
Here are some things that will be there:  
Fire and brimstone will be there, we know,  
For God in His Word has told us so;  
Memory, remorse, suffering and pain,  
Weeping and wailing, but all in vain;  
Blasphemers, swearers, haters of God,  
Christ-rejectors while here on earth trod;  
Murderers, gamblers, drunkards and liars,  
Will have their part in the lake of fire;  
The filthy, the vile, the cruel and mean,  
What a horrible mob in Hell will be seen!  
Yes, more than humans on earth can tell,  
Are the torments and woes of eternal HELL!"

Not only will the trash of the earth be there, but also I fear, many "right living" lost people. People that live like a Christian - some may even call themselves Christians. People that think they will make it to heaven on what they have done in this life.

A week before my father's death I was talking to him about Christ. He told me that he was HOPING he had done enough good in his life to gain entrance to heaven.

SUCH CONTRASTS!

RICH & POOR

LUXURY & POVERTY

HELL & PARADISE

TORMENT & PERFECT COMFORT

vs 25 He could see Abraham and Lazarus.

We see here that we will all know everyone in the eternal state. We will be able to seek out David and talk to him. We will be able to go see Noah and ask him of the world in which he lived - that is if we are interested, with the Lord to go see!

Imagine the conflict in the rich man's mind. To be at one moment feasting sumptuously and the next moment in torment.

Instantly! From pleasure to torment. CAN YOU PICTURE IT? THEN To see Lazarus and Abraham in comfort!

24. "And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

And he "CRIED" - Not mentioned, not discussed, not announced, not whimpered, but HE CRIED! "HAVE MERCY ON ME" "SEND LAZARUS" Notice that he did not ask for his Jordaches or his BMW, nor for his good food, BUT for A DROP OR TWO OF WATER!

A MAN THAT HAD IT ALL NOW CRYING FOR DROPLETS OF WATER! HE FINALLY HAD HIS PRIORITIES STRAIGHT! "FOR I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME"

25. "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

MORE CONTRAST

Abraham asks if the rich man remembers.

IN LIFE

YOU HAD GOOD THINGS LAZURUS HAD EVIL THINGS

NOW

YOU ARE TORMENTED HE IS COMFORTED

You had it all! Now you have only torment. He had nothing! Now he has everything.

This verse seems to indicate that his material possessions were certainly a part of his current situation.

26. "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from here to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from there."

There is a gulf fixed!

Sheol was a place for all departed spirits. The lost were placed in the side of torments, and the righteous people were placed in the side of comfort. Between these two places is a great gulf that none of the departed spirits could cross.

The gulf that is fixed rather forcefully shows that there is no second chance to accept the Lord once you have died as some of the "isms" of our day teach.

It is of interest that there is indicated here that there may have been a desire by those on the paradise side to help those in the torment side.

It is also of interest that there will be an eternal desire to leave the torment side - which will be an

impossibility.

27. "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house"

28. "(For I have five brethren), that he may testify [REPEAT] unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

ANOTHER REQUEST: He is able to remember His family in the place of torments. Remember Ironside's title, "A missionary - minded man in Hell"? You can get the picture can't you! Can you imagine - "IN AGONY" AND KNOWING THAT YOUR FAMILY IS ON THEIR WAY TO THE SAME DESTINATION!

"TESTIFY" Christian does that term ring in your ears. Let it rattle around in your mind this week! "TESTIFY"

Note, also the context of testify. HELL. Today we try to sweet talk people into heaven - however the EYEWITNESS of hell tells us to testify of hell as well as heaven! Those today that concentrate on the love of God in their witnessing are setting aside GOD'S JUSTICE, HIS VENGEANCE, HIS PUNISHMENT AND HIS RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION! Indeed, they are not giving the whole Gospel. Christ saved us from ETERNAL PUNISHMENT! That is part of the glorious message that we are to proclaim!

29. "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Abraham again speaks: Do you feel a calmness in Abraham's voice?

We should have a quiet calmness in our minds when we talk to men of their souls. We have the authority of the Word of God as to what will happen and we need to communicate effectively what we know of it.

Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. Salvation can be known from Moses and the prophets! Can we find application in this thought for our own day? Some today say we have unevangelized in America and that we need to reach them! We are spending too much on foreign missions and we have a real need here at home.

True, there are unevangelized here and true we need to reach them, HOWEVER THE BIBLE IS TO BE HAD IN EVERY DEPARTMENT STORE, EVERY BOOKSTORE, EVERY MOTEL OR HOTEL ROOM! YET We have 3 billion people in the world that have never heard the Gospel. THEY DON'T HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS!

A New Tribe's missionary mentioned recently that there are 2000 tribes that do not have the Bible. 2000 TRIBE'S THAT DON'T HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF OTHER PEOPLE!

30. "And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

31. "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, through one rose from the dead."

The rich man honestly thought if Lazarus would return from the dead that his brothers would repent. Abraham says if they won't listen to Moses and the prophets -(whom they had grown up on probably) - they wouldn't even listen to one raised from the dead.

PAUSE

Do you know what event follows this account chronologically in the life of Christ? Let me share it with you. "And when He [Jesus] thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth," Jn. 11:43,44a

Now we should also take note of the audience's reaction to this. In 45,46 it states, "Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done."

The Jewish leaders heard the account of the rich man and Lazarus - they heard the reports of a man named Lazarus being raised from the dead -NO CHANGE!

No, it wasn't the same Lazarus but they must have thought of the account of Lazarus and the rich man and the raising of Lazarus! Indeed, they didn't believe when Christ Himself rose from the

dead!

Do the words of Rom. 6:23 have new meaning to you today? We all use it at times to witness. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

The term death can become somewhat academic today. Try this - For the wages of sin is eternal torment! The wages of sin is eternal separation from God. The wages of sin is eternal HELL!

The rich man had it all on this earth. The beggar man had nothing on this earth

YET IN ETERNITY

The rich man had nothing but agony and the beggar man had EVERYTHING FOR ETERNITY!

NOW, when do you want to have it all, HERE? OR THERE?

Earlier in the book of Luke it is recorded, "And He said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

"For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

"For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?" Lu. 9:23-25

WHAT PROFIT IS THERE IF YOU HAVE IT ALL HERE AND GO TO HELL?

Nothing on this earth is more important right now to a lost person than the Gospel of Jesus Christ! I heard someone say "I wouldn't miss heaven for anything." Think about it.

If you are lost, you need not go to hell and suffer as the rich man is suffering today! Yes, he has

suffered for only 1960 years and all of eternity yet ahead of him! Christ has provided the way for you to go to eternity with Him!

Christ paid the cost of your sin! All you have to do is accept that payment.

God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross in your place as punishment for your sin. The price has been paid, the debt is no longer due. Christ did everything that needed to be done for you to enter into eternal glory with Him - all you have to do is accept what He has done.

It isn't wrong to have it all. It is wrong to have it all and fail to prepare for eternity! How about it? Are you so busy trying to get it all, that you've missed the simple call of Christ, to accept Him?

To the lost person it's - have it all here and reject Christ and suffer torment - Or settle accounts with God and Have it all in heaven!

To the saved - remember that word that we mentioned? TESTIFY. Let's be about the Lord's business this week!

Remember having it all isn't wrong if God has given it to you. HOWEVER Having it all is wrong if eternity is taking 2nd place to your own desires!

Believer - we have it all spiritually! We have salvation! We need to give it away! We need to give what we have to others!

There seems to be one more item to look at.

The rich man didn't do certain things.

1. He showed no remorse - evidently he knew he was where he belonged.
2. He didn't ask for release. He must have known his punishment was just.
3. He didn't apologize to Lazarus. He must have known it was too late to make amends.

TALK ABOUT A HOPELESS POSITION! Once death overtakes you it truly is too late - indeed, he did not request a second chance - he must have known all was done concerning him.

Believer - TESTIFY to those that need to know - to those that do not know Christ.

To those that do not know Christ as Savior - PREPARE BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

DON'T WAIT TILL YOU GET TO HELL TO REALIZE THAT CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY!  
THEN IT IS TOO LATE!

There is one further contrast that I would like to draw your attention to. The poor man had nothing! Not even food! Yet in eternity he was in comfort. What a promise and thought to encourage us when we are down - when we are sick. One day we will enter complete, total, eternal comfort!

THINK OF IT!

And all this because someone took time to explain the Gospel to us!

TESTIFY!

In closing I would like to read an old song for you. This is a song that people used to sing in church! You'd be run out of most churches if you sang it for a special number in this day and age. Listen to the words.

FIVE SECONDS AFTER DEATH

The Lament of a Lost Soul in Hell

"Five seconds after death, and now my eyes do see

The awful, flaming pit of hell is opening under me.

My blinded eyes are open now, when it is far too late. (Vs 1)

"Five seconds after death and now my ears do hear

The terrible shrieks and cries of souls in agony and fear.

I would not hear God's earnest call I would not heed His plea,

And now, I too, am here, in Hell for all eternity. (Vs 2)

"Five seconds after death and I'm forever lost,

O that I had not given tho't to our salvation's cost!

But foolishly, like multitudes, I just ignored God's Word,

I would not listen, would not heed, the warnings of our Lord. (vs 3)

"Lost I'm lost! Yes, I'm forever lost!

Lost! I'm lost! O soul, think of the cost!

I'll never walk the streets of gold,

I'll never see those in the fold,

The Christ of God I'll ne'er behold,

For I am Lost! lost! lost! (chorus)

"Five seconds after death, O soul, where will YOU be?

Consider well where you will spend your long eternity.

"God's Spirit pleads with you today, so open wide the door,

He'll give you pardon, peace and power, and life for evermore."

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M05050

TITLE: THE EXCESSES OF

READ Eph 5:18-21

OUTLINE:

I. Introduction

II. EXCESSES OF WINE

III. EXCESSES OF NEED

III. EXCESSES OF MISSIONS?

V. Conclusion

I. INTRODUCTION

We are vitally interested in Missions and use every opportunity we are given to speak of missions. I included missions in my Christian Education courses, in my Theology courses, and naturally in my mission courses. Some might wonder how I fit missions into Theology. I noticed in studying for my classes that many of the topics of theology are actually missions related.

If you consider the section we call "MAN SIN AND SALVATION". If that isn't MISSIONS in a nutshell I don't think that you will find it in a nutshell. We are to be talking to lost men about their sin and possible salvation.

As I was considering the Attributes of God. Many of the attributes of the Lord are the prime movers in His working in lost mankind's lives. Love of his creatures, Justness of offering salvation to ALL mankind, Compassion extended to the lost. Many many others.

As you consider Bibliology, the study of the revelation. Why would God want to bother revealing

His Word to us if it weren't to COMMUNICATE TO ALL OF MANKIND?

Let it suffice to say that MISSIONS should be an integrated part of our lives - EVERY BELIEVERS LIFE!

## II. EXCESSES OF WINE

I would like to share with you in this study a few thoughts from my past - a time, which I am not terribly proud of - but a time that the Lord allowed me to go through.

I was saved in my senior year of High School and the man that led me to the Lord did nothing to teach me or disciple me in the things of the Lord.

I could stop here and share a message or two on the importance of discipleship after you lead someone to the Lord, but we won't take time for that. Let it suffice to say that much of what I am about to tell you of my time in the Navy could have been eliminated from my life with a few hours of discipleship.

Some say today that we must experience things to really know what they are like. I disagree with that philosophy. You do not have to try drugs to know what they are like and know what their effects are. You do not have to try alcohol to know what it is like and what its affects are like. To those that tell me they have to try it to understand it I say, "Then why don't you see what suicide is like." YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPERIMENT.

Much of what I am going to share with you is a result of two very common errors of philosophy in our current society, indeed of some of our churches in America.

The first is that we get people saved, but never do we take time to disciple them. We ought to be teaching our new converts the basics of the faith!

The other philosophy that I am speaking of is "SOCIAL DRINKING." Many churches are discussing the topic of social drinking again. Let me say to those that say social drinking is okay. "Why are so many alcoholics started down that road by "SOCIAL DRINKING" if it is okay? Social drinking and experimenting in alcohol led me down a four-year course of wasted money,

wasted time and wasted spiritual life!

The day I was discharged from the service I began drinking in San Francisco. The next morning I woke up in my brother's house in the Los Angeles area. I do not remember the trip at all. "SOCIAL DRINKING" and "EXPERIMENTING" are really nothing but tools of the devil.

Let me begin with the first Christmas that I spent in the Navy aboard an aircraft carrier. In the Navy it is traditional on many ships and duty stations to have a Christmas bash - I mean Christmas party. On the Hancock it was no different.

The Hancock had over 3000 men and officers aboard so they planned a very large get together. They rented the top of the Mart in San Francisco. It is a large building and the top floor has a fantastic view of the city. The ship rented the whole top floor of the Mart Building.

The night came for me to go to the party - you see they ran the party three nights and divided the crew into thirds for the party. I was enjoying the party and the friends that I had made on the ship. Within a couple of hours I was basically under my friends control. I did not care what I was doing. They would say, "Let's go listen to music so they would lead me to the music. This went on for about an hour before I decided I needed to sober up a little. I was going to go out for some air. The ship, fortunately had the foresight to station SP's (the navy equivalent to MP's) at the front door of the Mart building to assist people like myself back to the ship. I remember part of the ride back but very little else till morning.

At one point during the party I had my head lying down over the back of a chair. One of my friends called my name. I tried to raise my head but didn't make it. He reached over and - you are going to find this hard to believe" He reached over and grabbed my hair and lifted my head. The next morning the top of my head was very sore around the hair roots.

The next part of what I want to share comes from a time on Okinawa an island in the Pacific Ocean. I was stationed on a troop transport at the time. Three of my friends and I were nearly broke. We pooled all our money and found that we had enough to go to the Air Force base and have a pizza and a very few drinks. We went and enjoyed our pizza. As we left the base we passed a bar that was selling drinks for 25 cents. Drinks usually were a dollar plus. We decided that was a very good deal. We went in and started buying rounds of drinks from our pooled money. We didn't want to pass up a sale!

As the evening went on things were getting a bit out of control. Several of us had a little more money put away for special things coming up in the future. We began spending that money because we were out of the pooled resources. Needless to say when we left the bar that night we were very fortunate to make it back to the ship.

I wasn't so bad that I didn't know what was going on but there were times that night that I could not get myself to do what I wanted to do. I went down to take a shower and forgot to take off my clothes as I remember. I was so tired I slipped down into the bottom of the shower and fell asleep with the water running. One of my friends happened into the shower area and woke me up and headed me to bed.

I trust that a couple of things are true. Number one is that none of you will find this exciting and decide that you want to try it. That would be foolishness plus. There is nothing glorious in not being in control of yourself! Number two is that none of you will take offense to these accounts.

I hesitated several days before I set this study to paper because I feared that some would take offense or feel it completely out of line for a worship service.

The reason that I went ahead with this study is that my God and Lord is the one that chose the drunkenness of man to illustrate His truths at times in the Scriptures. If God wants us to relate to what He says we must know something about the illustrations that He uses.

Not that we have to go get drunk to know what He is speaking of but that we understand the principles of what the illustration is saying. Being drunk is basically the idea that the person no longer has complete control of himself. The alcohol has completely fogged his mind and the alcohol is in a sense controlling the person.

This is why people cannot speak clearly when drinking, it is why they cannot walk properly, it is why they cannot drive properly when they have been drinking excessively.

I trust that none are offended with what I have said. I also trust that there are many here today that have not experienced what I have been talking about today, and that you will vow to your Lord to never find out what it is like to be drunk. I hope that term isn't too offensive but it carries the idea much better than some of the \$24 words we use today to make the alcoholic feel better, you know words like disease, substance abuse, bad habit.

### III. EXCESSES OF NEED

I am only going to share one fact with you and move onto the next point in my outline. Today we have several thousand lost people going into eternal torment in every single hour. That is LOST people. Most of these people have never heard of the Gospel and many of them have never heard the name, Jesus Christ.

As we sat through a Sunday school class several thousand lost souls died on planet earth and are in torment with the man of Luke 16 that cried to Abraham, "I am tormented in this flame!"

### III. EXCESSES OF MISSIONS?

Some today accuse missionaries of being extravagant. I was in a pastor's office one day while on deputation and the pastor was holding a letter from a missionary that was trying to raise \$2400 per month of support to go to the field. He said something to the effect that if I could explain why the missionary needed so much money he would give me a meeting.

I told him that I did not think that the amount was out of line for the ministry that he was entering into. He was with a service men's group that supplies housing and meals on weekends for servicemen abroad. They have to have a large house with room for the men and the Bible studies etc.

As I began to explain the costs of missions the pastor began to be more quiet and I think that he was properly informed for the first time of the costs of missions today.

No, I didn't get a meeting in that church. I do think the other missionary did however, which was great.

I think that missionaries could tighten their belts some and many are doing just that. We were appointees to Ireland for five years. The missionaries with our mission turned down cost of living increases yearly because they were making due with what they had.

When I hear of pastors wanting missionaries to tighten their belts I feel like asking them how tight their belts are. An American Missionary Fellowship missionary spoke in chapel at Frontier

and mentioned that he was told by a pastor that he was resigning and seeking a new church. He wasn't being paid enough. The missionary asked how much he was receiving. The pastor replied that he was receiving \$48,000 per year.

I certainly do not want to downgrade pastors but let me tell you, we have many men coming out of our schools and seminaries that are looking for positions and not ministries! Their first priority is not how may I minister to you people it is how much are you going to minister to my pocket book.

With this type of people you cannot build missions.

We have been speaking in churches for several years all over the western part of our country and there aren't more than four or five that have any type of outreach program for the lost in their church.

We attended one little Baptist church two or three times in a year and a half period and they had had two outreach programs. Something has to be right in that church!

As to the excesses of missions I personally believe that they are few. Most missions in fundamental circles operate on a shoestring and that shoestring usually is tied together in several places to get it to wear a little longer.

We do not have excessive workers today. Most missions could put 50 workers to work immediately in areas where they want to start works.

We do have an excessive amount of financial problems today in missions.

We have many appointees that are taking longer to raise their support than they are taking to prepare for the ministry. That is four years of college and then five years of deputation. We have appointees that cannot get to the field. While on deputation we ran into a number of pastors that were ministering in churches because they could not raise support to get to the field.

Several of these feel that this was God's way to help them realize that He wanted them to minister here in the US.

My wife and I spent over five years on deputation trying to raise support to go to Ireland. We, today feel that for now God wants us helping train others to go where we could not.

When we first arrived at a teaching ministry in Wyoming we sent out over 150 letters to churches and pastors in the area to see if we could come and present the work of the school and the work that God has called us to. From the 150 letters we were able to schedule one meeting. That meeting was canceled because the church closed before the meeting.

I mention this to acquaint you with some of the problems of missionaries today. We have missionaries that are veterans trying to return to the field for their fourth and fifth terms and cannot because they have lost so much support.

We have missionaries come home in the middle of the term to raise enough support to remain on the field till furlough.

Most missionaries find that if they send out 100 letters and follow the letter up with a personal call to the pastors that they will get ten meetings. Of those ten meetings there will be one church or individual that will take on support.

These are facts that are about three years old and I suspect that they are even worse now from what I gather talking to missionaries.

Mission excesses? I don't think so for the most part.

## V. CONCLUSION

Now let us look FINALLY at a Scripture passage that we can tie all of this together with. I have purposely not brought us to a conclusion until now. We have seen the excesses of wine and the drunkenness that causes one to loose control. Indeed the alcohol takes control of the person.

We have seen that there is an excess in the needs of the world today. There are millions dying without the Lord and no one is telling them about salvation. We have seen that the mission organizations are not being excessive in their sending out of missionaries. Indeed most missions could, TODAY, send out large numbers of workers if they had them available.

We need now to consider what drunkenness has to do with missions. Let's read a very familiar passage. Eph. 5:18-21 "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Now I realize this is a text speaking of our community worship and times together. I do not want to detract from that interpretation of this passage. I want to however, spend some time thinking of verse 18 and how it may relate to the way we live our lives in 1996 America. "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit,"

Now, remembering it was God, the one that inspired the Scriptures, that chose the illustration of drunkenness. It is God that decided to compare the filling of the Spirit with the drunkenness of wine. Not Stan Derickson.

Now, if you will remember that the alcohol brings the person into a state where he no longer is able to do those things that he wills to do. That drunk driver coming at you wills to drive between the lines on the highway yet he is unable to.

Now how about some spiritual application? If the Spirit of God is controlling us, as He desires to, we will no longer do those things that WE WILL but those things that HE WILL.

It isn't that we are slaves to the spirit but it is that we want so much to do what God wants us to do that our own desires fade into the sunset, or fade into His desires.

When it comes to desiring and willing to buy a new car when the old one is still running very nicely it is submitting to the Spirit and doing something else with that money. Might we suggest the missions offering?

When it comes to desiring and willing to stay home super bowl Sunday, and you are perfectly free to do so - it is doing that which the Spirit would move you to do. Go to church and fellowship with the children of God. And I don't mean bringing your 5" TV so you can sit in the nursery and watch the game as one woman did in Salem one year.

Let us think about these ideas of the Spirit controlling us as alcohol controls the drinker.

The Spirit is desirous of seeing all of God's commands and requests of us to come to pass in our lives.

The Lord has given each one of us the command to go.

The Lord has given each one of us the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors of God to bring the lost world to Him.

The Lord has promised to provide our needs.

God is the commander in chief of the spiritual forces.

He commands all the angelic host and he controls all the human host. Or does He?

Can we think along these lines for a few moments?

He is the commander in chief and distributes His forces as He sees fit.

He has a spiritual warfare in progress. The United States is today primarily the home base for God although that is changing. The United States is one country that still holds forth God as very important to them.

The war is taking place primarily in the rest of the world.

Now, we know by facts and figures that around 90% of God's Christian workers are in the United States and about 10% of his trained workers are in the rest of the world.

Consider World War II when Hitler and Japan were cleaning our plow. If the president had stationed 90% of the trained troops on the west and east coasts and sent only 10% to the front

how long would he have remained in office?

I rather think that there have been marching orders sent out to God's workers but they have been drunk with money, power, prestige and everything else. The Spirit has not had the control that He needs to move that person on out to the front.

This applies equally well to the man in the pew as well as the man in the pulpit. There are, I would suspect many that have been called but that have not responded to prepare and to go.

I am not pointing the finger at anyone. It is just illogical to believe that the Lord would distribute the troops as they are now distributed.

Another area that we might think about for a few moments is the area of praying. While on deputation, we challenged many congregations with the lack of prayer in our churches.

The Lord told the disciples to pray therefore that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth workers. We today have the same Lord of the Harvest. He is God and He has not changed. We have workers trained ready and desiring to go to the foreign field but cannot because of lack of funds.

Is it a financial problem - is it because of the economy? No, for the Lord still has the cattle on a thousand hills that He hasn't sold.

If there is a problem in the trilogy of Lord of the harvest, workers and prayer I think we all know where the problem lies. We do not pray in the church in America!

There is a story that I once read that was supposedly true of a church in mid-America that was having terrible financial troubles. They ask one of their deacons to be treasurer of the church. Not being excited with the financial problems he stated that he would take the job for one year on two conditions. One that he would not be ask any questions, and two that he not give a report until the end of the fiscal year when he left office.

The deacons knew and trusted the man so agreed to his requests. At the end of the year the treasurer stood and gave his report. He had paid the entire church mortgage, he had paid all

unpaid bills, and had excess in all funds of the church. The pastor in amazement asked the deacon how in the world he had accomplished all that he had done.

The deacon said, "Well pastor as you know this is a farming community and most of our members are farmers. I work at the elevator here in town and when the members came in with their loads of grain I totaled their loads up and took 10% of their yield and placed the money in the church's general fund.

Now, folks I don't recommend that method of church giving, however it points up the fact of what we could do in America if all believers would only tithe.

The facts and figures show that the majority of giving in evangelical circles comes from a very small percentage of the overall church membership.

In two years we as believers spend more on Christian tapes, records and concerts than we do on missions in a year. You apply the needed truth of those facts to the church today.

Now, let's spend a moment or two with the person that feels that he is called to be a layperson ministering in the local church. Maybe you are giving 20% of your income to the church, and maybe you teach Sunday school class and maybe you are at every service of the church. You may be the model churchgoer. FANTASTIC - KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Do you witness for your Lord?

Every one of us is an ambassador and not a one of us has any reason not to be witnessing for our Lord.

I am a little technical in my definition of missions. Many today say that missions is witnessing at home. In a general sense, yes, that is true. In a general sense we are all missionaries, however if you look at the early church our missionaries were a bit different from the normal, stay in Jerusalem believer.

The missionaries of Acts were CALLED, they were SENT, and they were sent to particular geographical locations at times. We are all to be witnesses yet the missionary is someone that is

called to do a specific work for the Lord.

Take time to commit yourself to the concept of the Spirit having such a control of your life that you are always doing what God wants you to do.

Such control that you are always open to his leading in witnessing, in serving, in going to the foreign field if that should be the case.

I trust that you will meditate on the comparison that the Lord supplied to us of being so controlled with the Spirit that we are like the drinker that is controlled by the wine.

It is not that we are to be out of control because of the Spirit. That is a false understanding of the verse. It is that He is in control of our lives so that He can guide and direct us into those things that the Lord would have us to do, be it giving, be it witnessing, be it going, be it praying, be it cleaning, be it sharing, be it anything.

Challenge yourself and your family and your church family to be filled or controlled with the Holy Spirit.

I trust that the thoughts haven't been too mundane and heavy for you.

I will close with one final illustration. A pastor that taught a class I was in during College mentioned that he was at one time an assistant pastor in a very large church. The church was so large that it had several pastors and assistant pastors. For some reason all of the staff were on the platform for one of the final sessions of a missions conference at the church. The speaker had been giving a real challenge to the people about dedicating their lives to the Lord. The pastor mentioned that he had been considering the message but knew that it wasn't for him for the Lord had led him to be the assistant pastor of this church. As the speaker went along the man began thinking and the Lord began moving and at the close of the service the man was really wondering if the Lord would have him leave his position and go to the foreign field.

The speaker began some final challenges and the final of these went something like this. If nothing else you folks in this church have a bunch of pastors - why don't you send one of them to the field. The speaker was pointing point blank at the man. He, before the closing prayer had committed himself to go to the field and made public his decision that morning.

What has God been doing in your life this month? What will you let Him do in your life in the coming weeks?

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M06000

TITLE: THE CLASS OF 57 HAD ITS DREAMS

Read Ps. 145

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

I. OUR DREAMS

II. OUR REALITY

III. OUR HOPE

CONCLUSION

I. OUR DREAMS

Just to recall some of my high school classmates, I dug out the 1958 Lexington Minuteman annual, and snooped for awhile. I took some time to look through some of the signatures etc. It is appalling what I was accused of in that book. These days I could call it liable, and sue someone. One underclassman stated, in words, the confidence that the student body had in Stanley Derickson. In my senior annual she wrote, "Best of luck in your future years at Lexington High School." Another was not so nice, "Well here's hoping you get killed."

I must admit I ran with a strange crowd. I must also admit, I had forgotten what a great guy I was!

In looking back, I always remember the kids I graduated with. One became a center for the

Minnesota, Vikings, one a coach for the University of Nebraska, that went on to be a coach with the Vikings and there were many more.

I want, for a moment or two, for you to go back in your own minds to your high school friends. I want you to consider the result of your own generation. To help in this I'd like to share with you the thoughts of a Statler brothers song that was popular a number of years ago, and see if there isn't a whole bundle of truth for believers in 199... .

Yes, it is a secular song. Yes, it relates to how the world is. Yes, it shouldn't relate to church services. Yes, it is strange to bring a secular song into a preaching service. But! I trust you will see that it is very relevant to us today. Please bear with me and think with me as I read the words to this song and then bring our thoughts to spiritual things and some application.

THE CLASS OF 57 by THE STATLER BROTHERS relates that some are selling cars, fixing hair, working in grocery stores, selling real estate, working in research etc. The thought is that all the class of 57 had dreams of making a big difference in their world. The realization that few ever reach those dreams is the point of the song.

I'm not really that old! The class of 57 predates me a bunch!!! I was in the class of 58! I admit the song has some reminiscence value, but I have to be very honest in stating, I see in the song a reality in which many of my own class mates are probably trapped! It is a very sad thing to me to know that all those people had hopes and dreams that faded into a truck driving job or sales job that does little to fulfill ANY dream.

It is even worse when I think of the thousands of class of 57's that have experienced the same end. The highlight of their life is getting together now and then for a big bash called a class reunion. I have never gone to any of my reunions because they are always centered around booze and they usually cost a fortune.

Having dreams does not guarantee reality of those dreams in the future! Indeed, we know that King David had a dream that he left unfulfilled when he died. He had dreamed and desired to build the Lord's temple, but due to his life God told him that was not to be the case. David ultimately left the materials for his son to build the temple. READ I Chron. 22.6-8

## II. OUR REALITY

Do you remember the Christians in your graduating class? Have any followed on with the Lord's work? Assuming we are all walking with the Lord - what made the difference between you and those that aren't walking with God?

What could you plan into a youth program to be sure all turns out well in future generations? What can families do to assist in turning out committed young people?

I talked recently with the youth pastor in a church and he was telling of some of the class of 92 in this same church. One of the young fellows has parents that bought him a car. The wife had to go to work to make the payments and the youths attitude is that if they will do that then why should he work. He rides around in his car and doesn't care about anything.

The youth pastor mentioned also that the kids in his youth group that aren't interested in spiritual things come from homes with parents that aren't interested in spiritual things.

I think that the home has a direct input into the youth's life! Those that were challenged before Graduation to follow God -- What was the key to their following and others dropping away? Might I call your attention to the REALITY of the class of 58? My Class (approx. 100 students)

Of the class only two have achieved any fame of any sort. I've already mentioned that one was an assistant coach for Nebraska and then the Vikings and the other was a center for the Vikings for several years. The rest are driving truck, selling cars, working here and there.

Of the Christian kids that I graduated with several are divorced, one drank himself to an early grave, one married an unsaved person, some are walking with the Lord and some aren't. None of us has done anything of great importance in our lives other than raise families.

This is not a song folks - THIS IS REALITY! This is what happened to the CHRISTIAN KIDS of the class of 58 in only one school in one year in this country!

Jesus said in Matt. 28:19-20, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

SO! Why, did some turn their back on the spiritual values that they had? Indeed, most of them had similar spiritual upbringing. (Mine was much abbreviated.) SO! Why is only one of these believers in active Christian service? SO! Why isn't the class of 58 going forth for their Lord and Savior?

I would challenge you to look into your own spiritual class of ..... and see how the averages are.

These young people came out of a good Bible belt, Bible believing, Fundamental church. Why have so many churches been turning out classes of 58 instead of classes of young people that are willing to go out into the world to make disciples instead of bucks?

Why have our young people turned to the world's standards for dress? For dating? For marriage? For divorce? Why have our young people turned to the world's standards for moral choices? Why have our young people turned to the world for their entertainment?

Because they have probably taken the standard that the church has taken - the world's standards of dress, standards of morals and standards of entertainment.

I have done a study of Humanism Vs the Church. I find almost point for point Humanism's belief is in the church today. The whole thought of self gratification is where the church is at today. If I want it - I SHOULD HAVE IT. If it is against what I've been taught - TUFF - I'll do it anyway.

I hear the same beat and sound in the Christian music that I hear in secular music. For the most part in tuning across the radio dial I can't tell when I reach a Christian station unless I turn it up and try to catch some of the words. When I happen to catch someone talking, I'm usually appalled at what I'm hearing! So much false doctrine coming from "Christian Radio" and believers are supporting it.

I hear the same rhetoric in Christian homes about money and things as I hear in secular homes. I see the same dress in Christian homes as I see in the secular homes. I see the same morals in Christian homes as I see in secular homes.

It is no wonder that our teenagers look, act and seem to be the same as the world, they have been following the standard that has been set before them by their Christian peers!

STRONG YOU SAY? YES, I trust it is strong, for I believe that is very true.

When the class of 58 graduated I had no dreams! I had no purpose in life and I had no desire to do much of anything. Why? Who missed it? Why wasn't I challenged spiritually?

God took hold of my life much later and turned it around. He gave me a command in my freshman year of college. GO YE! In our first missions conference a missionary named Ron Blue - He is now Dr. Blue and I believe he teaches at Dallas Seminary - explained that great commission text to us, and it was the neatest thing that I had ever heard. That it was for everyone - but more important, that it was for me!

From that point on I had a dream. I had a purpose. No Christian teen should ever leave high school without a strong sense of their place in God's plan for mankind!

From that point on, I thought I'd change the world with my works and deeds. I took my Bible college training and was from that freshman year headed toward teaching in a Bible College. All my hopes and dreams and plans were toward the day when I would accept my first teaching position and begin to train young men and women to obey the GO YE!

GUESS WHAT? Along the way to that goal that God set before me 20 years ago I have observed that we have a lot of class of 58's. 1. We have a lot of Christians that have gone everywhere but to the world with the Gospel.

2. We have a lot of split homes. The churches divorce rate is not that great when you compare it with the worlds!

3. We have a lot of worldly people. We have Christians in business that operate on the world's standard rather than the Lord's standard. We have Christians that act like the world. They talk, act, and live like the world.

4. We have a lot of immoral people. We have a staggering number of Christian ministers falling into moral problems. I recently talked with a man from a church in Nebraska that had had a series of three preachers that had totally embarrassed the church people. One stole from the church, one had an affair, and the third talked for months on sex and related subjects, in every service and on his radio program.

A man took a church in Colorado. He used the school where I taught as a reference. The school did not know the man. A deacon went to his house to talk and found the pastor smoking and gambling. The pastor had left his previous pastorate because of debts. He was being sued by his creditors.

5. We have a lot of materialistic people. I have talked with ministers that have decided where they will and will not serve God based on finances, climate and proximity to family.

I have talked with Christians that see as their purpose in life, to enjoy the money that they have to the very fullest. They at times even give to the church, but they could do so much more if they chose to serve Him completely.

6. We have a lot of disinterested people. I've spoken in churches where there were very few even listening to the message.

7. WE HAVE VERY PRECIOUS FEW THAT ARE GOING TO THE WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL - WITH THEIR LORD'S COMMAND IN MIND!

How do you rate when you consider what you have done for your Lord since your graduation from high school? Are you one of the one's that decided to follow Christ in the ministry that He set before each one of us? Or are you one of the one's that just faded into the woodwork of life? Or maybe you are just beginning to fade - maybe your commitment is on the decline.

I fear there are multitudes of people from the class of 57 in our churches. People that faded into the old timers class or maybe just arrived there having never been challenged. We were in an older adult class recently where the excitement of the day was the question whether a man with back problems should go with surgery or a chiropractor. The next exciting item of discussion was whether one of the men had retired or not.

IF, and I mean if, most of our church people have ever taken the great commission seriously, most have just as seriously ignored it later in life.

I personally am a pessimist when it comes to the class of 58 having any great impact on the Gospel scene. We are too old to go, too tight to give, and I fear too unwilling oft times to pray.

However, there is hope and that hope lies in what the younger generations can do!

### III. OUR HOPE

In thinking back over the class of 58, I find only one thing that may have determined my being the one to go into the ministry.

All of the others were raised in Christian homes. I was not and my being saved in high school is the only real distinction between myself and the other Christian kids I graduated with.

Being saved out of a life of sin seems, as I observe people, to bring the realization of God's call on the person's life to the forefront in their thinking and commitments. There is right up front, a realization that the person was destined for hell and only the work of the Lord changed that! The idea of God owning the person is very prominent in their thinking.

Maybe we need to communicate the lostness of man to our youth!

The question may have come into your mind. **WHY ARE WE HAVING SUCH POOR RESULTS IN OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?** May I make a few suggestions that may help you evaluate your own church and your own ministries relating to youth?

1. The Lord spent three years with the disciples and I believe all went into some type of ministry, be it missions or pastoring. How many churches do you know where anyone spends three years worth of time **REALLY** trying to train the youth in the things of the Lord? Is your youth program designed to help the youth to know what the Christian life is all about?

The youth pastor I mentioned earlier told me that he had taken a book of the Bible to study with the young people. They thought that was neat - they had never done that before. They had not been taught the Word of God. Is your program designed to teach them the Biblical standard of life? Or do you even have a planned, purposeful and committed program for your children, and youth.

2. Compare the lives of your youth with the standard that has been set before them by the majority of the church folks. Do you find that the youth are following what they have been seeing

in the church folks? Is what they are seeing proper?

3. Does your church provide a youth program that is designed to help them to be evangelistic? Are they included in the missions planning and missions conferences?

4. Are your youth really saved, or are they just putting on the facade that allows them to live and operate in a Christian family and surrounding?

I would like to quote a very familiar text from Matthew and make some brief comments as we go along. This text is one of the most quoted of Scripture I would guess. Please do not go to sleep as you read it because you've heard it a thousand times before.

**IF WE AND OUR YOUTH COULD LEARN TO LIVE THIS TEXT THEN SOME OF OUR FUTURE CLASSES WOULD TURN OUT ALL RIGHT!**

Matt. 6:9b-13

I would like to read one of Christ's prayers and I am not interested in discussing whether this is really the Lord's prayer or not. It is a prayer of the Lord that we want to look at.

"Our Father,"

This may seem very simple, yet it is very hard. God must be our Father - we must be saved to live the life that is honoring to the Lord. Salvation is not an option in the Christian life! It is an imperative! We have so many "Christians" today that don't know the Lord. Within the term seems to be a relationship, as well as a subservience - we are willing to do His bidding.

"who art in heaven,"

Again, this may seem very simple yet is very hard for some Christians. Our Father must be the Father that dwells in heaven and not the father of lies that dwells here on earth. Many try to serve the father of this world while calling themselves "Christian."

"Hallowed be thy name"

Holy is thy name. Not your own name, but the name of the Lord! Many seem to think that they are the one that should be revered instead of the Lord.

God IS holy! We are only struggling toward that end. The term hallowed is the Greek word that is normally translated sanctify in the New Testament. Sanctify means to set apart. His name is to be set apart! Held with honor! Used reverently!

We were watching 48 hours and they followed some people from a Christian tour around Times Square. One of the women used the Lord's name in vain twice. What a testimony! (7-8-92) In case you watched that show, yes we turned it off before it was over because of the trash. It is bad when you have to shut the news programs off.

"Thy kingdom come."

It is the Lord's kingdom that we are to be working for and toward, not our own. Indeed, to watch most of us spend, you'd think we were commanded to buy a kingdom. As you consider your life, be sure to compare all the time that you spend in your own pursuits with the time that you spend serving your God. If the latter outweighs the former, it will surprise me in most Christian lives.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"

In heaven we all know that everything that God wants done is done. In earth however, we have another story don't we! We are very bent toward doing what WE want to do! In fact this may be part of the problem in our whole discussion. It is the dreams of the people that they leave high school with, rather than the dreams of their Lord! May we be so sensitive to the Lord's desires that we are constantly doing those things that HE leads us to do rather than doing the things that we desire to do?

"Give us this day our daily bread."

Believe it or not this phrase is not related to the postal service delivering your devotional magazine! It is the bread that is the staff of life, and not the money. We are talking in this phrase

about the NEEDS that we have in life. God never promised to give us all that we can dream of possessing. God promises to provide our needs, and anything over and above the NEEDS of life is His gift to us.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Mark tells us that if we don't forgive others that God won't forgive us. That makes our right relationship to others very important to our own relationship to God. If we haven't forgiven others then God has not forgiven us and we have sin in our lives that is keeping us from HIS VERY BEST! "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses." (Mk 11:25-26)

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

This is one of the keys to the spiritual life. We must be constantly on the guard to flee temptation, and to seek HIS help to maintain our purity and holiness.

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"

It is truly the LORD'S kingdom, the LORD'S power and the LORD'S glory that we should be striving for. Not our kingdom. Not our power. Not our glory. That really chips away at the glory hounds that we seem to have in the Christian world today. The men and women that are out there charging big bucks to perform or speak. I've been told of some Christian concerts that cost \$ 7-8,000 for one show and Christian's pay because they want to be entertained. I've been told that some big name speakers charge several thousand dollars per engagement. Publishers: Oh! we want to help get the Word out! That will be \$44.95 please. JUST WHO'S POWER AND GLORY ARE WE SEEKING AFTER?

"Forever."

That is the plan that we are to be seeking! The eternal plan of God and not the temporal plan of man.

"Amen"

So be it. So may these things be true in your lives and in the lives of the youth that you train up in the coming years of your church.

#### CONCLUSION:

If we as church folk are living the life that we have just discussed then the youth that we have contact with will turn out to be the Christian workers that they should be when they reach adult years!

May we through a commitment to work with children and youth, bring about some classes of Christian young people that are willing to take the GREAT COMMISSION seriously.

If we aren't what we should be in this area - even now may we commit ourselves to rectify the problems that we have in our lives.

Let us take time to consider our success in fulfilling our spiritual dreams when we were high school graduates.

What are your dreams now spiritually? What are you doing, to see those dreams become reality?

We know the reality of the class of 58, and we can guess the outcome of the class of \_\_ in your church, but what of other classes from this church?

In contrast to the class of 58 I'd like to tell you of another group of graduates that came from the same church a few years later. From one class of graduates there were six that entered the ministry.

One worked with Back to the Bible. Two pastor churches. One is a pastor's wife.

One is working in a music ministry with her husband. One is a missionary to Venezuela. Seemingly, the church program also affects the outcome of youth! I would encourage you to plan

and purpose, for your youth!

If you don't, the Devil will be delighted to do your job for you, and we all know how successful he is.

Three quick passages for your consideration. This study is not unlike the thoughts of some of the Biblical writers.

Ps. 78.4-8 "We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. 5. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: 6. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: 7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: 8. And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God."

II Tim 2:2 may relate in this sermon as well - teach others that they may teach others that they may teach others.

Ps. 71.18 "Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to everyone that is to come."

God has given us two responsibilities as human beings. Reach our own generation with the Gospel and to reach our children with God's principles.

For the most part my responsibilities are about done. I have done about all that I can with my own children, and my years make me think that reaching my generation is slipping away. Many are already dead and many are to set in their ways to respond to the Gospel.

I trust that as you go away from this study you will reconsider where you have been and where you can go from this point on to see to it that you pass on your God to your own family and to your own generation.

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M06050

TITLE: BUILD THERE AND YOU'LL NEED WASH AND WEAR

INTRODUCTION:

In viewing the story of the wise man and the foolish man I was reminded of two young brothers that were faced with life.

The one brother, the elder of the two, set his sights on the things of the world and began working at an early age to gain the things that he wanted. The elder brother was raised in a church where the gospel was nominally preached, and he had made a profession of faith through being baptized. As he headed on down through life, he relied on the mistaken belief that he was a Christian, yet there was no evidence in his life to indicate such a change. As he traveled lives pathway several shared the Gospel with him and at one point he was even aggravated that everyone thought he wasn't a Christian. He asked the younger brother about this one evening and the reply was simply that maybe the other people didn't see the changed life that accompanies salvation.

The older of the two ended up in later life having gone through three marriages and divorces in a VA hospital where an old chaplain was able to share the Gospel with him.

The younger brother was confronted with the Gospel as a teenager and knew that the Lord was just what he had been looking for in life and that all he desired to do was to serve God in any way that he could. He went off to Bible College and Seminary and entered into the ministry. The younger's marriage and family survived the rigors of three teenagers and is still ministering.

The elder brother had early in life thought that he should be a minister. Due to many decisions in his life, that never came to pass, yet in later life after the many problems God was gracious to save him and to place him in a limited ministry where he could serve as well as his health and situation would allow.

The difference in the brothers was not age, not parents, not economics, not education, not environment, but in their response to what Christ taught. The one rejected Christ's teachings for

many years and relied upon his own methods. The other submitted to the Lord's Word and found through life, even though the storms came and went that the Lord was always there to hold him above the troubles.

Indeed one of the younger brother's favorite passages was Ps 18:1-3, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation and my high tower. "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

Lu. 6:46-49. 46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? 47 Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: 48 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. 49 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.

Matt 7.24-27 24 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: 25 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. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

UP FRONT! IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU GAIN FROM THIS TEXT THIS, learn that the ruin of that house was great! Great was its fall. Understand the emphasis on this thought. The authors could have just mentioned that the house fell and we would have known what was meant, yet they go on and emphasis the GREATNESS OF THE FALL and the ruin the fall caused. GREAT WAS THE FALL AND RUIN.

We aren't just talking about a children's story, we are talking about the stuff that life is made of! If you don't pay attention to what the text says, you are leaving yourself open for a GREAT FALL AND RUIN!

I did not say that, nor did the authors of the books, it was the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the universe that shared these illustrations for His listeners.

My wife and I have lived in many places and two of them remind me of these two texts. One of the houses has been torn down in recent years, but when we lived in it the house was basically very solid. Some of the floors were getting creaky but mostly it was very solid.

This house had been there since the 1800's I would guess. It was way before lights and sewer in the Denver area. All the niceties had been added later. Over all it was solid as a rock after 100 years or so.

The other house is the one we lived in when in Wyoming. The yard was nothing but a sand dune in the winter when it was dry. The house, a mobile home, when we moved in was quite solid, but in the three years that we have lived there the ground settled and the house creaked, groaned, vibrated, and sloped.

We should understand that there is nothing wrong with the foundation, there is nothing wrong with the structure, nor is there anything wrong with the elements involved in these accounts!

The fault is the builders. The elements were as they were and should have been considered. The structures were built properly. The foundations are as the Lord of creation designed them to be. The rock was a rock and the sand was sand. That sand did not just turn into something that wouldn't support a house. It by design is as it is and there was nothing wrong with it.

The builders were at fault. They considered the structure, they considered the elements, they considered the foundation and built.

The utter simplicity of these texts is plain as black and white!

DO IT GOD'S WAY ---- NO STORM WILL TROUBLE YOU!

DO IT YOUR WAY ---- ALL STORMS WILL TROUBLE YOU!

In comparing the two foundations we should look at some of the differences.

ROCK SAND

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SOLID WEAK

FIRM SHIFTING

COSTLY LITTLE EFFORT

DEEP SURFACE

STORMS DON'T AFFECT STORMS UNDERMINE

We had a minor flood in Wyoming. Water ran for about an hour and it took all the sand from around our mobile's skirting. It took me many hours to get the holes filled in.

As we consider the accounts it is obvious that there are some direct results from building on the different foundations.

ROCK SAND

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WISE FOOLISH

SAFE DANGEROUS

Economic in the long run COSTLY

PROTECTION NO PROTECTION

STABILITY INSTABILITY

NO DAMAGE GREAT RUIN

If we follow God's word we have all the safety and security that the omnipotent God can offer. If we reject God's word we have all the justice and judgment that the just God can deliver!

## THE TERMS INVOLVED:

fool = The term is the Greek term "moros" which is the basis for the term in English, "moron". Webster says of the term moron, that it can include the thought of someone that is mentally retarded and between the ages of 8 and 12, but he also lists the usual concept that we have of the term, "a very stupid person" (Strong's number 3474)

wise = "characterized by wisdom: marked by deep understanding, keen discernment, and a capacity for sound judgment..." (5429 = "phronimos" = it is always translated wise in the NT.)

The other terms in the text are easily understood as they appear. Ruin has the idea of breaking or broken apart.

These are God's terms! IT ISN'T A DIFFICULT PASSAGE TO UNDERSTAND.

God's way is wisdom AND your way is very stupid. SIMPLE, ISN'T IT!

## SETTING:

To properly interpret this text we must understand that the setting of the account is the Lord speaking of a time which had a certain set of standards.

Christ was speaking of a set of laws and principles for a time when He would be reigning here on earth as king. That time He was speaking of was the kingdom that He was offering to the Jews of His day.

This is the kingdom that we call the Millennium or the 1000-year reign of Christ. This kingdom is yet future. It will be set up after believers are taken out of this world, and after the seven years of terrible tribulation.

The Jewish people rejected Christ as a whole and the kingdom was postponed for a time in the future when Israel would turn to God.

We are not living in the kingdom, but are in the church age. The differences are quite definite between the kingdom age and the church age.

The specific application of these texts is to the Jew living in Christ's time. The thought of the passages is that of eternal life. Christ was calling them to follow His teaching and follow Him into the kingdom foretold of in the Old Testament.

These accounts are actually an illustration to show the listener that if they are rejecting His teachings they are not going to be known by Him in times to come.

Mat 7:21-23 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24 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:

We can find specific application in two areas this morning for our own time.

a. The first application would be the same as that of the Jew in the kingdom. Following the Word's of Christ will produce eternal life and rejecting His word's will result in damnation.

b. The second application would be the lesser yet still very important and would relate to living within the physical world.

As a person or family decide to follow the word's of the Lord they will be building on the foundation of Jesus Christ and the storms of life can never harm them.

If a person or family reject the teaching of the Lord then their lives will be on the shifting sands of the worldly philosophy, false gods, religions, and the storms of life will certainly swamp them.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The thought of Salvation is upper most in this text and this message.

Do not miss what has been related to you in this study!

Christ is very plainly communicating the fact that if you are a fool and follow other than His words you will end in destruction and ruin. Hell is not going to be a pleasant place.

The text tells of destruction and ruin. When Mt. St Helen, the volcano in Washington, blew there were great masses of debris and mud that entered into the rivers and caused drastic flooding.

One of the TV stations had positioned a camera at the end of one of the interstate bridges many miles from the main trouble and was filming the waters that were endangering the bridge.

As they were filming, a two story house that had been washed away by the flood crashed into the bridge. The destruction was total and complete. There was nothing left of it but flying boards. You couldn't have destroyed it any better if you had taken it apart board by board and nail by nail. It was as if a demolition squad had filled the house with explosives and blown it apart.

If you have any doubt about what that end will be like, what Christ meant by ruin and fall, please allow me to read a few verses to you from Luke 16:23-26. This is the account of two men that died at the same time and they are in the place of residence for departed souls. One is in paradise and the other is in torment.

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The rich man had built his entire life on the sand of the world and riches, while the beggar had built his life on the Rock of God.

Christ is also stating plainly that if you are wise and follow His words that you will end up in strong success. You will never be moved from that foundation!

Eternity with God will be as glorious as The Lake of Fire will be terrible!

The message is so very crystal clear. A fool will choose ruin, while the wise man will choose eternal life with God!

That leaves each and every person that does not know Christ as personal savior with a decision to make - right now. Either you are going to be wise and follow the Lord or you are going to leave as a fool.

That is not my terminology, it is God's!

2. The two builders were building for a specific purpose. So, we, as we go through life we are usually building for a specific purpose. We need to be very aware that what we do now, this day, will affect our entire future.

Note should be taken that the decision to follow or reject is often made early in the process of life. It isn't to say that you can't change your way later but you will need to face the extra cost of not having done so earlier.

The decision also has far reaching ramifications that cannot be foreseen before the trouble comes. We saw this in the account of the two brothers in the introduction. One resulted in no marriage and little contact with his children and grand children - the other in a long marriage and good family.

We must be aware that all of mankind is open and free to make any decision that they care to make. The fact that they often forget is that they must put up with the costs and side effects of their decision.

Today in many areas of our own country we have people that are doing the same thing that the Lord uses for illustrations. They don't build on sand, but they build on flood plains and ocean coasts and on mountains where they know, sooner or later their house will be floating away, be

dashed to pieces or dumped down the side of the mountain.

They still do it. I've seen interviews of people that have just lost everything and they are planning to rebuild in the same spot. God terms them fools.

Do it once and it might be excusable, but do it twice or three times and the term fool seems better to apply.

Prov 1:24-33 gives us a look at Wisdom personified. Wisdom is speaking.

"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; "But ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: "They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. "Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. "But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."

What a declaration. Those that turn foolishly away from God will reap destruction and death upon themselves.

3. There is a third application that should not be missed from the study we have had together.

In the context of the wise man and the foolish man, the main point Christ was making was that in the kingdom, and indeed the time of judgments there will be many that cry Lord, and He will declare to them that He knows them not. Let me read that context again for you.

Mat 7:21-23 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24 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:

Just because you do wonderful things, even if you do miraculous things, it does not mean that you are a believer!

It is the blood of Christ, and it received that allows the person into the kingdom or eternity. Nothing that we can do no matter how neat will help in any way.

Even if you call Him Lord today, be sure that if you have not accepted Christ as your Savior, you are planted on the sand and will certainly reap the destruction and ruin that the Lord was referring to!

If on the other hand you are founded on the rock through salvation continue to build your life on the Rock Jesus Christ.

How will you leave this study today?

A wise person - following Christ - serving God - seeking Him.

or

as a fool - following your desires - serving yourself - seeking worldly pleasures?

God used the illustration!

You must this day choose your own title!

I trust you will choose the path of wisdom and accept Christ as your Savior and then build your entire life upon Him!

Another encouragement: God says you are wise if you walk with Christ so you don't need to look

at the world for approval. Everyone can be with the Devil and you can know you are right.

In closing I would like to read the words of a hymn.

This is the song HE LIFTED ME.

In loving kindness Jesus came My soul in mercy to reclaim, And from the depths of sin and shame thro' grace he lifted me.

He called me long before I heard, before my sinful heart was stirred, but when I took Him at His word, forgiv'n he lifted me.

His brow was pierced with many a thorn, His hands by cruel nails were torn, when from my guilt and grief, forlorn, in love he lifted me.

Now on a higher plane I dwell, and with my soul I know 'tis well; yet how or why, I cannot tell, H should have lifted me.

From sinking sand He lifted me, with tender hand He lifted me, from shades of night to plains of light, oh, praise His name, He lifted me!

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M07000

TITLE: THE WORLD CHRISTIAN VS THE WORLDLY CHRISTIAN

OUTLINE:

I. THE CONTRAST

II. THE CAUSES FOR WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

III. THE CAUSES FOR WORLD CHRISTIANS

#### IV. CONCLUSION

K.J. I John 2:15-17 15. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17. And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

NASB 15. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. 17. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever."

If all Christians lived by these words Christianity would be revolutionized! The world would be set on its ear. Think of it -- EVERY Christian living according to these words!

I once asked a church group to recall to mind someone in their past that was totally sold out to God. After the services several were talking and mentioned that the same couple had come to their minds. They had left a proper testimony!

A few years ago we were privileged to meet and get to know a young couple that were in their thirties. He was a man that I would class as a "World Christian." Let me share a little about this man.

The term "World Christian" is relatively new and has the idea that a person is committed to living for the Lord and reaching the world.

He was in Sunday school, church, evening service and Wed. evening prayer meeting every week. He was a part of the missions committee and the prime mover on that committee, leading it into a number of very worthwhile projects. He was a member of the church board - probably the prime conscience of the board. He started and spearheaded a visitation program that added several families to the church in the first few months. He was involved in a Saturday morning Bible study and prayer group. He was one of the main encouragers in the congregation. He was head usher. He and his wife were always helping others in many different ways. She was in the choir and active in the church even though she worked full time. He worked in one of the state prisons and was constantly under pressure from the world system yet he never submitted to it. They were very involved in giving. He was probably THE KEY MAN in his local church.

A true "WORLD CHRISTIAN!"

I'd like to share some thoughts from a book called WANTED: WORLD CHRISTIANS by J. Herbert Kane. (Chapter 7 P. 137ff)

"As a child of the kingdom the believer then becomes a World Christian. By calling he belongs to a universal fellowship - the Christian church. By conviction he proclaims a universal message - the Christian gospel. By commitment he owes his allegiance to a universal king - Jesus Christ. By vocation, he is a part of a universal movement - the Christian mission.

"Not all believers, however, live up to their high calling as World Christians."

What does a World Christian hold true?

1. "A World Christian is one who acknowledges the universal fatherhood of God." Mankind comes from one source and that is God Himself. He provided ALL of mankind salvation! Not just a select few.

2. "A World Christian is one who confesses the universal lordship of Christ." Not that we as individuals make Him Lord of our lives but that we recognize that He is Lord by decree of Almighty God. He is Lord of our lives! We only have to chose to live like it.

3. "The World Christian is one who recognizes the cosmopolitan composition of the church." The church today as it was in the apostolic times is a group of people from all walks of life. We are rich and poor. We are educated and self-taught. We are healthy and sickly. We are to be made up of all peoples!

4. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the absolute priority of world missions." Not tomorrow but today! John E. Skoglund mentions in his TO THE WHOLE CREATION: THE CHURCH IS MISSION p. 94, "Church and mission are one, and cannot in any way be broken apart. To break them apart is to make both cripples....It [mission] is the mark of the church."

5. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the universal scope of the Christian mission." It is the world not just the USA!

6. "A World Christian is one who recognizes his own personal responsibility for world missions." He is by nature sold out to do all that he or she can to help the world mission effort.

Now for a moment let me describe an example of what I mean by a "Worldly Christian."

He may or may not be at SS and church and maybe somewhat regular at Sun. evening but not usually at prayer meeting. He is tied up in the church softball league. (Never misses a game or practice or some similar activity) He is not involved enough to be on any church committees. He is not influential or enough of a spiritual leader to be placed on the board. He never goes on visitation. He very seldom does anything for the church---doesn't show up on workday. He very seldom associates with the church people. He seldom gives more than a token offering - enough to make himself feel comfortable. He is a man that is too tied up in what HE is doing in his own life to really get involved in the church.

I am using "HE" for our discussion for simplicity. This applies equally well to both genders! I'm an equal opportunity teacher!

NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT LET'S CONTINUE.

## I. THE CONTRAST

Let us take a moment to consider the two terms that we have in our title. THESE ARE THE EXTREME ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM!

WORLD CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world but that is not of the world. He is a believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to him concerning his entire life including each and every facet of that life.

WORLDLY CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world and that is of the world. He is a believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to the missionaries and pastors of the world and a few real workhorses of the church.

Let's take some time to contrast these two classes of believers.

1. WORLD CHRISTIANS view the great commission as incumbent upon each and every believer that has been washed in the blood of the lamb.

Matt. 28:19-20 "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen."

They are concerned with missions! They are CONCERNED ABOUT THE 2-3 BILLION LOST PEOPLE THAT HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL!

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS - You see, there we are, the missionaries are to go out into the world and evangelize. We are to invite the people into the church and the preacher is to win them to the Lord!

NO! WE, YOU AND I, all are to be evangelizing where we are and bring those that we win into the church for training in the Word.

This text tells each one of us that we are to be evangelizing AND discipling those that we win to the Lord.

THIS TEXT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MISSIONARIES OR PASTORS! IT HAS TO DO WITH EVERY BORN AGAIN BELIEVER!

2. WORLD CHRISTIANS view giving as a pleasure, a ministry, and a service to their King.

In her 80's - can't give much - picks up bottles and cans to sell to send a few dollars to the missionaries.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS view their giving as a duty, a payment on what they owe, or maybe their part in spreading the Gospel.

While on deputation, a pastor asked me for a list of needs in the financial area. I asked why. He

told me, "Stan these people feel guilty about the missions effort. If they see your needs they can give to you and then they won't have to go. They are doing something for missions that way."

3. WORLD CHRISTIANS are usually as involved in their local church as they can be. They are part of the planning and the outreach of the church into the community and into the world.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS on the other hand are usually content to allow others to do the work of the church. They like to sit back and evaluate the labors of others. The evaluation quite often is in the negative.

4. WORLD CHRISTIANS are often the ones that are entertaining the missionaries that come through to speak.

Helping the missionaries in any way they can.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS will normally not feel comfortable being in that close an association with a missionary.

We know a number of churches where the pastor is the only one that will take in missionaries. We know of one church where one couple always ends up with the missionary. They do not mind it, indeed they enjoy their ministry very much - the sad part is the families that are missing out on getting to know the Lord's workers.

5. WORLD CHRISTIANS are normally a praying people. They are involved in the prayer life of the church. They often are praying at home for the world and it's lost millions.

We met a man whose mother devotes her entire evening one evening a month to praying for missions. No television, no nothing - just praying for missions.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS are normally praying people as well, however their requests are normally centered around their own needs and seldom get around to the world or the lost. Normally their prayer life gets more serious as their self-sufficiency fails!

## II. THE CAUSES FOR WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

1. Lack of knowledge.

a. Not in the Word on their own. How can they hope to learn of their life with the Lord unless they are reading His instruction manual.

I recently heard a pastor mention the hours he spent trying to put together his children's swing set. Finally in total frustration he went to the instruction booklet to see how it was done.

Many people are wondering how in the world to get their lives together, yet they have never opened the instruction manual!

b. Not in the Word in the Church.

1.) Poor preaching.

Some of the preaching we've been subjected to in recent years is a total disgrace to the Lord that the men pretend to serve.

The Lord's word is so precious and some of his servants are just plain perverting it today!

2.) Poor listening.

I, being involved in Christian Education, am often interested in how people are reacting to sermons or lessons that I am presenting or sitting in on.

I often observe the congregation and consider the things that they are doing. I've observed people, trimming finger nails, sleeping, doing softball stats, staring out the window, staring at the ceiling, playing with their children, talking to their wife or the person sitting next to them, etc. Very little serious listening is going on in our churches today!

We have spoken several times in a church in WY. where everyone in the congregation is there to listen and to hear!

What a joy to minister to a LISTENING CONGREGATION!

2. Lack of interest.

The spiritual life is variable between spiritual and fleshly things and interests. The spiritual person will naturally follow and seek Godly aims, goals and achievements. The fleshly person will naturally follow and seek worldly aims, goals and achievements.

If a person is operating in the flesh he will not be interested in spiritual things. He may be in church, but he may be completely tuned out. He may be in the Word, but he may be completely tuned out.

3. Lack of spiritual discernment. This comes from lacking the Holy Spirits work in the life.

a. The Spirit can't work if self is in control! b. The person may only be a professor and not really a Christian. Application of I John 2:15-17 might well run along these lines.

If you submit to fleshly desires and allow them to run on their own, you may wind up in many many types of problems.

If you submit to buying all your eye sees and desires you will become as many Americans -- SERVING MATERIALISM. Indeed, just the desire of things that you see that you can't afford can be in this area of lust of the eye.

If you are proud of who or what you are then how can God use you? If you are that tied up in yourself you will have no time for God! Indeed, God may find that he has no time for you!

Is it not easy to see where a worldly Christian is?

THE NEXT QUESTION OBVIOUSLY IS WHAT ARE

### III. THE CAUSES FOR WORLD CHRISTIANS

1. Lack of attachment to the desires of the flesh - not that the desires aren't there but that the believer has those desires under proper control. He controls his desires; his desires do not control him.

2. Lack of attachment to the things of the world. Not that they own nothing, but that nothing owns them. PONDER THAT ONE THIS WEEK!

We have for the first time in our marriage of 30+ years settled into a situation that is what most would call permanent.

We have always been in progress - temporary in college - temporary at pastoring a new church - getting ready for the mission field - etc. We are faced with a confrontation between our "pilgrim" - "passin through" attitude which is Scriptural, and the settling into a permanent spot attitude, which can easily become worldly.

WE ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD!

My it would be so easy to go out looking for things to go along with "permanence." (Nice furniture, Nice drapes etc.)

Hebrews 11 shows Abraham as a "pilgrim" - one that is "passin through this life."

Vs. 13 "These all [speaking of Noah, Sarah and Abraham] died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Vs. 16 adds to their concept of this life and adds a very neat comment from their Lord! "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Abraham had material gain and possessions, but that gain and those possessions did not possess him!

This may not be true of believers today.

## "Protestants Are Earning More But Giving Less

Although Protestant churchgoers are earning more money, they are giving less of it to their churches. This is the conclusion of a recent nationwide study of 31 denominations.

"Giving declined by 8.5% from 1968 to 1985, while disposable income increased by 31%. The average percentage of the disposable income given to the church dropped from 3.05% to 2.79% during that time period. One researcher commented that 'people are placing a higher value on their life-styles than on their church.'" (From ANAM Newsletter/ May-Aug. 1988. ANAM is a group of fundamental missionary sending agencies.)

3. Lack of attachment to their way of life. A world Christian **MUST NOT BE PROUD OF HIS WAY OF LIFE**. Enjoying that way of life is okay. Increasing that way of life is okay. Continuing that way of life is okay. **HOWEVER!** Becoming proud of who and what they are - as we used to say in the Navy - **NEGATORY!**

**NOW!** If you control your fleshly desires **AND** If you control your eye's desires **AND** If you control your life's ambitions or desires **THEN WHAT?** Logically speaking you are going to be: 1. Morally correct. 2. A pilgrim in this life - looking for the next life. 3. Open to God moving and changing in your way of life.

And if these are true you are going to be: 1. A good witness. 2. Open to going without all those things that the ads say you have to have to be happy. 3. Willing to give up your present way of life for what God leads you to do. In other words - you'll be well on your way to being a World Christian.

## RESULT

God may leave you right where you are to be a good world Christian concerned for the millions of lost souls in the world and doing all you can to reach them for Christ in your local church.

Then again He may lead you to leave all that you have and lead you to go into the world to preach the Gospel.

The difference between the "world" and the "worldly" Christian here is that the world Christian will without second thought walk out on his present life and walk into the life that God has prepared for him.

The worldly Christian will never move out of his way of life even for God. His only hope is to become a "WORLD CHRISTIAN!"

#### IV. CONCLUSION

1. If you are a world Christian

a. Beware the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life!

This trilogy is Satan's mainstay in his bag of tricks!

Are these not the areas where he tempted even our Lord Jesus Christ? Luke 4:1-13 contains the account. Temptation # 1 was hunger - the lust of the flesh (1-4) Temptation # 2 was the kingdoms of the world - the lust of the eye (5-8) Temptation # 3 was His control of the angelic host - the pride of life (9-13)

**DON'T BE PROUD! THAT IS PRIDE OF LIFE!**

b. Concentrate on continuing on in your state as a world Christian! As a pastor we once knew used to put it, "KEEPING ON KEEPING ON!"

2. If you are a Worldly Christian

a. You had better do business with God soon! I would suggest today!

b. You had better make changes in your way of life! You had better control from this point forth your lust, your desires, and your pride of life!

God does not seem to allow for this type of person in His plan. He is very emphatic through John in verse 15 where he says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The immediate context is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

If you are having problems in any of these areas, you have not the love of the Father!

3. If you are riding the fence you are not a world Christian nor are you a worldly Christian.

You are a fence riding Christian. You are what John mentions in Revelation three, "lukewarm." **YOU'RE IN A MUDDLE!**

If you're a world Christian you are in a minority. If you're a fence riding Christian you are in a muddle. If you are a worldly Christian you are in a mess.

**YOU**, diagnose yourself - not me - not your neighbor - not your church leaders - but yourself. Are you a mess, a muddle or a minority?

You have today been confronted with some knowledge - you now have the responsibility to honestly evaluate your life and come to conclusions and needed changes! Then you are responsible to act on those conclusions and commit yourself before God to make those changes in your life.

If you are tied up in immorality, or in materialism or in yourself you need to do business with God before go further in your life! When I speak of immorality I do not mean necessarily wrong sexual relations though that may be the case, but if you are involved in viewing the wrong type of movies, videos or magazines or reading improper books you may well be feeding your lust of the flesh.

While on deputation we spent the night in the home of some people that were from outward appearances "Good people!" The next morning we found out that they were the leading pornography dealers in the area. They had big pornographic video parties in their home.

The lust of the flesh can enter into other areas as well. Any desire of your body that you allow to

control you is a lust of the flesh which is out of control.

The closing thought of our text in this study is the thought that you need to consider well. "And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the flesh. He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the eye. He that doeth the will of God is one that is not proud of his way of life!

The hymn writer penned the following words: "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun." (Amazing Grace vs 6.)

If we as believers really believe this concept why are we so tied up in the world. Our life here is brief - as a vapor, as James 4:14 describes it - we will be here only a moment in relation to eternity ---- so why are we so tied to this life and how little it offers when compared to eternity with it's rewards and glories?

TODAY! Are you a world Christian? TODAY! Are you a fence riding Christian? TODAY! Are you a worldly Christian?

TODAY IS THE DAY THAT GOD HAS CONFRONTED YOU! ARE YOU GOING TO ACT UPON YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE OR LEAVE IT WHERE IT LIES AND CONTINUE ON?

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLD CHRISTIAN YOU WILL RECOMMIT YOURSELF TO WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLDLY CHRISTIAN THAT YOU WILL TAKE TIME RIGHT NOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH GOD!

John finishes his book of I John with a very appropriate phrase that I would like for you to consider. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Indeed, is not idolatry what we have been talking about in this study? The idol of self-indulgence, the idol of me and the idol of way of life. Indeed, I believe John knew exactly where our hearts tend to roam!

Let's take a few moments before we close to spend time before the Lord in prayer about our present lives. Let's bow our hearts in prayer.

I will close in a few moments and we will be dismissed. If there is anyone that wants to talk to me or one of the church leaders feel free to seek one of us out and tell us that you would like to talk.

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M07050

TITLE: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

OUTLINE:

I. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

II. THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

III. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

I knew a young teenager in high school a few years ago. He began running around with the SOUTHSIDE kids when he was in Jr. Hi. He began smoking and drinking shortly there after. He was always in on the destructive mischief in town and at times in other towns. He wore a leather jacket and sported the usual ducktail that set the hoods off from the rest of society. He was barely making it in school. He had no friends. He was one of the town hot rodders and reckless drivers as he grew up.

I'm sure many people wanted to change that young man.

One Saturday evening late he and some of the kids he ran with decided to do a little vandalism and they collected small signs from all over town. They couldn't figure out what to do with them so they decorated the Bible church's front yard with them.

Compared to today's teenage standard he would be considered a wimp, but by the 1950's standard, society viewed him very negatively.

Jesus Christ came into his life and transformed him into the writer of this study.

God is in the business of transformations and through the obedience of His Son on the cross, God is continuing to transform lives. Let us look at some of the transformations that came about because of the DEATH BURIAL AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

## I. THE FACT OF CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

In I Cor. 15:1-4 Paul mentions that the death, burial and resurrection are the Gospel. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and in which ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"

## EASTER IS A SALVATION MESSAGE - INDEED IT IS THE SALVATION MESSAGE!

When I was an unsaved teenager I was asked by my pastor to help with an Easter sunrise service. I said no almost immediately. He mentioned in the course of the conversation that a very pretty girl from one of the other churches in town was going to help. I said yes almost immediately. To work with one of the cutest girls in town was important, you know! We planned the service and she didn't realize how important my existence was. In short she ignored me.

The Devotional and song time in the field as the sun came up was fantastic. We went back to town and had breakfast. After breakfast we had planned a film. I was one of the ushers and as the film progressed I was watching from the stairway outside the sanctuary. The screen was up high and I stopped to look just as they showed a picture of Christ hanging on the cross. The shot was from the bottom of the cross looking up. The thought came to my mind, "Why are we here early

in the morning? Why did we get up so early to go out and sing. Why is it important that Christ was on the cross? What is the big deal about Easter?"

It was over a year before anyone shared the Easter story with me and I accepted Christ. It was another six or seven years before I started going to church and realized the importance of the cross and resurrection.

As our pastor at that time was teaching the Sunday school class on Easter morning he began speaking of the pain and agony that Christ suffered on the cross. The realization that His suffering was caused by MY sin hit me like a ball bat. Christ was willing to suffer all that for the likes of me. WOW!

I would like to take a moment to consider the death, burial and resurrection of Christ in Prophecy.

#### A. IN PROPHECY:

1. THE DEATH WAS PROPHECIED BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET Isa. 53:4-9 "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

2. THE BURIAL WAS PROPHECIED BY CHRIST Matt. 12:40 Christ Himself told his followers that he would be killed and that He would be buried. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

3. THE RESURRECTION WAS PROPHECIED BY CHRIST Matt. 16:21 "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things

from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

The death, burial and resurrection are a fact of history. Several books have been written on the subject in recent years from an historical and logical view. We also know the fact of the occurrences from the Word of God.

## B. IN FACT:

1. THE DEATH IS RECORDED IN Jn. 19:16-18 "Then delivered he him, therefore, unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went forth into a place called The place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha, Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the center."

2. THE BURIAL IS RECORDED IN Jn. 19:38-42 "And after this Joseph, of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him leave. He came, therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, who at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulcher, in which was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was near at hand."

3. THE RESURRECTION IS RECORDED IN Lu. 24:1-9 "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them, in shining garments; And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen! Remember how he spoke unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest."

We have seen that the death, burial and resurrection were prophesied and we have seen that these prophecies came to pass. Now I would like to consider some of the many results of these occurrences.

## II. THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

### A. THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHRIST

1. BEFORE THE RESURRECTION: Jesus had physical limitations. He had to: eat, sleep, walk, teach long hours, and think of the cross. Yet none of this affected His ministry until just before the cross.

2. AFTER THE RESURRECTION: Christ had no physical limitations. Let us take a brief look at some of His activity after the resurrection.

a. He went through walls: Jn. 20:19, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." (Jn. 20:26-31 also)

I'm not sure how much peace they had knowing that they had locked themselves in and then Christ appeared in their midst. I suspect that there may have been some tense moments before they realized what was going on.

b. Christ was able to travel to heaven: In Jn. 20:17 Christ told Mary, "...Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father...."

But in Jn. 20:27 He told Thomas, "...Reach here thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach here thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing."

At some time between these two verses the Lord had ascended to do the work that needed to be done in glory and had returned to tie all the loose ends together here on earth.

c. He was with the men He met on the road to Emmaus and then vanished: Lu. 24:31, "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight." Can you imagine the excitement of that moment when they recognized their risen Lord! He could vanish at will, yet He could be visible and speak with His followers.

d. He finally, when all was done here on earth ascended to heaven to await His return in Glory. Acts. 1:9, "And, when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

e. He was free from the burden of the cross and free to enjoy His exaltation and eternity with His Father and His brethren. We will receive a similar body when we are raised or transformed at His coming.

Not only was Christ transformed, but man can also be transformed due to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

## B. THE TRANSFORMATION OF MAN:

1. NATURAL MAN: The transformation was from natural to spiritual.

The Scripture labels the non-believer as a natural man. He has not been touched by the supernatural. He is still under all the effects of the curse placed upon man at the fall of Adam.

Rom. 3:23 shows the result of this fall. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,"

God set the blood sacrifice in the Old Testament to cover sin. The Old Testament sacrifices awaited the New Testament sacrifice of Messiah as the one perfect sacrifice that could atone for all sin.

The sin of the Old Testament saints was not completely taken care of. Their sin was only covered by the blood of animal sacrifice, until the time when Messiah - Jesus Christ could come and die for all of the sin of all the world. After the resurrection Christ went into the heavenly Holy of Holies to offer His blood for all sin of all time.

After His blood was offered on the altar in the Holy of Holies, He went into Sheol the place of departed spirits and freed the saints of the Old Testament time that had awaited His coming and perfect sacrifice that would wash away their covered sin. They were now free to enter into the presence of the Father.

John the Baptist rightly titled Christ as the Lamb of God: Jn. 1.29, states "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world."

Christ's shed blood will wash away your sins if you are here this morning without salvation. That is Easter's promise to the lost person.

The saved person already has enjoyed that washing away of their load of sin. His blood washed away all our sins. His blood took care of all the effects of the curse of Genesis. All has been done for the believer to enter immediately upon death into the presence of the Father.

Rom. 10:9 explains how simple this is, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

As man calls upon Christ he is transformed from death unto life. He will have a resurrection unto eternal life.

Those that reject this simple plan of God's will also be resurrected, however they will be resurrected to face an eternity of torment and punishment.

Rev. 20:11-15 tells of this resurrection. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

You might want to look at Luke 16.19-31 for an eye witness account of the place of the tormented.

Natural man, if he accepts Christ and His provision for sin then becomes a completely different man. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ become a spiritual man completely ready to face almighty God.

2. SPIRITUAL MAN (Saint - God's child) In this life we are made a new creation. We are no longer that natural man, but we are a child of God with all rights and privileges of His family.

I WOULD LIKE TO ADD IN A SIDE LIGHT TO the changes that come to those who believe. I would like to just make a few comments on the eternal aspect of the believer.

We will be raised by the Holy Spirit when Christ returns for us. Christ is spoken of as the First Fruits because He was resurrected first and we will follow when the time is come.

I Cor. 15:20-23, "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

The Spirit will raise us as Christ was raised. What a promise to those that trust in Christ as their Savior!

Rom. 8:11, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

This passage is of prime importance to the saint theologically. It states clearly that IF the Spirit of God dwell in you, you will be raised. Now, if there is any chance that the Spirit is not an automatic gift to the believer at salvation, and if He does not come to reside within every believer immediately at salvation, then there would have to be a possibility of some believers not being raised from the dead. That is unacceptable.

This verse clearly demands that the Spirit be indwelling all believers from the moment of salvation - HAVE NONE OF THIS FALSE TEACHING THAT TELLS YOU THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES SOMETIME LATER - IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER HE IS PRESENT! NO QUESTION! HE IS WITHIN YOU!

At the resurrection our body will be changed. I Cor. 15:54-55, "So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to

pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Not only are we a new creation here in this life, but we can become more and more like Christ by changing our life patterns.

Not only can we be completely different creatures here, we have the promise that at the resurrection we will be like Christ in our spiritual bodies. We will have the same eternal existence that He now enjoys.

**NOW BACK TO THE CHANGES THAT ARE MADE IN THE PERSON THAT ACCEPTS CHRIST AS THEY WALK WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE.**

a. We have a new service: As we really realize the pain and anguish Christ went through - we will realize what we should do for Him. We were purchased by Him and we belong to him. Our normal response to Him is SERVICE.

b. We have a new position: We have no need to go through a priest for forgiveness as the Old Testament saint was required to do. Matt. 27:51 tells us that the veil that separated man from the throne of God is torn so that we have access to the throne of God to seek forgiveness as individuals.

c. We have a new love: Jn 15:12-14 mentions that we should love one another enough to lay down our lives for one another. Christ working in and through us can make drastic changes in our priorities. Before salvation our emphasis is on our selves, but after salvation, if we allow God to work in our lives, we will find that others are more important than we are. We will want to help others, even unto giving of our lives if we are walking with Him.

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you."

He died for us - we should love one another more because of His love for us. This love does not include wrong thoughts toward a brother nor backbiting or jealousy or any other items that tend to ramble around in our minds.

May we just list a few of those transformed men of the past? Peter the fisherman was transformed from a denier to devotee. Matthew the tax gatherer was transformed from someone to avoid to a Gospel writer. Paul the apostle was transformed from a murderer to a missionary. Mark the gospel writer was transformed from worthless to worthwhile. Carey the cobbler was transformed from a floppy shoemaker to the Father of missions. The list could go on for many years - the list of the men of the world that were transformed by kneeling at the cross of Jesus.

Not only was Christ changed, not only can man be changed, but the cross itself was changed.

### C. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CROSS

A ruff pair of timbers fastened together to form one of the most cruel instruments of death that man has devised.

Authorities differ as to what type of cross Christ was crucified on. There were two types of cross used in this time period.

- a. X - shaped cross - person was tied to it to die of thirst and exposure.
- b. T - shaped - tied and some nailed to it.

Some say the person was nailed to the cross while the cross was flat on the ground. Then the cross was dumped into a hole dug in the ground. This added to the tearing of the flesh.

An instrument of death was transformed into a symbol of the life it brought to those that accept Christ in this age.

Kings and paupers have bowed before it.

It has been used on crowns and flags for centuries.

Christ's death on the cross transformed a death-dealing tree into the symbol of the Christian faith.

I once was told of a missionary couple that was out witnessing on the beach. They stopped to talk to an old withered man. He looked at the pretty cross hanging around the woman's neck and then pointed to it and said, "Whatcha wearin that for - it didn't do anything - twas the blood of Christ that saves ya!"

We need remember it was the Blood of Christ that saves us and not the cross, but we can understand the significance of how the way man views the cross has changed. Yes, wear the cross, yes contemplate the cross, but do remember it is the blood of Christ that was shed upon it that save us from our sin and eternal torment.

### III. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM CHRIST'S DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

Christ was victorious over sin, death and Satan. We celebrate that victory today as we come together to remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Christ died that we might live.

Anyone that has accepted the work of the cross as payment for his or her own sin has crossed over from a destination of damnation to the destination of eternity with God.

Christ died that we might live abundantly. Christ died that we might live for Him. Christ died that we might share that story with others. Christ died that we might find victory over personal sin. Christ died that we might share eternity with Him.

Why don't we live so that others may live? Why don't we live so that others may see how we live. Why don't we live so that others may go to the world to share life eternal with others? Why don't we live so that our Lord and Savior will one day recognize our efforts on His behalf?

May you go from this study with a fresh look at the death, burial and resurrection. May you go from this place a saint that is rejoicing.

If you are a sinner that is rejecting may you not go from this study until you have found the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord and the peace and transformation that His cross can give to you.

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M08000

TITLE: FELLOWSHIP OR FALLOWSHIP?

INTRODUCTION: After visiting a church in Scottsbluff, NE we were asked to have a cup of coffee with the pastor of the church. When we arrived, we found that the pastor's father-in-law and one of the pastor's deacons had been invited as well. I sat down to what I figured would be the fellowship trio, NEWS, WEATHER, AND SPORTS, and was pleasantly surprised. The conversation went immediately to spiritual things and for about an hour and a half the four of us sat in the living room enjoying the things of the Lord.

On the other hand while living in Denver and attending an Independent Baptist church, we experienced an evening that was quite strained.

We were new to the church. The people acted like they were afraid to say anything except something that was funny, or very generic. The occasion was a coffee time after the last session of an evangelistic series. Present at the coffee time, which was very informal, were the pastor, the evangelist and their wives along with three other couples from the church's leadership. All were believers.

In the entire evening there was not once that the Lord's name was mentioned, and not once were spiritual things of any sort mentioned.

Q. WHY?

Men and women that should be vitally interested in the things of the Lord and they talk of the NEWS, WEATHER, AND SPORTS. I call this the fellowship trio.

These men and women were the leaders in their local church and they didn't even comment on

how they thought the Evangelistic meetings had been.

Why the difference in these two situations.

I would call the first fellowship, and the second fallowship. The first was vibrant and spiritual, while the other was dead and worldly.

Our title is FELLOWSHIP OF FALLOWSHIP? Fallow means inactive. The question implies that believers are not fellowshiping, but are inactive in their relations with one another.

Let's talk about fellowship for awhile.

Most of us have some standard thoughts when we hear the term "FELLOWSHIP."

Weather

Sports

Cars

Pastor's sermon, but only if it was bad or didn't relate to us

Sewing circles

Women's groups

Of course there is always THE CHURCH FELLOWSHIP DINNER

AND DON'T FORGET THE GREETING TIME WHERE WE MAKE EVERYONE FEEL WELCOME!

NOW MARK MY WORDS - I AM NOT TALKING AGAINST FELLOWSHIP DINNERS - I REALLY LOVE THEM, but I really wonder how much scriptural fellowship we have at times. True, we have unsaved come at times and we can't dive into deep spiritual realms, however something simple might draw some attention.

Other churches have redefined the term "FELLOWSHIP HALLS." One of the [Catholic] churches in Denver years ago had built their fellowship hall in the form of a restaurant and obtained a liquor license so that they could serve drinks.

At least they were open and honest about their lifestyle.

We are seeing a move in many churches to break for a few minutes, over coffee and donuts, either before or after SS. This is a good time for getting together. It can be a good time for believers to share on a personal and spiritual basis.

I have wondered if a time of coffee and informal questioning of the pastor after the message would be useful for the congregation.

Have you had close fellowship lately? No, I'm not talking about 40 college kids crammed into a phone booth!

I'm talking about meaningful spiritual fellowship!

What is "SCRIPTURAL FELLOWSHIP?"

Let's look at a few references and see if we can find out what the term means, and how we should be using it today.

There are four Greek words that are translated "fellowship" in the New Testament. They are translated in ways other than fellowship as well.

I want to focus on one word in this study. This is the most common of the terms.

"Koinonia": Vine states that this is, "communion, fellowship, sharing in common."

Let's just chase some passages that use this term and see what we can learn from them. These are all passages that contain the word Koinonia.

Acts 2:42 "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Four things they were involved with:

- a. apostle's doctrine
- b. fellowship
- c. breaking of bread
- d. prayer

Notice that fellowship is nestled in the middle of DOCTRINE, THE LORDS'S TABLE AND PRAYER!

That should tell us something right away. Can you honestly and comfortably nestle your fellowship today in the midst of your worship service - amid preaching, prayer, and the Lord's table. WILL IT FIT?

WE TRY CHRISTIAN. How often have you been in a prayer meeting, and when the praying is finished, someone makes a comment such as, well we needed that rain, or it was really hot today?

The early Christians were spending time together around spiritual things. "Steadfastly" seems to indicate they were really into this time together, and knew of its importance.

Ro. 15:26 "For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem."

The believers were sharing of their material possessions. They were SHARING, one with another! This gives a little to the meaning of the term. It is not just surface talk, but it is sharing of things, be they material, or spiritual.

They were not sending newspapers to Jerusalem so the Christians could keep up on the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS - they were sending things that they needed for living! It was money, most likely.

II Co. 9:13 "While by the proving of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men,"

This is a distribution of funds. They were giving of their funds. We are to give of ourselves in fellowship be it funds, or ourselves!

Too often, I think, we give of the funds so we don't have to give of ourselves.

When we were on deputation, a pastor requested a list of all of the material needs that we had. I asked him why he wanted it. He told me, "Stan, Christians feel guilty about missions, and if we give them a list, they can give financially so they don't feel guilty about not going themselves."

Heb. 13:16 "But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

A communicating is called a sacrifice to GOD! We please God when we share with one another.

This seems to be related to material items again. As we give - we offer sacrifice to our Lord, and God.

We have been associated with a church in Wyoming that I have often accused of acting like Christians. They get behind the people in their church that are hurting. One of the families found themselves in a mess. The husband was in the hospital and the car went out when the wife was visiting her husband. They were in need of money to live on. The church got behind them in material ways as well as helpful ways. They acted as the New Testament requests that we act.

I Cor. 1:9 "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our relationship with Jesus Christ as believers is called fellowship!

I'd like to see any one of us talk to the Lord when we see Him face to face about the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS.

"Hi Lord!" "Do you think it'll snow today so I can go skiing Sunday?"

Lord, do you think the Trailblazer's will take the championship this year.

I'm not trying to say that we won't have some neat conversations with the Lord, but I really doubt that we will dwell on the fellowship trio that we use now in our lives with believers.

II Cor. 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?"  
(fellowship is "metokee" and communion is koinonia)

In this passage the term koinonia is not translated fellowship, but rather communion.

Have NO communion! When we are to have communion then we should have the opposite of this. Paul said, "no communion," so the opposite would be, have CLOSE communion. Close fellowship - close koinonia.

Light and dark NEVER get together, so if we as believers are to be the opposite of this; we should ALWAYS be getting together.

II Cor. 8:4 "Beseeching us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

The idea seems to be joining in on the ministry, or taking an active role in the ministry of sharing with others. This is not limited to giving, but involves sharing in all aspects of the ministry of this church. You should be involved in EVERY aspect. You should be here as much as possible. You should be helping in the church in any way that you can, be it giving, teaching, leading, or whatever.

Wow! What a thought. "take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

II Cor. 13:14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."

WOW! We should have fellowship with believers similar to the fellowship that we have with the Holy Spirit.

But what is that? How does the Holy Spirit fellowship with us?

The Spirit MINISTERS TO US! How often do the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS minister to you?

He teaches us: How often do the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS teach us anything spiritual?

He leads us: How often do the NEWS, WEATHER, AND SPORTS lead us to anything spiritual?

He comforts us: Now, I won't argue with the fact that the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS comfort us. When your favorite team wins, YOU ARE COMFORTED! BUT, we all know that this is not the comfort that we should gain from fellowship with the Spirit or believers.

Gal. 2:9 "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."

This text seems to be indicating that the "pillars" of the church were giving their agreement to the ministry of Paul to the Gentiles. The idea of agreement to a persons qualifications seems to be present.

The right hand of fellowship - an acknowledgement that Paul and Barnabus were being led of the Lord and that they agreed with the work they were doing. Maybe by application a "well done" to those that minister with you in your church situation.

Phil. 2:1 [We will read this one later.] This text also speaks of the fellowship of the Spirit.

Phil. 3:10 "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death,"

There is a close relationship between the believer, and the sufferings of Christ.

Partaking in the sufferings of others would seem to be a possible application of this text. How much co-suffering do we do over NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS? LOTS! OH! THE METS LOST AGAIN! OH! NO! YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!

When we go through trials and tribulations, we are fellowshipping in the suffering that Christ went through. When we suffer with other believers, we are assisting them - we are suffering with them.

I was talking to a man that was on the board of a large church in Denver. We were talking about how our Christian society was going lately. He told me that the church where he ministers, this is a quote, " . . .STRUGGLES TO KEEP ENOUGH HEALTHY FAMILIES TO MINISTER TO THE HURTING FAMILIES."

A body of believers STRUGGLES to keep enough families spiritually healthy, to minister to the spiritually struggling in their church.

I John 1:3 "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

**WE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, CHRIST AND BELIEVERS!**

The apostles had a close relationship with God - WITH THE FATHER - WITH THE SON - WITH THE SPIRIT - THE TRINITY OF ALL CREATION! We can, should, and ought to have fellowship with God.

I John 1:6 "If we say that we have fellowship with him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;"

In short if you say you fellowship with God and walk in sin, you are a LIAR.

Simple terminology isn't it. IF YOU SIN, YOU DO NOT FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD!

I John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT - WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP ONE WITH ANOTHER -- NOT MAYBE, BUT WE WILL! WE WILL HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS!

The implication is that if we aren't walking in the light we won't have fellowship one with another.

You might consider the reverse of that text. If you aren't fellowshiping with one another, you may well not be walking in the light.

Notice!

Fellowship is with God the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit AS WELL AS BELIEVERS!

Let's think about that! Is our fellowship with GOD the same as with believers? It should be similar, that is, IF we have GOOD fellowship with the Lord.

If we are not walking with God as I John mentions "walking in the light" then we won't have "fellowship" "one with another."

Illustration: I had a friend in my first two years of Bible college that would come over and we would talk about the Word for hours at a time. We had coffee almost daily and talked about the things that we were learning. One day those conversations stopped. We talked about the weather

and the rotten teachers and the miserable assignments and every thing else, but every time I would change the subject to spiritual things he would leave the subject as quickly as possible.

This went on for about a week and he finally shared with me that he had been in a real spiritual slump, and that he had not been walking with the Lord, as he should.

He mentioned he was back on track. I had already noticed things had changed in his life, by our conversation.

If you find yourself changing a conversation from spiritual things, to other things, you might consider your walk with the Lord.

We have times in our churches where we talk about the things we do for the Lord, and testimony times when we might mention what the Lord is doing in our lives, yet there are very few other times when we really share with one another of what God is doing way down inside our lives.

When we fellowship with God we:

Pray

We confess

We request

We praise and thank the Lord

We meditate on Scripture

When we study the Word

We learn of God

We are challenged by God

We talk the Word over with God.

SO!

If these are some of the things that we do with God when we fellowship, then it would seem to me that as we fellowship together - one with another, we should be doing some of the same things. We should naturally desire to share with one another.

Some of the things we ought to be doing with one another are:

Sharing burdens (Many hurt today, yet do not share).

Confess our wrongs of others.

Request prayer about items in our life/ not aunt Tillies toe nail.

Praise God and thank Him.

Meditate on Scripture.

Teach one another.

When you learn something new from the Word share it with those you fellowship with. They may need to learn the same thing.

I had a pastor at one time that took a couple of us to a seminar. We had a lunch break so we picked up a hamburger and ate. We had about a half-hour left so we took a walk around the church neighborhood. We were just off of the church property when the pastor started talking about what we had been learning and challenging us spiritually about what we had heard.

When he first started, I thought to myself, "What a quirky thing to do on a walk on a pretty day." As we continued I found that it was quite refreshing when compared to the normal conversations I had been having with believers.

I have read that when people went walking with A.W. Tozer, they were challenged to think with him about some spiritual subject. One writer mentioned that as they left for their walk, Tozer said, "Now let us think and talk about the almightiness of God."

WE OUGHT TO BE TALKING TO ONE ANOTHER ABOUT THE LORD, AND NOT THE NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS!

I was informed in a church in Wyoming that in some communities it isn't NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS, but rather BULLS, FENCES AND WEATHER. The trio may differ, but one thing is the same - there is little spiritual quality in our fellowship!

The question should have come to your mind by now - "Why don't we fellowship like this in our churches and friendships?"

Let us consider a few reasons that are possible:

1. SIN: If we have sin, and are not fellowshipping with the Lord, then we will not find fellowship one with another.

2. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE: Lack of knowledge of what fellowship really is. If you have been saved a short time, or raised in one of our many churches that do not fellowship, you will have no knowledge of what God has provided.

3. FACADES: An article I read many years ago mentioned the "FUNDAMENTALIST FACADES." The author was speaking of the two faces of believers. As I remember, he mentioned that we have the supersaint face that we wear most of the time, and then we have the real face we wear on the inside that is broken and pained by problems and trials, and at times sin.

4. LACK OF CONCERN: Today we have people asking questions, but not listening to answers. We have people that really don't want to get involved in sharing, as we should in fellowship. It might require involvement. We have people that aren't interested in knowing of your problems, or of your victories.

5. SELF-INDULGENCE: Another may be that we just enjoy talking with people. And some like to talk about the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS! It isn't wrong to talk about the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS, but if that is all you talk about, possibly there is a problem!

Let's see if we can draw some conclusions to our study.

## CONCLUSION:

**SOME LIKE FALLOWSHIP:** I am convinced that some like fallowship because of the sin in their lives.

I am convinced that some like fallowship because of the fact that they have never known real true fellowship with believers.

I am convinced that some have not found the fellowship with God that they need to attain the fellowship we have mentioned with other believers.

**SOME LACK FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: IF THERE IS NO VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP THERE CAN BE NO PROPER HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP!**

I am convinced that unless believers begin to have scriptural fellowship with God, and with other believers, we will continue on down the garden path to the point that we will be fallow ground - ground with which God will not be able to work.

I am convinced that many remain in the - no fellowship - mode because it is comfortable. If they are in a proper type of fellowship then they most likely will be challenged in their spiritual life, and that is devastating if they are happy in their complacency.

In my first years of Bible College I had much to learn spiritually. (I know it all now! HA!!!) We had some neighbors that would come over for an evening now and then. We would have some real good times in the word. The following summer we were together nightly for several weeks and I found that the constant challenge was not only teaching me much about the Lord, but it was getting to be very strenuous to talk to the couple.

I felt that I wanted to have a break from them. Just a time to breathe. Yet, in all honesty I knew that it was the spiritual stress of not wanting to change so much, so quickly. Spiritual change was the stress factor, and not the people, or the fellowship.

To talk of the NEWS, WEATHER AND SPORTS is not wrong, however if that is all you ever

talk about when you are with other believers, then you should begin to check some items to see what is wrong.

## SO, WHAT SHOULD WE CHECK?

1. Check your own spiritual barometer to be sure you are walking in the light.
2. It isn't wrong to check your friend's spiritual barometer either. You may find that it is on the low side of the scale.
3. It is not out of line to check your church's spiritual barometer. If a church is not all that it should be, then the fellowship will definitely be affected. It will be difficult to bring about changes in a church that is at a low point, however it must be done!

We, as believers are designed to have fellowship with God. The church and believers are designed to give a certain amount of support via, prayer, encouragement and fellowship. If we aren't gaining that fellowship then we need to do something about it.

If we can't find true fellowship we will have to bottle up a lot of hurt inside!

## WARNING:

It is easy to condemn what we term fellowship in the church today.

It is easy to tell you what the scripture tells us that fellowship ought to be.

It is easy to challenge you to set priorities in your life to change your view of fellowship.

It is even easy to challenge you to begin to have spiritual fellowship with your friends.

The hard part is for you as individuals to go into your homes and groups and do something about

it.

The hard part is for you to try to bring the conversation around to spiritual things without being thought a lunatic.

The hard part is for you to continue to try to bring the conversation around to spiritual things when the people you are with continue to change the subject to other things.

The hard part is for you to commit yourself to finding friends that will fellowship with you.

The hard part is for you to put away friends that refuse to be a part of spiritual conversations.

I preached through this material at a Bible Institute, and went to coffee with the faculty and student body immediately after. There was joking about koinonia and fellowship on the way to coffee, yet during coffee the conversation was NEWS, WEATHER, AND SPORTS.

It is not easy to change what has been accepted for so many years.

NOW! How do we change the cycle we are in? How can we bring about change in our churches?

1. Have a proper fellowship with God. If this area is not correct then you should work on it first.

If you have trouble developing your fellowship with the Lord seek someone out that might be able to help.

2. Don't be arrogant or proud that you NOW know what REAL fellowship is.

3. Try to bring spiritual things into the normal conversations that you have with your friends.

Use a small generic, safe type question to bring up spiritual things.

Something like: "Do you think, in our society, that we can follow the example of Christ?"

4. Begin with people that are interested in talking of spiritual things so that you become comfortable with it. Notice how they bring the conversation to spiritual things.
5. As you feel more comfortable with it, try bringing conversations with other friends around to spiritual things.
6. Pray specifically for a friend that you can just sit down with and fellowship. You know, maybe your wife or husband or maybe even your adult child or just an acquaintance that is a believer.
7. Be prepared to be challenged in your spiritual life.

I firmly believe that any two believers can have true fellowship if they have the desire.

One important point that you need to understand is this. God has fellowship with all age groups. He fellowships with children, with young adults, with older adults, with senior citizens, and I am even told that He fellowships with teenagers.

AGE IS ERRELAVENT in the area of fellowship. When believers gather, age should not be a problem.

My wife and I met an old couple that was in their 80's years ago. We only knew them a year or two before they died; however those times we were together were great. Mrs. Duncan and Faith would start talking and Mr. Duncan and I would listen. Somewhere along the line Mr. Duncan or myself would ask the other some question about Scripture or the Lord and we were off and running. We had many very good times in fellowship. We even got into the Word.

We have so much time in which to sharpen our spiritual skills and minds why do we waste so much of it on the NEWS, WEATHER, AND SPORTS?

We talk much about discipling people today. Can you think of a better informal way to do it - fellowship is a natural?

Just remember - IF WE DON'T HAVE A VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP WE WON'T HAVE A PROPER HORIZONTAL RELATIONSHIP! If you observe someone that doesn't have a horizontal relationship it may well be that he doesn't have a vertical relationship.

We have mentioned that we fellowship with God!

Do you realize that God fellowships with ALL BELIEVERS!

Rich ones and poor ones

Skinny ones and fat ones

Gorgeous ones and ugly ones

Young ones and old ones

Black ones and white ones

Smart ones and not so smart ones

Educated ones and not so educated ones

Conservative ones and not so conservative ones

Professional ones and non-professional ones

Big named ones and little named ones

Supersaints and babes in Christ

ALL KINDS OF BELIEVERS!

NOW IF YOUR VERTICAL RELATIONSHIP IS PROPER THEN YOU CAN HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH ALL BELIEVERS ALSO!

Rich ones and poor ones

Skinny ones and fat ones

Gorgeous ones and ugly ones

Young ones and old ones

Black ones and white ones

Smart ones and not so smart ones

Educated and not so educated ones

Conservative ones and not so conservative ones

Professional ones and non-professional ones

Big named and little named ones

Supersaints and babes in Christ.

Have I made the point clear? Christians today tend to be a little bit like Archie Bunker! We are a bit bigoted when it comes to those that we associate with and fellowship with.

We tend to stay away from other age groups, from those that we don't like, from those that are different than we are.

Exaggeration? I don't think so. Think about your own fellowship life. Do you fellowship with ALL OF THE BELIEVERS AROUND YOU, OR ONLY A SELECT FEW THAT YOU LIKE?

We were recently in a SS class where the topic for the morning was "What kind of Snob are you?"

It came from a book entitled; "WILL THE REAL PHONEY PLEASE STAND UP."

Some author's sure know where we Christians live.

They were talking about not associating with people because they didn't fit into OUR class of

people.

I might add, don't be too proud if you are in one of the social or ethnic classes that are usually discriminated against. Snobbery works both ways.

You can be rich and a snob, or poor and a snob.

You can be handsome and a snob, or ugly and a snob.

You can be conservative and a snob, or less conservative and a snob.

You can be deeply spiritual and a snob, or a spiritual midget and a snob.

You can be educated and a snob, or less educated and a snob.

**SNOBBERY IS A SIN!** James two makes it quite plain that we are not to look up to the rich and down at the poor!

Paul encouraged the Philippian believers in this area.

Phil 2:1-3 "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

This passage tells us how to keep snobbery out of our churches - don't think too highly of yourself!

One final thought: The psalmist David in 142:4 mentions a time when he was alone and in trouble. I'd like to LOOSELY relate his words to the individual believers in churches across America in our day.

"...there was no man that would know me. Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

I know many pastors and church members that would shout, "AMEN" to that phrase. We get together for "church" today, but seldom for "koinonia." We get together for "fellowship" today, but seldom for "koinonia."

We need to put some meaning back into our term fellowship so that it will one day mean the same as "koinonia."

"...there was no man that would know me. Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

I would like to make some general application to this thought. Faith and I have visited many churches and have observed many things that have made us wonder if the church is really interested in visitors.

Most churches today have what I call the disease, but they call the greeting time, or the fellowship time, or the get to know one another time. It is the time in the worship service when everyone suddenly and magically becomes friendly for a short time, and then just as suddenly and magically go back to the way they were.

Let me illustrate this for you, and I might say that we have experienced similar situations over and over through the last few years.

We entered a church that had a rather large foyer. The Sunday school let out and the area filled with people. Faith and I looked around and walked around, wondering where the sanctuary was. Faith noticed the son of someone she worked with leaning against the wall. We went over and talked to him for a moment. He was as bewildered as we were. This was his first visit to this church as well. Finally I went in search of the sanctuary and found where it was. Faith returned to the young man to inform him of our find.

We sat down in the sanctuary and awaited the service. During the time between our entering the church and the beginning of the service, we were greeted only once or twice.

During the service the dread disease was unleashed. Everyone started being friendly and noisy.

At least three couples shook our hands and said hello. Even in the "friendly time" they weren't even that friendly.

Now, let me be quick to say! that the greeting time can be and is used by many churches very effectively. Don't quit, but just be very careful about the progression of your greeting times.

People in our society are hurting. We have very high unemployment; we have families in a mess. They need help and often they turn to the church for help.

When they come into our building, they are crying for help. Just what response are they getting?

How do we react to these people?

If our vertical fellowship is correct, then we will be open to greeting that person with the thought of helping and sharing.

If our vertical fellowship is correct, when we meet a fellow believer, we will naturally desire to share with them in the area of spiritual things.

Let us recap what fellowship really means.

FELLOWSHIP MAY INCLUDE:

APOSTLE'S DOCTRINE: The study and teaching of His Word.

BREAKING OF BREAD (UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH): This may be in the area of preparing the table or in serving it.

PRAYER: This means at church, at home, and with other believers.

GIVING OF MATERIAL THINGS: It may be money if you have money to spare. It may be

belongings. More than once we have had missionaries that came to our church or home with material needs. When I saw them, I realized we had extra in that area and was able to share with them.

Let me share one case in point. When we lived in Denver, we found a whole stack of Bibles for \$5.00 each. We bought several for future use. Not many weeks later a missionary couple came to our church. When they walked in the woman was carrying a coverless, tattered old Bible that was held together with masking tape. Guess what she received when they came to our house for dinner.

**BRINGING GOD INTO IT:** Talk about spiritual things when you are with believers - with your family.

**CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS:** This will take time, commitment and honesty.

**INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH:** This means regular attendance, work, and involvement.

**CONFESSION:** This means being open with others, as well as getting rid of sin in your life.

**APPROVAL OF ONES MINISTRY:** Supporting church officers ministers and missionaries, both verbally and physically.

**SUFFERING TRIBULATIONS:** Be assured that the devil will oppose this sort of fellowship.

**FELLOWSHIP MAY REQUIRE:**

**GIVING OF YOUR MATERIAL THINGS:**

**GIVING OF YOUR TIME:**

**GIVING OF YOUR EMOTIONAL STRENGTH:**

**GETTING INVOLVED IN THE MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH:**

BREAKING DOWN OF FACADES:

STUDY:

HONESTY:

HARD TIMES:

I trust that your minds have been challenged, and your consciences have been stirred in this area.

I trust that your concept of fellowship has been reconsidered, and modified as needed.

Personally, as I visit churches, I see very little Scriptural fellowship going on.

I trust that the Lord can change this in the coming years.

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M08050

TITLE: WHOSE CHURCH IS THIS ANY WAY?

OUTLINE:

I. I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

II. YOU WILL DO THE FOOTWORK

There is a brochure in the sermon notes file labeled ser238 that depicts some of what I was trying to combat in this message. It goes on for a page and a half before the word church is mentioned.

INTRO:

In the Gospel of Matthew, it is recorded that Christ, when speaking of a future time, mentioned, "I will build my church;"

A small group of people that had recently organized as a church met to consider the purchase of a building. The congregation was asked to pray and consider the possibilities carefully. The church met and the decision was unanimous to NOT purchase the building.

One of the couples in the church decided that the congregation had erred, so contacted all the people personally behind the pastors back and convinced them that they should go ahead with the plan to look into the building.

This group ceased to exist within weeks.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

A Sunday school teacher was asked to take a large class of Senior adults. He did so and within a few weeks had the seniors responding quite well to his ministry. So well, in fact that they decided that they were tired of pew warming and they wanted to get busy helping in the church. The teacher went to the pastor to see if the people could help. The pastor scoffed at the teacher's efforts and within a week had run the teacher out of the church by falsely turning the church board against him.

The young teacher found that he was the third in a series of teachers that had been run off, and later found that a fourth was treated the same. The pastor was insecure about anyone having a ministry in his church.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

I was told recently of a church planting organization that selects an area where they make hundreds of phone calls. If there is a certain percentage of the people on the phone that are positive in the thought of starting a new church in the area, the organization feels that it would be "COST EFFECTIVE" to start a church in the area.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

A church I recently was informed of has their whole thrust and program geared to bring unsaved

people into the church. They will do most anything to draw people into the sanctuary so that the pastor can evangelize them.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

A church had been meeting in another churches building for several months. They were talking about a new church building they were going to build. In all the time a missionary was with the church during a conference the only reason for the million-dollar building that the missionary heard was that the people were so tired of carrying their hymnals in and out of the church every week.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

A church board met to ask their pastor to resign. They listed all of the reasons he was being asked to leave. None of the reasons related to his preaching ministry, nor his teaching ministry, nor his calling ministry, but mostly to his yard work at the church. The most important reason for his being asked to resign was that he had not fertilized the lawn in several years.

The pastor told the board that there was a woman in the church that had donated money for lawn fertilization and that it had been done by professionals for years. He was still forced to resign.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

A pastor took a small church and built it up numerically until they were able to build a building. Shortly after, the pastor began eliminating church officers for one reason or another. Ultimately the pastor was the only church officer, and his family was the only ones allowed to minister in the church. He had total control of all funds, all ministries and all aspects of the church when he had many very qualified people in the church.

The church dwindled over the coming years.

Jesus said, "I will build my church;"

I was being considered as a Sunday school teacher in a very large church. As teacher, I would have been pastor to a class of about 100.

Some observations about the church:

In the foyer was an enclosed window displaying a picture of the pastor as a child on his mother's lap. Also, in the window was the mother's Bible. It looked like a little shrine.

All I heard before Sunday school was about how great the pastor was.

Near the conclusion of my SS lesson, which all were very attentive to, the pastor walked into the room through a door in the back of the auditorium.

ALL attention turned to him to see if he was going to speak.

I lost the complete class - had to stop talking because no one was listening.

A few months later the pastor resigned and they almost had to bury the church. The congregation almost went to pieces, fearing that the church would disintegrate without the pastor. It almost did.

I don't think for a moment that anyone intended for the people to put the pastor on that high a pedestal, but somewhere the people as a whole lost sight of the fact that Christ is building His church. (The church recovered due to strong spiritual men on the board.)

Jesus said, "I will build my church."

I would like to consider Christ's comment in Matthew. Please turn with to Matt 16.18.

I. I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

Matt 16.18 Christ tells the apostles that HE will build HIS church. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I want to concentrate on the phrase; "I will build my church."

Now, there is nothing earth shattering in this comment, I am not going to tell you that it is a mistranslation, I'm not going to tell you that it was poorly recorded, and I'm not going to insult your intelligence by taking an hour and a half to explain the meaning of this phrase. **AND THEY ALL SAID AMEN!**

It simply means that Christ somewhere in the past had decided that He was going to be the one to build His church. Simple statement of fact and all of the translations I checked translated it the same with the exception of two that translated it "I will build my assembly;" which is quite acceptable because the Greek word used is Ecclesia which means assembly, but is normally translated church in the New Testament.

Christ planned to build His church! If this is true, and it is, then how dare any human being attempt to build Christ's church, how dare any human being declare that another human being can build Christ's church. Christ Alone can and will build His church. He certainly uses human beings to assist Him in His task, but it is Christ that will build the church, not us.

This is not a totally new concept to God. The Old Testament mentions this concept a few times and I would like to just touch on these for a moment to illustrate the fact that God has a plan and He is in the process of taking steps to complete that plan.

These texts also illustrate the fact that God gives the increase. We do what He leads us to do and **HE GIVES THE INCREASE**. We will see this as we go along.

God, in the Old Testament times was in the business of caring for people, as today Christ is caring for His church.

Levi. 26.4 mentions that God will give the rain and that the land would give the increase. "Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."

Ps 85.12 shows the idea that God does the increasing. "Yea, the LORD shall give [that which is] good; and our land shall yield her increase.

Deut. 7.13 mentions "And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee."

There is one final aspect of the I Will of God in relation to the church. Acts 15.16 mentions the "I will" aspect of the rebuilding of the end time temple. "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:" Yes, God is speaking of a literal building, not a church group, but it illustrates the fact that God takes steps to do HIS work.

I Cor 3.5ff speaks well of our subject. "5 Who then is Paul, and who [is] Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

It would seem that the apostle Paul had gotten the picture quite nicely, but the people at Corinth seemed to feel that some were more important than others due to which person had led them to the Lord. Paul is clear that he was not doing the increasing, that Apollos was not doing the increasing, but that GOD was doing the increasing.

Paul continues: 8 "Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [ye are] God's building. 10 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. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The context goes on to explain that there are consequences to doing other than God's method of building. We will consider this later.

I think that we should be clear at this point that it is God that is building His church not you, not the pastor, not the evangelist, not the Sunday School teachers, not the janitors, but ALMIGHTY GOD HIMSELF.

## II. YOU WILL DO THE FOOTWORK

Never in the Bible is a person told to go out and build a church.

Never in the Bible is a church told to seek a pastor that can build a church.

Never in the Bible is a single individual held responsible for a church growing or declining.

Never in the Bible is the success of a church based on numbers.

Never in the Bible is the failure of a church based on numbers.

Never in the Bible is -- well, I think you get the message.

However, on the other hand the Bible is full of things that we are to do, are to judge success by, are to judge failure by, are to seek pastors by, etc.

Spirituality is the key to judging all of these. Pastors are to be picked for their spiritual qualifications and gifts. Not their good speaking ability, not their good looks, and not their great drawing power.

Churches are to be judged by how they minister to the unsaved and saved alike. It relates to the ministry of the Word of God.

Individuals are to be judged by how their spiritual lives reflect the love of their Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord.

No matter how great our pastor is, God must give the increase.

No matter how great our programs are, God must give the increase.

No matter how much we witness, God must give the increase.

No matter how pretty our building is, God must give the increase.

I suggest that many churches, FUNDAMENTAL AND EVANGELICAL CHURCHES ALIKE, are trying the hardest they can to build Christ's church instead of allowing Christ to do it.

I doubt that I've heard it all, but let me tell you a little of what I've heard in recent years.

We have an orchestra to try and get the intellectual in to hear the Word.

We have a keyboard to try and get the young people interested in the Word.

We have contemporary music so that the younger couples will come and listen to the pastor.

We have the best Sunday school literature available so that we can draw the children into the Sunday school and then maybe we can reach the parents.

We have to build a new building so that we have enough room when visitors come.

We have to have contests to draw people in.

We have to have drama to keep the peoples interest.

NOW, before we go further!

Yes, buildings are important.

Yes, pastors are important.

Yes, programs are important.

Yes, Sunday school is important.

HOWEVER!

All we do in the church MUST be done by the leading of the Holy Spirit, NOT by the budget, not by the attendance, nor by the any other thing.

Let me tell you what my philosophy of church growth is.

Let me tell you what my philosophy of church budget is.

Let me tell you what my philosophy of church buildings is.

All of these philosophies are rolled up in one. ALL BELIEVERS WITNESS TO THOSE THEY HAVE ACCESS TO, AND WHEN PEOPLE ACCEPT CHRIST THEY ARE INVITED TO THE CHURCH FOR DISCIPLING, WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP.

Let me repeat that for you.

ALL BELIEVERS WITNESS TO THOSE THEY HAVE ACCESS TO, AND WHEN PEOPLE ACCEPT CHRIST THEY ARE INVITED TO THE CHURCH FOR DISCIPLING, WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP. It's that simple!

If we witness and bring the converts that GOD brings unto Himself into HIS church so that the believers can train them, then budget, growth and buildings will deal with themselves.

I am not a reformer, nor am I against church planning, budgets, and goals, but we must be about the work of the Lord first and foremost, and allow Him to build His church and lead us into the planning, budgets, and goals that He wants to bring about in our individual church.

Christ told us that He would build His church.

The church is in existence for only a few limited purposes. Evangelism, which includes missions, Edification, which includes training of the new believer and challenging of the older believer, Fellowship, for the uplifting of the believers, and Worship to uplift the soul before its Lord and Master.

The church is central to the plan of God. Paul did not go around saving people and telling them to become isolationists. He went back and organized the churches that he had planted by setting up church leaders. (Acts 14.23) He would not have set up church leaders had he not known that the church was God's plan for this age.

Eph 4 mentions that the church is for the edification of the believers. We are to train others so that they can train others so that they can train others.

Let us turn to Eph 4.11 and read a couple of verses, and then I want to read one verse from Paul's second epistle to Timothy.

11 "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Now, II Tim 2.2 "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Without this process the church would cease to exist! Christ uses us to build and continue His church.

GUESS WHAT?

If we as a body of believers don't teach those we lead to the Lord, it is very doubtful that anyone else will.

GUESS WHAT?

If we don't pass on our faith, it is definite that no one else will do it for us.

Each generation must reach its own generation - GUESS WHAT? My generation has failed thus far. One half of the world hasn't heard of Christ. My generation is about out of time.

Paul mentions our ministry in another way. Turn to II Cor 5.18 for our closing thoughts.

"And all things [are] of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech [you] by us: we pray [you] in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

God is in the business of reconciling the lost to Himself, but he has honored us with the opportunity, indeed, the duty to share that message of reconciliation with others.

We are to do the footwork, but WE MUST NEVER FORGET WHO IS IN CHARGE - ALMIGHTY GOD THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.

Before we close, I would like to revisit one of our texts for just a moment. Turn back with me to I Cor 3.8.

Remember this text is in the area of church planting and nurturing. Paul has planted a church and Apollos has done some nurturing and evidently was in on some of the fruit bearing as well, however Paul's admonition is that it is God that gives the increase. It is God that increases numbers, and by logic it is God that increases offerings, it is God that increases buildings etc.

Now in that context Paul states, (3.8) "... and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." Paul tells the Corinthian believers that each person will have their own reward for how they have built while they are working on the church of Christ.

Paul then continues to tell them that their work will be either wood, hay, and stubble, or it will be gold, silver, or precious stones. How we as individuals work on the church that Christ is building will be judged.

I Cor 2.12ff mentions, "12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 if any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Folks, this is personal opinion - doctrine of Derickson - so take this with a grain of salt - but I personally believe that there are many churches in existence today in Fundamental and Evangelical circles that are built as wood, hay and stubble. I believe that many believers are more concerned with their numbers, buildings, and programs than they are with their Lord and HIS BUILDING OF HIS CHURCH.

I was sitting in a pastors office one morning and the pastor walked to the window - looked out and around and said, "Stan, this is MY turf." He ran his church HIS way, to fit HIS desires and if HE needed to run someone off to get HIS way HE would do it.

He took his church of over 200 to 50 in less than a year after his statement to me.

His Turf? Yes.

Christ's church? One is left to wonder.

As we go forward with our Lord, let us be sure that we are building in the manner that Christ desires us to build. Let us be sure that we are building gold, silver, and precious stones.

As we as believers win the lost to Christ and bring them into the local church for training, so they can go out and win others to Christ, we will see the church grow as Christ wants it to grow, we will see the offerings grow as Christ wants the offerings to grow, we will see the building grow as Christ wants the building to grow.

It is not wrong to set goals for the church, it is not wrong to set up programs, it is not wrong to evaluate how the church has been run in the past - these are all imperative - however, BUT all we do must be in conjunction with prayer and the seeking of Christ's purpose for this particular church and its people.

You and I are to do the footwork, while we leave the increase to the one and only one that can cause the increase -- God.

I would like to describe a church we went to one time for you - a successful church Scripturally.

It had spiritual leadership.

It had regular meetings.

It had as many present for prayer meeting as for worship.

It had serious prayer meetings - we went to one and they gave the preacher an hour then prayed about an hour - ON THEIR KNEES!

It had a witnessing membership.

It had a part time pastor.

It met in the pastor's basement.

Success comes in small packages OR large packages - IT DEPENDS ON HOW CHRIST PACKAGES IT.

To tie all this together I would like to share four points concerning what God blesses. Though I disagree with Watchman Nee in some of his theology, I agree with his points about God's blessing our efforts.

What God will bless:

WHAT HE INITIATES

WHAT DEPENDS ON HIM FOR ITS SUCCESS

WHAT IS DONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORD

WHAT IS DONE FOR HIS GLORY

Let me repeat that for you.

What God will bless:

WHAT HE INITIATES

WHAT DEPENDS ON HIM FOR ITS SUCCESS

WHAT IS DONE ACCORDING TO HIS WORD

WHAT IS DONE FOR HIS GLORY

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M09000

TITLE: IS CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE, OR HAVE WE

ACCEPTED ANOTHER?

God by the prophet Ezekiel said of His Old Testament priests in 22.26, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shown difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hidden their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."

God speaks again of the Millennial priesthood by Ezekiel again in 44.23, "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and common, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean."

Take a moment and think of things that you used to think of as holy or revered, but now view as common and ordinary.

INTRODUCTION:

We've all heard comments about the wolf in sheep's clothing. We all relegate that in the spectrum of Christianity, to the liberals and false teachers under the umbrella of "Christianity." I would like to suggest that today we have little ways in which it is really the Devil creeping in under that umbrella - slowly but surely sneaking into the Church and its activities.

II Cor 11:13-15 states, "For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of

righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

We normally relate this to the false teaching that is made to look like truth. We do have a serious problem with this today.

The churches divorce rate is currently about the same as the worlds. We have accepted the world philosophy of, try it you'll like it - if you don't, divorce it.

We have for all practical purposes bought the divorce myth. The world said it was okay, so now we have preachers in fundamental churches preaching from pulpits that divorce is okay. In my hometown in the 50's divorce was almost unheard of, yet today some of our fundamental pastors preach that it's okay.

My Bible still says that God hates divorce.

YES, we must minister to divorced people - they are with us, but we must begin to teach believers what marriage is to be, and teach them that divorce is wrong.

We are also seeing more and more unsaved people as church members. Some are even on the boards of previously sound churches. Indeed, I have been told of unsaved sitting on the boards of fundamental churches.

The Devil has been copying the Lord's ways, means and ideas since the beginning.

I trust that you will take what I say with a grain of salt until you do some thinking about it on your own. I have been tossing it around a lot over a long period of time, and feel there is a bunch of truth in it.

In this study I would like to just think of the Devil's influence on the church. He doesn't have to copy the church, or the Lord's doings. He now just has to wait a few months until the church copies the world's ways, and he has his stuff into the Church at the Churches invitation.

Just what are some of these items that we, the Church, copy?

An example from the past is the mini skirt craze. The fashion magazines presented the mini skirt to the public and it was only a very short time before the church was filled with mini skirted women pulling and tugging and squirming in the pews trying to be modest.

The devil did not have to labor to do the job, he just allowed us to do our usual thing in the church.

What I'm about to say may not be bad, but consider it - beware of it - act on it, if needed.

Another example: Harvest festivals - to get away from Halloween. Catholics started all hallows to combat paganism. Paganism became Halloween. We've seen black cats, ghosts, Jack-o-lanterns etc. in harvest festivals.

MUSIC: When I was growing up the rock and roll stations introduced us to the top 40! As teenagers we were always listening to the radio to see who was number one on the charts, Pat Boone or Elvis. Today we have top forties of Western, Blue Grass, Popular, Rock, Heavy Metal AND now CHRISTIAN MUSIC!

I have even heard Christian music that was an attempt to copy New Age music recently.

We have, for years had Sunday school songs and choruses, but now we have Christian words put to everyday tunes of the world. (Brother John, I've Been Worken On The Railroad etc.)

The rock groups had their guitars, bass guitars, keyboards and now so do the churches. We went to a church in Portland, OR some years back and when we opened the door, we were met with the blare of drums and guitars. We exited as we entered.

The world gave us heavy metal and the church now has CHRISTIAN HEAVY METAL!

How about chorus's in worship service? Probably good, however watch the content. I've seen music that is published by groups that are known for their false doctrine, new revelation etc. I saw one publisher listed on a sheet of choruses' in a fundamental church. The publisher is known to believe in revelation other than the Bible. The congregation will assume the publisher is okay.

We were in a fundamental church - large church - and one of the choruses they sang was a prayer to God asking Him not to take His Holy Spirit from them. FALSE DOCTRINE AND THEY WERE SINGING IT AT THE TOP OF THEIR VOICES!

TOYS: We have had toy action figures with us for a number of years, at least since Star Wars, and in the late 80's we were introduced to BIBLE ACTION FIGURES! Do we really want to have our children consider David and Goliath on the same plain as Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker?

This is probably a good place to mention Bible Cartoons. Webster defines Cartoon as, "a drawing intended as satire, caricature, or humor"

Do we want the kids to see Moses in the same light as Donald Duck? Do we want the kids to think of Christ in the same light as the new age sounding cartoon Captain Planet?

BOOKS: Historical novels have been with us for years and years but the Christians of our time just have to have their CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL NOVELS, very loosely based on the lives of Biblical characters.

My wife spoke to a young Christian woman that was reading one of the novels recently. The girl told her how she enjoyed it and was learning so much. My wife explained what a historical novel was - that it's fiction based on the period of time. The girl WOULD NOT understand that it wasn't based on fact - that she knew it was based on fact and that it was TRUE! She said, "But this one's TRUE!"

Can you imagine her teaching Sunday school?

Maybe the "Christian Publishers - you know those that really want to reach the world. Reach the world at \$44.95 a copy.

Those computer Bibles that go for 150 to 200 dollars!

We might mention the fact they won't publish Chafer's Systematic Theology (Seven volumes)

anymore, because there isn't enough market available to make it cost effective.

Shame on the publishers and shame on us, the universal church:

- a. The publisher for being so cost effective.
- b. The church for not creating a market for great works of theology.

I might also mention the overemphasis on books instead of THE BOOK. When counselors council, too often they tell the people what Joe Blow wrote, rather than what God said.

**DISCIPLINE:** We have bought the worlds view of discipline in families, and are reaping the benefit in our churches. Many have taught their children to be independent, and that they are. We have a generation of Christian young people that do not have Christ's values and morals. They have the world's. They submit to no one! Not even God.

I was in a pastor's home while on deputation, and they told their children to go to bed. The kids refused for some time, and finally one slammed the television switch and they stomped off up the stairs. One of them as he passed his father said, "This is just plain DUMB!" That is not the sign of Godly discipline, it is a sign of a very permissive discipline.

We have allowed this same philosophy to permeate the church. Most churches do not have church discipline today.

Discipline is not invoked when a believer divorces their spouse.

Discipline is not invoked when a believer is in adultery.

Discipline is not invoked when a believer is in doctrinal heresy.

The Proverb says spare the rod, spoil the child. That is true in the church. There are spoiled churches in our country. They have no discipline and as a result are doing what they want rather than what God wants.

One of the fundamental churches in Oregon had six married people involved in adultery and there was never any discipline. The church muddled along and the pastor left to become the head of a home missions organization. Another pastor had one daughter that divorced - a son that was married and seeing other women - no church discipline - the pastor left the church and became president of one of the seminaries in the northwest. We know what those students won't be taught. These are two fundamental churches in only one city!

GAMES: How about Bible Trivia? The terms in the title of that game ought to say enough to help us understand our subject in this study - BIBLE - TRIVIA! Webster mentions of trivia, "unimportant matters: trivial facts or details;" He mentions of trivial, "of little worth or importance" BIBLE - TRIVIA -- REALLY!

How about Bible Pictionary? I walked into a Christian's home in the late 80's and noticed several Jr Hi age young people playing Bible Pictionary. One of the young people was exploding with excitement because she had the answer first, and she hollered at the top of her lungs, "The Blood of Christ!!!!!!" I really think that the blood of Christ should have a little more dignity than that! His blood brought a lasting relationship with God. It saved us from hell. Do our kids really understand that?

EVANGELISM: We need to have a good evangelism program, so we are out there using memorized programs that have been set up by people that are giving near commercial quality. Why do we need a spit and polish program when we don't need it? If we needed it, we would have first and second evangelism not Romans.

Others use questionnaires to get the people to talk to them. The use of questionnaires is not wrong, unless it is a tool to get in the door. If you are really interested in the answers to the questions, and plan on using that information, then surveys are okay. If you use it for a door opener, consider a study of ethics. That's the way the cults operate.

PAY PACKAGES: The world has given their employees packages of benefits and pay and termed it many things, but today we have many pastors that judge a prospective church on the pay package they offer. Within the pay package are items such as:

salary parsonage allowance

travel conference expenses

vacation pay clothing allowance  
medical insurance social security  
retirement package moving expenses  
relocation expenses  
and anything else the pastor can suggest.

By the way, what is living by faith? I would like to suggest an acrostic. I fear for many it is:

F inancially secure

A ffluent

I ncome rising

T ax sheltered

H ome paid for

I recently heard of a man that was turning down churches with \$40,000 pay packages, waiting for a \$50,000 package. Shame on those individuals and shame on the churches for bowing to it.

**BUILDINGS:** Christians have condemned the costly cathedrals of the Roman Catholic Church, yet we are building bigger, and better, and snazzier churches than ever. Some of the churches are now putting up million dollar gymnasiums so that they can minister to teens. HUMMMMMM!!!! One in Oregon did this. The last time we talked to people in the church it had twenty members - no youth - 1 3/4 million dollars worth of paid for building - EMPTY.

**ESTEEM:** We have known for centuries that the Lord holds each and everyone of us as very valuable. We know that we all have great value in God's eyes, yet we have invited the "self image" and "self worth" philosophy into our churches, and many of our youth are thriving on it.

We don't have to build our own egos up; we merely need to realize how valuable we are in God's eyes.

BIGOTRY: We despise bigotry yet we have educational bigotry in many of our fellowships and groups. We have some looking down their noses at minimally educated people, and they in turn condemn the higher education people, as over educated and dabbling in the world system. My education was prayed over and directed by God, yet Christians have condemned me for having too much and for having college and seminary education. That is an affront to God!

For that matter how many of the churches that you have been in, have black people as members, unless the whole church is black?

THE BIBLE: The Roman Church had their problems with not allowing the lay people to have the Bible to read for centuries! Never will fundamentalists do that, we have said for many years, yet we have many seminaries teaching their students, OUR PASTORS, that you cannot properly understand the Bible unless you know the original languages. If we can't really understand the Bible without knowing the languages, then why should I be interested in reading it? Not to many steps down the road and we may have the Romanists telling us off about that one.

PREACHING: How about the teaching and preaching of the church today?

How accurate is it? I have seen men declare boldly something that is in the Old Testament that was for an age past as fact for our living, yet ignore other teaching in the Old Testament, or the New Testament that declares that the principle has been set aside.

I heard a man declare boldly from the Old Testament, that the sin of the father will be visited upon the children and he gave an illustration of a father that went into adultery in June and in July his Godly teenage daughter started sleeping with her boyfriend. Now the story may be true, yet it does not prove that the principle is for today. Indeed, the Book of Ezekiel chapter 18 states that God has changed that principle!

I sat in a Sunday school class in a Baptist church and listened for half an hour about the bills that the church had. The pastor told us that we had to take offerings to pay those bills before the Lord returned, so that we wouldn't have to take offerings when the Lord was here. Proof? Yes, of course he had a proof text! I Cor 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." THAT WAS PAUL SPEAKING BY THE WAY, NOT CHRIST!

How Biblical is it? I have heard many many sermons that the speaker used a bit of a verse as a

spring board to go off into some topic that he wanted to cover, and never again return to the Word for direction or proof.

I have also heard men state that a passage taught a certain thing, yet after a dozen readings, I have failed to see what he said in the verse.

How honest is it? We say that we reject the principles of modern day counseling and the psychiatrists of days gone by, yet we still hear "Christian counselors" that are rerunning the old, "why do you hate your mother" (or father), Freudian principles.

We say in some circles that we reject accreditation as teaching institutions. We don't want to submit to the world's standard! Yet we seek and accept the accreditation of the organizational part of the institutions. Seems a bit illogical to most. No, we don't want to be placed under worldly standards, yet the Christian accrediting associations are designed to bring a school into excellence of standards and teaching. Heaven forbid we attempt to upgrade the quality of our Christian education.

MISSIONS: How about missions today?

Are we following Biblical principles? Or are we out there trying man's concoctions? I have a friend that tried to start a church by telemarketing. The same principles that insurance salesmen use to sell insurance!

We are seeing more and more Christians feel that we should use the world's principles.

When I was on deputation and the support wasn't coming in, a Christian sat me down and told me what I was doing wrong. He mentioned that I wasn't being a good Public Relations man. He thought that the church was all wrong in sending people out on deputation. His thought was that we should introduce advertising campaigns into the church and raise money as a secular Ad Campaign might raise money.

Are we totally committed to reaching the lost? Again, when I was on deputation I sat across the table from a man that was questioning the "COST EFFECTIVENESS" of missions. If the missionary can't produce certain results then he is not being cost effective and should be brought home or sent elsewhere.

The telemarketing that I mentioned earlier is based on the same principle. If you can't raise enough interest by making a certain number of phone calls in an area, then it is not cost effective to go ahead and start a church in that area.

WHAT HAPPENED TO "SAVING THE LOST AT ANY COST!"?

WHAT HAPPENED TO "SOLD OUT FOR GOD!"?

WHAT HAPPENED TO "GIVING ALL FOR GOD'S GLORY!"?

One more question. "WHAT HAPPENED?"

CHRISTIAN RADIO: The world has had radio for many years and believers have used secular stations to propagate the Gospel. In recent years we have "Christian Radio" that is for the purpose of \_\_\_\_\_, you tell me, cuz I don't know. As near as I can tell it is to serve Christians rather than reach the lost.

If it is for the propagation of the Gospel, why do I hear so little Gospel on it? If it is for the edification of the saints, why do I hear so much false doctrine on it?

I have people constantly telling me how great the listening is on Christian radio, yet every time I tune in on Sunday morning, I hear I'm going to hell because I sinned last Tuesday, or I hear Christian rock.

The real crime is that we have Christians supporting those stations! God's money is going to help propagate false doctrine and play Christian rock!

Sure I can be selective in what I listen to, but how about that lost person that tunes in looking for help and finds some false teaching to follow.

I'm not against giving to Christian programs, but do it directly to the ministry and encourage them to change to secular stations where the lost people listen. At least on secular radio the lost know selectivity is necessary.

In the early 90's I was listening to "Christian radio" and heard a news flash. It was from Jerusalem and it was "on the spot coverage" of Christ's triumphal entry. Actually it was stated that they were covering a parade. The commentator mentioned that the parade was planned by the religious leaders, and that it had great political overtones. The blurb sounded innocent enough, however it was teaching falsehood. Christ was not political, the religious leaders did not plan it and it was not a parade. Aside from that it lowered the Lord's declaration of Himself as the Messiah, to the level of a newscast that was false coverage.

DRESS: I promised myself that I would not mention dress. I would not want to talk about dress. Yes, I would want to talk about dress. In fact just a comment or two about dress if you don't mind, (or three or four).

As I try to live a godly life why would I want to use the same sort of language the world does?

As I try to live a godly life why would I want to frequent the places that the world frequents?

As I try to live a godly life why would I want to live by the same standard that the world lives by?

As I try to live a godly life why would I want to educate myself as the world educates itself?

As I try to live a godly life why would I want to look and dress like the world looks and dresses? Yet thousands of believers spend thousands of dollars to be trendy - to be in style - to go with the flow.

We have growing friction about the dress of ministers. A number of years ago when on deputation I stopped in off the interstate for church. A friend, unknown to me, was speaking. Both of us drove up about the same time. They could not see who I was but I got out and was putting on my suit coat. The woman told her husband, "He's wearing a dark suit, so he must be a missionary."

You used to be able to tell a pastor from his looks. I was told of a man that wears Levis, a plaid flannel shirt and wide suspenders into his pulpit on Sunday eve. He tells His pastor friends that the people accept it. However, a friend told me from reports from the congregation, it is more like toleration. They DON'T like it.

I went to see a pastor in Scottsbluff, NE - I didn't know which house he lived in. The one I thought he lived in looked like a wrecking yard. A dirty unshaven man in greasy overalls came out of the house. I was about to ask the man where the pastor lived when the man said, "Hi Stan, glad you could make it." I hadn't even recognized the pastor.

End commentary.

ENTERTAINMENT: How about Christian performers that cost \$8000 per show?

A Christian professor recently recommended a movie to me and said that it was excellent - a really good movie. He didn't tell me that it was full of swearing, and had an occult theme to it. We turned it off about ten minutes into it.

We may have to listen to swearing in our work place, but we don't have to bath in it when we get home and turn the television on! We have known of Christians that will listen hour after hour to the suggestive - swear ridden sitcoms.

COOPERATION: Might we suggest that we are not only copying the world, but in some cases we are working with the world - with the lost.

Mission translators that turn their work over to the Roman Catholic Church.

Evangelists that turn their converts back into lost, state churches as well as to the Roman Catholic Church.

Mission groups that work within the Roman Church.

These are all groups that evangelical and fundamental people support with God's money.

VOCABULARY: How do we treat the names of God? We were in a Sunday school class recently called the "GOD SQUAD." Cute? Yes. Honoring to God? I doubt it. Remember Matt 6 in the Lord's prayer, "Hallowed by thy name?" HOLY BE THY NAME!

Swearing seems to be on the increase among believers. I hear more and more of it in Christian homes and even churches at times.

Our Christian teens are always using the slang of the day, that quite often is just a shortened form or abbreviation for a swear word.

INADEQUATE DOCTRINE: We don't teach about the devil, demons, and hell today. We are helping eliminate those things from new generations thinking. Add to that the fact that many of these same kids watch occult etc. on television and assume that it is good viewing.

DISHONESTY: I called an independent Baptist church recently to see what difference there was between them and the other Ind. Baptist churches in town. I asked him, point blank, what differentiated his church from the others in town. The pastor told me that there would be no doctrinal differences, only differences in how they did their services.

We decided to go to this church, and during Sunday school I read the doctrinal statement printed in the front of the quarterly. There were three points of false teaching in that one short page. That pastor KNEW that there were doctrinal differences, when he said there would be none.

I also called a Community church to find out what type of church they were. Community churches have always been general, Bible preaching churches, or at times a conglomeration of many beliefs merged together. Never have they been denominational.

This particular church is not a "Community Church" in the traditional sense it is a reformed Presbyterian. They teach covenant theology and infant baptism.

We might put speeding into this category. When we speed, we are not following the principles of Christ, nor of Romans thirteen, yet constantly I am running into believers that seem proud of how fast they can get somewhere. I asked a man how long it took to get to a certain church. I planned accordingly and left a half hour extra for safety. We were late! That Christian forgot to tell me he didn't drive the speed limit.

They may be getting somewhere geographical quickly, but they are not getting anywhere spiritual quickly! Think with me. God, in Romans thirteen says obey the law. If I speed I sin - I am out of fellowship - I am not walking with God. How spiritual am I? How spiritually mature am I?

OTHER PROBLEMS: It wasn't bad enough to have a bunny that lays hard boiled, colored, decorated eggs, but now we have shrink wrap, religious plastic coverings for eggs. It makes it easier to teach your kids the Easter falsehood.

Many churches today have business managers. We have deleted God's method of church government, and substituted the world's method of organization.

SEX: The pre-marital sex statistics for Christian youth is about the same as for the world. Why? Our churches haven't been teaching. Our kids have bought the world philosophy of, "A little dabble will do ya!"

A little babble will get a girl pregnant.

A little dabble is against God's Word.

A little dabble is sin.

A little dabble is immorality.

Some of these same kids that dabble in sin say God is leading them to get married. BALONY! God does not lead anyone that is dabbling in sin continually!

If you sex, speed or spin a lie you sin, and you do not walk with God. He cannot lead you.

This is what cracks me up with "Spiritual Leaders" that speed. IMPOSSIBLE. You can't knowingly speed - knowingly sin and be spiritual.

You can't knowingly lie on a continuing basis and be spiritual!

You can't knowingly choose to continually thumb your nose at God and be spiritual.

Sorry if I burst anyone's bubble.

Communion - do we still handle it reverently? In Nebraska in a fundamental church we had tried to teach our kids proper respect for the Lord's Table. After the service in sight of all, the pastor and one of the deacons were emptying the extra juice glasses as fast as they could drink them.

Well, enough is enough, and I am sure that you could add some items to our long list. I would like to tie things together with one last illustration of what I am talking about.

We saw a sign advertising Easter goodies in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Chocolate bunnies, marshmallow eggs, crosses and suckers.

The world has merged the spiritual into the world, and have made it rather unnoticeable. Do you feel that the church is making the "Holy" things common and everyday? It seems that the church has taken many things spiritual, and placed them on a plain that is so common that the children of our day are going to have a hard time understanding why church, the Bible, and Christianity are of any importance at all.

Do we really know what evil is anymore? Do we really recognize the devil's ways when we are looking at them? Do we really understand the ramifications of what we are doing in the church today?

Psalm 15 speaks of the man that will dwell with God in eternity. I would like to take a moment and read the passage. 1 A Psalm of David. "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? 2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. 3 [He that] backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. [He that] sweareth to [his own] hurt, and changeth not. 5 [He that] putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these [things] shall never be moved."

It is verse four that is of interest. "In whose eyes a vile person is contemned;" The word contemned means according to Webster, "to view or treat with contempt." This would indicate that we are to consider evil people with contempt.

The interesting part of the text is that the term translated evil and the word translated contemned are both the same Hebrew word. (baw zaw': Strong's 959) The word has the idea of, to despise or hold in contempt.

Let us read it another way. In whose eyes a vile person is considered to be vile. By application we see that the man that shall dwell with God is to consider evil people evil. He is to consider evil things evil. In short when the Word tells us that God hates divorce, then the believer should hate divorce.

When the Word tells us that homosexuality or murder is sin, then the believer should consider homosexuality and murder evil.

It is not wrong to see wrong and label it wrong. Today we seem to think we have to see something GOOD in everything. Many "Christians" are saying homosexuality is only a different lifestyle. NO! God says it is evil and we should say that it is evil.

**GOD FORBID THAT YOU AS A STUDENT OF GOD'S WORD GO OUT AND PERPETUATE WHAT IS GOING ON IN MANY OF OUR CHURCHES! IF ALL YOU ARE GOING TO DO IS FURTHER WHAT THE DEVIL IS DOING IN THE CHURCH, THEN DON'T GET INVOLVED! GOD DOES NOT NEED YOU!**

**HOW DARE YOU USE GOD'S MONEY, AND YOUR TIME TO ASSIST THE ADVERSARY!**

If on the other hand you are going out into the world to use the Bible as your handbook to Christian living, for church planting, for church organization, for family building, then GO FOR IT AND MAY GOD BLESS THE DAY LIGHTS OUT OF YOU!

**BOLD? HEAVY? OPINIONATED? I CERTAINLY HOPE SO! IF IT ISN'T THEN I HAVE FAILED IN WHAT I WANTED TO DO!**

If you are not awake to the Devil's work in the church in this country now, then I suspect that you may have been asleep!

A related study is the study of humanism and its effect on the church. If you just read through the Humanist manifestos, you will see that the humanist thinking is having serious affects on the church.

As we go about our normal daily life, may we begin to consider what we are doing in light of the Biblical standard.

May we determine to remove anything that is not wholesome and pure from our family life as well as our church life.

May we consider evil things evil, rather than white wash them so we might take them into our life style.

I would like to close with one more verse of Scripture: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7

Keep the order on that right! It's submit to God and resist the Devil NOT submit to the Devil and resist God.

If we are not on guard for the Devil's attempts to import his ways into the church, we will soon have a church of Satan with Christ's name on it!

May we see evil for what it is and stop bringing it into the church.

What I have said comes from my observation of the decline in fundamentalism in the last 20 years. Fundamentalism has changed drastically.

Some changes have been good. The fundamental preachers of the 50's hurt many people very badly, yet they reached many lost people as well.

The pastor that led me to the Lord caused the side tracking spiritually of a number of people.

As I study the Roman Catholic Church I find three things.

1. They started out in the first century doing the best they could with the knowledge they had.

2. They did not design their false system and set it in place. It grew and evolved as time went along.

3. Their system and doctrine was derived through the aging process. They allowed subtle, honest, seemingly insignificant changes to creep in.

My personal belief is that Fundamentalism has partaken in the same process. Indeed, Fundamental churches are taking the term out of their name because they realize they no longer are traditional fundamental churches.

In several Psalms the writer goes back over the past to remind the reader where they once were.

I believe God would have fundamental churches review the past and see where we began slipping and return to those old standards from which we have slipped.

I trust you will review this week!

Just how are we doing?

I want to read Ps 145.1-4 "I will extol thee, my God, O king, and I will bless thy name forever and ever. 2. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name forever and ever. 3. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. 4. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts."

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M09050

MISSIONS, IMPERATIVE OR OPTION

READ II Cor. 5.17-21

MISSIONS, IMPERATIVE OR OPTION?

Intro: On a trip to the Midwest several years ago I Left Salem at 5:00 A.M. Wed. after a hard hard week and four hours of sleep. I drove 20 hours to Montana and then slept five hours in the car before meeting with a group of pastors. That evening I drove nine hours to Wyo. and slept in the car for three hours before driving onto Colo. Springs, Colo. Friday morning. Needing to get back north I returned to Wyo.

Now, I was what I call sleepy. SSSOOOO the order of the day as I was driving was coffee - Coke - cookies - chips - Neccos - bread - gum - lifesavers - 7up - Sprite - and last but not least I spell relief R-O-L-A-I-D-S--.

I had to stay awake! My imperative was STAY AWAKE! -- my option was keeping a settled stomach. As to going to sleep it was imperative that I didn't

As to stomach - it was optional it was uh, oh I'm getting drowsy - look out stomach here it comes. Like the Burger King commercial with the talking stomach in my case when I would say I'm sleepy my stomach would say OOOOHHHHHHH!!!! NOT AGAIN!

I want to consider missions today in this light. Some pastors when approached about a meeting say OOOOHHHHHH!!! NOT AGAIN!

IS MISSIONS AN IMPERATIVE OR AN OPTION?

Some today say yes the world is lost yet we have "X" many million foreigners in this country that we aren't reaching. Some are saying financially we can't support foreign missions - let's plant and build more churches in America so we have a strong financial base to send missionaries with. Is this not putting evangelism in a wrong light? EVANGELIZE WHEN WE CAN AFFORD IT. NOT BIBLICAL.

IN GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES, was missions optional or imperative?

Some today, in practice are making it optional.

Let's look at what HE said through His Word and find out if it is optional or imperative.

The Old Testament is a book written to reveal the Messiah. It is full of prophecy about Him as well as the record of his lineage.

Does it also show that the grace of His Father was to extend to ALL mankind?

YES! Was God's program for only the Jews? No.

Never was it designed for a few to enjoy.

Gen. 1:28 "be fruitful and multiply"

God wanted Adam and Eve to fill the earth with people that would serve Him. In this text we see all mankind is involved - in surrounding verses it is clear that God disclosed His system of reconciliation to Adam and Adam passed it onto Cain and Able. (Cain just didn't want to follow it.) Gen. 3:23-24 God dwelled at Garden gate to be a gate, or an access to the tree of life. "placed" is always translated dwell elsewhere. God dwelled there for all mankind to come to him.

Gen. 9:1 "be fruitful and multiply"

Noah was given a similar task to fulfill. Again God is dealing with a person from which ALL men were to come - God is not dealing with a certain group of people.

Gen. 12:3

Abram is called and he receives a promise that he will bless all nations. This could only be fulfilled through a missionary attitude on the part of Abram and his family to come.

God narrows His view right? No He only changes people. He worked with Adams family - Noah's family and now Abrams family. NO WHERE does God say He isn't working with all peoples.

I Chron. 16:23-24 David's time.

"Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the NATIONS, his marvelous works among ALL PEOPLES."

Ps.18:49 "give thanks unto thee, o Lord, AMONG THE NATIONS"

Ps.96:3 "declare his glory AMONG THE NATIONS,"

Ps 67:1,2 "thy saving health AMONG ALL NATIONS"

This shows that the world was the goal in the Psalmists time. Indeed it would seem that the world is always in view in God's mind. Note this is under the time of the law.

Within the Old Testament there is another group of people that for the most part are completely ignored in today's preaching and teaching. These people are the strangers and sojourners that joined themselves to the Jews and became proselytes.

These people were for the most part identical to the Jew except for a blood link. They were to be taken in as a Jew would be taken in.

they were to offer sacrifices (Lev. 22:18)

they were to follow the law (Lev. 24:22)

they were to be circumcised (Ex 12:48)

they were to be treated as a Jew by birth (Ex. 12:48)

they were capable of leaving God and following idols (Ezek. 14:7)

These came to Israel wanting to worship God. Israel did not go looking for them. They were spiritually almost identical to the Jew. In Solomon's time they were numbered at over 150,000.

Israel's great sin was not going to the world with their God. The churches great sin is also not going to the world with their God. Israel waited for people to come seeking their God and we do

the same today! We wait for the townfolks to come to the church services so that the pastor can save them.

THIS IS NOT THE BIBLICAL EVANGELISM THAT I SEE!

If God set up such a fine arrangement for those that were to come along to join themselves to Himself and to the Jews then He must have had in mind that ALL the peoples of the earth were to be told of this God that the Jews served. Since God was dealing with ALL mankind in all generations then the Gospel should be preached to ALL today as well!

The New Testament is fairly well spattered with texts that deal with the thought of missions.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the USA --- NO! --- the WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON"

This has the very definite idea that Christ was interested in the WORLD. Not just a few - not just Jews - not just Americans - not just English speaking people. (Something like 90% of church funds in the world are spent on English speaking people.)

Matt. 12:8-21 is partially a quote from Isa. 42:1-4. Vs 21 mentions, "His name shall the GENTILTES trust."

Matt 23:15

Scribes and Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte -- going out to convert others was not unknown to the Jews! The Old Testament Jew just didn't practice it much.

Matt. 28:18-20 (READ)

A clearer command to go with the gospel to the world is not needed! Disciple people. II Tim. 2:2 is the idea of it.

Luke 2:30 (READ)

Simeon knew this yet the apostles missed it for a time.

Acts 1:8 (comment on as time permits on the lack of sequence in this text.) The uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 2:10

Sojourners of Rome, both Jews and proselytes. Proselytes were Gentiles that had been brought into the Jewish fold in the concept of the sojourner of the Old Testament. Verse 41 - 3000 saved - some may have been gentile proselytes indeed Acts 6:5 may show this to be true.

Acts 6:5 These proselytes were accepted within the local church for service in the local church.

Acts 10:34 "God is no respecter of persons" "in every nation"

Paul was himself a foreign missionary.

Acts 13:43 Jews and proselytes. Listened to Gospel and believed.

Romans 10:13-15 (Vs. 15b is a quote from Isa 52:7 which seems to me Messianic in nature.)  
Verse 13 "whosoever" - the world!

II Cor 5:18-19

God committed the work of reconciliation to us! Note the WORLD is mentioned again.

The Gospel going out to the world is of prime importance to God in that if we aren't doing this then we are thwarting His plan of redemption! We are slowing the work that has need of being done.

Standard oil is known the world over. Their one function is to sell oil products. They have circled the globe with their product. The church is less than 1/2 done.

1. If we really believe in the soon return of Christ then we should be doing more witnessing and more praying and more giving!

2. God has set the pattern in the scripture - It is our job to set the pattern in our church. A pattern that will lead to a fruitful missions program.

3. As churches grow and develop they should set up a specific missions program. Women's meetings on mission subjects and prayer. Men's meetings on mission subjects and prayer. Special projects. Missionary barrel. Giving goals! Invite missionaries, and use them. Set objectives and goals for the program.

4. Our personal commitment should be based on a proper understanding of the Lord's command to go and our relationship to it. Have we really ever considered the possibility that God might want us on the field?

Now in contrast to the Biblical Basis of Missions I would like to present to you a short logical basis of Missions.

1. God wants to reconcile man to Himself. God is not doing this job in person. He has left it to his people. If the job is going to be done then WE HIS PEOPLE are going to have to do it. II Cor. 5:18-19

2. Statistics:

1/2 the world has never heard the gospel

The average American Christian gives only about \$.33 per day to missions.

There is one full time Christian worker / 230 people in America

There is one full time Christian worker / 256,000 abroad

World population increases are causing Christianity to become a dying organism

If missionaries available today decided only to deal with the population increase per year they would have to witness to 1540 people per year per missionary. That's 4.2 people per day seven days a week.

Americans spend 50 times more for diet pop than they do on foreign missions

Americans spend 41 times more on Scope mouthwash than they do on foreign missions. THE WORLD IS GOING TO HELL BUT WE ARE SLIM AND WE SMELL MINTY NOT MEDICINE!

I could list several pages of statistics to show the real lack of commitment to missions in America.

I recently read a comment that is all too true today. "Many pastors in the United States today are keepers of aquariums and not fishers of men."

Is there not a logical need to reach the world?

One more statistic that might move you to think:

Half the world hasn't heard the gospel - that is over two billion. To put that into perspective for you, within the last hour over 3000 LOST souls have slipped into hell for eternity. Over 3000 lost people die every hour on this earth.

While you are thinking about this think of the torment of hell. We don't talk about hell much any more because we might offend someone. I think personally it is time that the Church stand up and offend some. Hell is a very real danger to the lost and we need to warn them of its place in their future.

If they were about to be hit by a truck we would warn them so why not about hell?

We in America place high priority on eye witness accounts of things that happen.

Let me read you an eye witness account of one that has been in hell and felt its effects. Lu 16:24, "I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME!"

Yes, there is a Bible Basis for Missions but even if the Bible said nothing of going to the world with the good news LOGIC WOULD DEMAND IT.

Just how logical are we in our spending today as believers.

If we really believed that Christ could come at any time

If we really believed that hell were a reality for the lost

Would we not live like it?

Do we give all we have to get the gospel out or do we buy motor homes and boats and cars?

Do we give all we have to get the gospel out or do we go on vacations all over the world. Just a side light to this thought is the Holy Land tour Mania that is sweeping our country. The Holy Land tours are almost becoming a pilgrimage as the other religions of the world have. I would challenge you to look at some of the ads that are out and see if this isn't the idea that is coming across in some of them. We even have cruises to the Caribbean booked as conference cruises.

I've been told that most of the spots of interest are covered with Catholic shrines. If this is true I'm not sure why we are spending so much money visiting the competitors holy places.

If every Christian that went to the holy land stayed home and gave his or her two or three thousand dollars to missions we could send a large number of missionaries to the field fully

supported. Yes seeing Holy Land helps us experience the footsteps of Jesus but it is OPTIONAL while the Gospel is IMPERATIVE!!

I picked on Holy Land tours but there are dozens of other things that are in the same class that we as Christians feel are so very important to us. There are also the CONCERTS - BOOKS - CONFERENCES - CONFLABS - CONVENTIONS - ETC.

We sat in a Sunday school class once and the before class conversation was concerning everyone's trips to Maui, HI. Everyone was talking about their favorite place in relation to the geographical location of other people's favorite places. They were talking about streets and roads on Maui as I would talk about streets and roads in Salem, OR.

Do we give all the time that we can spare to go out on door to door visitation to try to win our own communities to Christ. How many doors have you knocked on to share the gospel?

Do you give as much time as you could to teaching?

Do we really believe that the gospel is all that important? If we as American Christians really believe it then why don't we live like it?

Biblically and logically we have a MANDATE to give the gospel to the peoples of the world.

It is your responsibility as a local church and as individuals to consider what has been said this last hour.

It is up to you to do something about what you have heard.

Don't wait till someone else makes a move -- you make a move.

This has nothing to do with Stan Derickson or his ministry. It has to do with YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO WORLD MISSIONS AS A WHOLE!

EACH ONE OF US IS RESPONSIBLE! MYSELF INCLUDED!

Biblically and logically missions is an imperative yet we tend to treat it as an option.

Just how missions minded is your church?

Would you like to take a quick test?

1. How many missionaries speak in your church? A church in Vancouver, WA has a missionary speaker once per month. The church is very mission minded. Even the little kids are excited about missions.

2. What percent of your total budget is sent to foreign ministries? I looked through an annual report of a church of 100 members recently and \$107,000 went to missions out of a total income of \$150,000. OVER 2/3s of their budget to missions! That leaves only \$43,000 for the church for the year. That doesn't leave much for the PAY PACKAGE.

Acts 1:8 if taken proportionately requires 25% on the home plant, 25% on immediate area, 25% on the state area, and 25% on the uttermost part of the earth. Many very mission minded churches shoot for 1/3 and when they get there they shoot for 1/2.

3. How many of you pray for one missionary regularly at least once a week? A man was at a mission conference recently and he mentioned that he would not put anyone on his prayer letter list unless they would promise to pray for him daily.

One mission we know of requires each appointee to find 100 people that will promise to pray for them every day before they can go to the field.

4. Are missionaries prayed for regularly in your Wed. night service? I have been in churches where they don't even pray for the missionaries that they support on Wed. eve. Some members don't even know their missionaries.

5. How many people have left your church to prepare for foreign service? I contacted a church in

Washington recently that has 12 couples in various stages of preparation for the field. All came from that church originally.

6. How many missionary magazines or books are read annually in the church?

7. What do your Sunday school kids want to be when they grow up? Any missionaries or pastors?

8. How do your people react to filling a missionaries need of a new Bible or new tire etc.? We were in a church while in college and some folks came from Mexico. I noticed that the lady's Bible was very tattered and had no cover. I could have gone to the pastor but why bother. I went home and picked up one of the several Bibles lying around and gave it to her.

9. Do your families invite missionaries into their homes so that they can be around their families? This is a great way to get to know a missionary!! It is good exposure for your family.

10. Are missionary meetings well attended? The Bible is totally committed to the thought of all people hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ but the question is are Christians totally committed to the thought of all people hearing the Gospel?

We have received the mandate of God in the area of missions today!

What are you going to do about it as a church body?

What are you going to do about it as a Christian family?

Are you willing to give up some recreation funds to give more to missions?

Financing missions isn't hard. You give the Gospel out and as souls are saved and disciplined the finances increase.

**CHURCH FINANCE ISN'T A BUDGET -- IT'S EVANGELISM?**

Are you willing to have one of your children go to the field?

What are YOU going to do about it as an individual?

I saw a joke in one of the mission magazines some time back that was to real to be a joke. It showed a young man pushing a young girl forward and the caption read, "Here am I Lord send my sister."

I think that the Church in America had better wakeup to the lack of work it is doing in the Lords harvest fields. I think this of both the home and the foreign field.

I have been in churches across the western half of the nation and have only run into three or four that are really evangelistic in their ministries.

very few have calling programs

very few have active missions committees

very few have active evangelism committees

very few are really interested in reaching their community

I recently went to a town of 10,000 that has four or five gospel preaching churches. A man that had surveyed the town for a possible church was told by the pastors of the good churches that there was plenty of room for another church. The churches there are not doing the job that they ought in that town. Five churches reaching 2000/church is the town. A church of 200 would only have to witness to 10 people/ person. Split the town up - canvas and you could give every family in town opportunity to hear the Gospel in a month or two.

Thousands of cities and towns and villages have never heard the gospel and have no gospel church yet we are starting churches all over this country for the sake of spreading a group's name.

We ought never start a church in any town just because there is no IFCA church or no Berean church or no Regular Baptist church or no Conservative Baptist church or no Independent Baptist

church there. We should be starting churches because there is a need for the gospel. An independent pastor I know wants to start a church in Longview, WA a city of about 40,000 people. There are very few if any works there. An area of great need!

That is what we ought to be doing!

God's Word teaches missions.

Logic DEMANDS MISSIONS.

WHAT ARE YOU AND I GOING TO DO ABOUT MISSIONS TODAY?

Is missions optional?

NO!!

Missions is an IMPERATIVE WITH WHICH WE MUST DEAL.

Because we've been treating it as an option I believe God is going to deal with us! Indeed the financial plight of fundamental churches may be due to our lack of interest in missions.

God felt it was so important that HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON!

How important do YOU think it is?

Make missions an imperative! That may mean giving! That may mean praying! That may mean going! All are vital to the effort!

May we consider before God if He would have us do more in one or more of these areas!

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M10000

TITLE: GOD'S GUARANTEED CURE FOR PEER PRESSURE OR MENPLEASERS  
CANNOT BE GODPLEASERS!

OUTLINE:

1. WHY DID PAUL DESIRE TO PLEASE MEN?

2. II. WHY DO WE DESIRE TO PLEASE MEN?

III. WHY DO WE DESIRE TO PLEASE GOD?

READ: Gal 1:1-12

INTRODUCTION:

In the days of yore when I was but a lad of twelve or so, I had a friend that wasn't much of a friend. He was my friend because no one else wanted to spend time with me after school.

He was not nice, for he broke promises, for he liked to put me down, for he would spend time with me only when he had nothing else to do, for he was stronger than I by bunches and he liked to prove it from time to time. You may find that hard to believe, but when young I was the model that they used to draw the ninety-pound weakling in the Charles Atlas ads. I was a bit on the sickly side. I KNOW! MANY OF YOU THINK THAT I'M STILL SICK!

On one occasion of his proving his superiority of strength he had me down on the ground on my stomach with his knee pressing the side of my head into the ground. He was going to force me to give in.

He would put pressure on my head with his knee and ask me if I would give up. I would reply in tears of pain, "no."

He went through this process for quite some time and found that I was not one to give into pressure, even if it was on the side of my head.

He decided that he wasn't hurting me enough so began sitting on my head and telling me to give in. The reply was still a firm "no" even though the pain was intense.

After a time of this he decided to bounce up and down on my head for a time. I was in serious pain with tears streaming down my face and still the answer was "no."

What this young man did not know about me was that pressure from without, has little to do with what I do.

In frustration the boy began pleading with me to "please give up" so that he could quit hurting me. The answer was still "no."

Finally in utter desperation the lad got off of my head and walked away totally defeated.

HE HAD GIVEN UP!!!! PEER - PRESSURE had failed.

The moral of the story?

Peer pressure may be great, but there is no place in God's service for you to buckle into it.

If you say no to your peers long enough they will give up and leave you alone.

In retrospect you might wonder if this incident wasn't one of the defining moments in my staunch, never sway, non-conformist, secure, stable, sure, resistant, confident, solid, and firm style of ethic.

DON'T YOU EVER ALLOW PEER PRESSURE TO DICTATE TO YOU WHAT YOU WILL OR WON'T DO!

I believe that we have in our text this morning God's simple answer to peer pressure. It is so simple that we might reject it because of its simplicity.

Galatians 1

1. Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

2 And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:

3 Grace [be] to you and peace from God the Father, and [from] our Lord Jesus Christ,

4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

5 To whom [be] glory forever and ever. Amen.

6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

7 Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

10. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I would like to key in on verse ten for our thoughts.

"For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Paul is quite obvious in asking if he were still pleasing men if he could be a servant of Christ.

He seems to be stating that if you please men, you cannot serve God. I would like to take that one step further and say that if you please men, you can't please God.

In the early days of Fundamentalism the Conservative Baptist Assoc., General Association of Regular Baptist Churches and Independent Fundamental Churches of America were formed because godly men refused to please men - refused to go with the flow of modernism. Today these same groups are dabbling in the things that lead to modernism years ago. Peer pressure should have no part in how we serve God.

To begin, we need to consider why Paul would have desired to please men.

## I. WHY DID PAUL DESIRE TO PLEASE MEN?

We might begin by asking, when Paul was interested in pleasing men.

It would seem that it was before he was saved.

Back when he was persecuting Christians. He was doing what he thought was best. He was following the teaching that he had the best that he could. He was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; Philp 3:5) and he did the best that he could.

Philip 3:6 declares his zeal, and in Gal 1:14 he mentions that he was very zealous of the traditions of the Pharisees.

I have always been impressed with Paul's zealousness for God in his life. He was misdirected to say the least in that he was out killing Christians, but I always thought that he was what we sometimes call "sincerely wrong."

A brief side light: Being zealous is not wrong - never is it ever wrong to be zealous for what God has told you to do or not do. In our day and age everything that is unwanted is the work of a zealot - someone that is over zealous about things. When serving God how can you ever be over zealous? You cannot. Zealous Christians are greatly needed today!

Now, I'm not going to second guess the apostle and say that this is looking back in retrospect because I do not know, but at the time of the writing of Galatians, he viewed his persecution of Christians and his life as a Jew as a life lived to please man.

The NASB depicts nicely the verb tenses in the text. If you have one read it for yourself.

Notice that phrase "If I were still trying to please men," it is the proof that he saw his pre-salvation life as one spent in pleasing men.

May I say that pleasing men is a trap that you do not want to get into. Pleasing men is a trap, in that you can never please men.

You can try as hard as you can, but there is no way on God's gorgeous earth that you can ever do it. You might please one now and then for a short period of time, but you will soon be back on the carpet trying to have a repeat performance.

Now, based on this thought from Paul's pre-salvation life let's draw some conclusions.

1. You can be religious and be trying to please men.
2. You can be zealous and be trying to please men.
3. You can be busy and be trying to please men.
4. You can be doing great works and be trying to please men.
5. You can be of single-minded devotion and be trying to please men.

On the other hand you can be all of those things in a desire to please God and Paul rolls all those nice pious sounding activities into one lowly word called "SERVANTHOOD."

If you want to be religious for God

If you want to be zealous for God

If you want to be busy for God

If you want to be doing great works for God

If you want to be of a single minded devotion to God

**THEN BE A SERVANT OF GOD!**

It would seem to me that in Paul's pre-salvation life he was focused on pleasing the leaders around him in the circles of the Pharisees.

Now, we don't want to go away from this study feeling self-righteous knowing that Paul tried to please men, and we would certainly never get involved in that activity.

Just so we won't leave feeling better than Paul, I have another question.

## II. WHY DO WE DESIRE TO PLEASE MEN?

A few thoughts that you can kick around in your mind.

a. It is easier to please men than to cause friction.

Some like the phrase, "But you have to go with the flow." The problem with the flow is that it will catch you and carry you along the same path of destruction that it is taking.

You will find out, if you haven't already, that in life you will be pressured into doing things that you really don't want to do, but if you say no, you know that you will be looked down upon.

Those situations are not pleasant but sometimes the head must give a little for the knee's sake. You know the opening illustration!

"No" is a viable answer to any question, no matter how loaded the question is for you.

b. To build up our poor self image. I don't feel very important so if I impress them I will be more important.

I trust that you will not fall into this trap either. Impressing people will not help your self-image one iota. It will just require that you keep on impressing people.

Find your value in who you are before God and not what you are before man.

We have a friend that resigned his pastorate against almost all of his incoming advice. He asked me what I thought before he resigned, and I told him that he **MUST** do what God was leading

him to do and set all the advice aside if it indeed, contradicted God's leading. I warned him that he needed to be sure that he and his wife were on God's turf before asking for guidance.

I also warned him that many would criticize them for leaving if that was indeed God's leading. It wasn't to many weeks after his resignation that he mentioned that I had been correct that the criticism would come. IT DID!

He is comfortable in his present, NON-MINISTRY place of serving the Lord and finds his worth in his God rather than the eyes of man.

c. To increase our pride - lift ourselves up.

When living in Denver, we found out that there were some special meetings at one of the churches in town. Two "famous" preachers were speaking each night.

I enjoyed one of them so we decided to go for one evening. The church pastor asked one of them to take an offering. Of course he made a big show of the offering. He asked everyone that was going to give five dollars or more to raise it in their hands. He then asked those that were going to give ten dollars or more to raise their hands. He then asked all that were going to give one hundred dollars or more to stand up. As people raised their hands and finally those that stood you could see that they were doing it to impress people. Most of the ones that stood turned around so everyone could see who they were.

We left that meeting without hearing the second man!

Can we say love of self is the problem? I think that we are very close to the truth with that statement.

We desire to please man because we desire to make ourselves feel good about ourselves.

It would seem that the man pleaser is focused on this life and what can be gained in this life.

This seems to be the same focus that Paul had in his pre-Christian days.

Well if we aren't going to please man we are left with only one alternative and that is to please God.

This brings us to the third question.

### III. WHY DO WE DESIRE TO PLEASE GOD?

Several years ago we were interviewing for a position in a large church in Petaluma, CA and the board member of the church that was present asked me a question. He asked what my mindset

was as I worked for the Lord in view of the rewards that I was building up.

I was pulled up short. I was speechless for awhile. I had never even considered what rewards I had assembled in heaven. It was never a consideration in anything that I had ever done.

I told the man that his question was totally foreign to my mindset of serving God. I told him that I had from the early days of my walk with the Lord felt that I was His servant and that I would do anything and everything that He asked me to do - Rewards never crossed my mind.

Paul realized that the only one worth serving in this life is the God that extended His grace to include even a Christian killer.

This text really gives me some insight into why Paul was so anti-false teaching and so anti-works.

His former life was tuned into works and the false teaching of the Pharisees. He was totally sold out to that life style.

Indeed, he was under the impression that this would make him spiritual.

It is no wonder that he stresses the proper place of works in the Christian life, and it is no wonder that he stressed the need to guard against false teachers and their influence upon believers!

He was reacting to his own pre-salvation deception!

He is contrasting himself, the servant of God, with the false teachers that he is trying to confront.

He is also contrasting these false teachers - the men pleasers with himself - the God pleaser.

Can you imagine how angry the false teachers must have been when they heard Paul's words?

The focus of one desiring to please God must be on the eternal and not the temporal.

Paul emphasizes this in Colossians when he states,

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in god." (Vss. 2,3)

A total selfless love aimed at serving God will be the focus of the one wanting to please God.

I was in a meeting with a missionary years ago and this old missionary woman was talking about the love that she had to have for the people that she worked with. She described some of the ugly, dirty, filthy people that she had to show love to. She mentioned one old woman that had a very

serious disease. The woman was one of the dirtiest and most disgusting people that the missionary had ever seen. The sick woman came to talk with the missionary. The missionary told the woman that God loved her. The woman asked if the missionary loved her.

The missionary took a long look at the old woman, considered just how unlovely she was and decided that Christ wanted her to show God's love so the missionary reached over and kissed the woman on the cheek. The old woman began to cry and was totally open to the Gospel message, and became a Christian on the spot.

#### CONCLUSION:

Being slave to peers has bothered both great and small.

BERTRAND RUSSELL, in his Unpopular Essays mentioned, "America is the greatest of opportunities and the worst of influences."

Even this man had problems with peers. John Davis states of him, "Bertrand Russell suffered ... torture ... each time he was called upon for a speech until one day he said to himself, 'What difference does it really make in the scheme of things if Bertrand Russell makes a good or a poor speech?' It would be of no world-shaking importance. History would go on unchanged. And he says that when he overcame his egotistical concern about being humiliated, his fears left him, and he began to enjoy making speeches -- and they were better speeches!" (John Davis Excerpted from "Complete Speaker's and Toastmaster's Library" Copyright (c) 1993, 1994 Compton's NewMedia Inc.)

So, Christian, how's the peer pressure this morning?

Are you buckling to the world and its pressure?

Are you following the crowd because you are tired of them bouncing on top of your head?

Or are you desirous of pleasing God through your service to Him?

Paul put it in another way when he was writing to Timothy. II Tim. 2:4 states, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

God has called us to be servants and there is no way that we can be proper servants of His if we are tied up in the world system, or in the world's pressures.

Just some final thoughts concerning peer pressure.

1. We tend to only think of peer pressure as negative influence, when in reality it can also be

positive influence. We as Christians ought to be putting pressure on lost people around us to live a better life.

When I walk into the break room at times I can hear the swearing and loud stories dwindle to whispers. I assume that this is the result of positive peer pressure - as well as respect for my beliefs.

2. You are someone else's peer. We tend to think of peer pressure only coming our direction, when in fact we also exert it to those around us. I trust that you are exerting POSITIVE pressure on those around you.

3. You are only a positive pressure if you are living a godly life. If you don't take a stand for right, then you will most likely be negative pressure.

4. Know that good peer pressure is probably going to be less effective than bad. The devil seems to win out - probably due to his having more people on his side. Evil peer pressure is more common than holy.

5. You will find that your stand and effectiveness is boosted by being in church or youth activities. You are around others of like mind and are encouraged in your stand.

6. God is your strength in all situations of life. Ps. 18:2 says "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

7. The Bible is your only guide for good. David said that it was a light unto his path. It alone can guide us through this life.

We must be free of the world's pressures by having said no to them and having taken the option of serving God!

I would like to share a story from Warren Wiersbe in his book entitled "BE FREE." (P 20)  
"When Verdi produced his first opera in Florence, the composer stood by himself in the shadows and kept his eye on the face of one man in the audience - the great Rossini. It mattered not to Verdi whether the people in the hall were cheering him or jeering him; all he wanted was a smile of approval from the master musician."

So, we as Christians should care little what our peers say, what our peers do, or what our peers think, our focus should be on the Master of our lives God. He it is that we should desire to please, and Him only!

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M10050

TITLE: The church is growing like a storm - maybe that is the problem. (The Minimum requirement for a church)

READ Acts 2:41-47

I read on a Total cereal box that the cereal inside met "All seven food recommendations of the U.S. Surgeon General." The real question is, does this church meet the Great Physicians minimum requirements to be a church.

INTRODUCTION:

A number of years ago my wife and I had the privilege of going to orientation with one of the major foreign mission agencies. It was an intensive six-week training course to prepare us for smooth functioning within the mission and to give us a look at what it is like to be on the field under extreme pressure.

We were living in Salem, OR at the time and the orientation was in the Philadelphia area. We took a fast one stop trip to the East Coast.

As we traveled, we naturally needed to eat. We noticed that almost every McDonald's had a large billboard 10 to 15 miles before their establishment. This made it easy to find them and so we usually stopped to eat at McDonalds.

As we traveled, we noticed that no matter what state we were in we were receiving the same identical food. Once in awhile we would get a coke that had a chlorinated taste, but the food was identical. We enjoyed that because we are creatures of habit and like what we like.

It amazed us that in so many different states, and in so many different establishments, and in so many different cultures, the food was the same.

I was reminded a few years ago of this when we were trying to determine where we might settle for a local church in Wyoming. As believers we should be able to go cross-country and attend a

local Fundamental Bible church and expect certain similarities. Instead we find that there are few similarities and many differences in the churches that we visit.

Just what should we be able to expect as we go into a church?

The government has established minimum daily requirements for vitamins.

They have established minimum standards for building.

They have established minimum standards for water.

They have established minimum requirements for physical exercise.

They have established minimum requirements for aviation safety.

They have established minimum requirements for worker safety.

In fact they have established about everything that they can with the exception of freedom from taxes.

We as believers follow these government guidelines, but I fear we ignore God's guidelines for a church.

WELL, maybe we'd better get back to the church. What basic minimum requirements might we expect for a church? Should we be able to enter a church and not feel uncomfortable because we find things that are not correct?

Let's take a look to see what we should be able to expect.

I personally believe that God has set some minimum church requirements, that are not necessarily being met today in America's churches.

In trying to determine what the church should be, we should look into the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament to see what the Lord has told us there, to pattern ourselves as a local church after.

If all churches were patterning themselves after the New Testament principles, then the churches of our nation should be of the same basic order.

We should be able to go to the East Coast and choose a Bible church to attend on vacation and feel that we would walk into a church that would fulfill the basic requirements of a church.

This will be a brief look at what the church should be. It should be a MINIMUM of what the church should be.

Let us see what the Word says. We will get the unpleasant one out of the way first and talk about giving.

1. GIVING: Turn to I Cor 16:2. Let's get our priorities straight right away. Giving is an integrated part of the local church and as such should be considered. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Let me say at this point "as God hath prospered him" is a formula for your giving. Now, you don't stand back and look at all the things that you have acquired and give according to that. You don't look at your paycheck and give according to that. The proper thought behind this is to look at your eternal destination before God intervened and then look at what God has done since, and give according to that.

I trust that you see the difference in those methods of seeing how God has prospered you.

The New Testament mentions offerings--giving is an offering thus can and should be worship. If we are entering a church for worship, then we certainly should be involved in giving.

So, giving is a minimum requirement.

2. WORSHIP: In Acts 2:46 we see that evidently the early church continued to worship as the Old Testament Jews had worshiped. We see from this text that they continued to worship in the temple for a time. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread

from house to house did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people."

So, worship is also a minimum requirement.

3. PRAYER: Acts 3:1 shows us that the church leadership prayed. The church as a whole is shown as a praying people in the New Testament. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer..."

The latest pole that I have seen concerning prayer among Christians listed the average "Evangelical" pastor spending five minutes per day in prayer. The average church prayer meeting runs about 10% to 15% of the Sunday worship service attendance. In one church in the Midwest the prayer meeting crowd was about 7% of the Sunday morning attendance.

I recently spoke with a man from a large church in Nebraska. He was excited about his church, and well he should be - his church was running about 30% at prayer service. Prayer should also be viewed as a minimum requirement.

4. TEACHING AND PREACHING: Acts 5:42 tells us that the early church was a preaching and teaching church. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

Notice however that this was not only in the homes where they met, but it was also in the temple where they worshiped. Since they had meetings in the homes for their own edification, we are left to assume that part of the teaching and preaching, if not all of it, in the temple was for the purpose of evangelism.

When is the last time that any of your church members preached and taught the lost? This may take a number of forms in the local church. It may be in door to door visitation where you talk to people about spiritual things. It may be in the work place. Teaching can go on anywhere. We don't need a classroom with chalkboard! It may be on the street. Street preachers are becoming more and more accepted in our cities. I have seen several in American cities.

I met an Irish pastor that did street preaching every week. He and a few of his young people would go out onto the down town streets of Limerick, Ireland, where they would sing and preach.

A number would gather and listen. Some are saved through this ministry.

I think that we can all agree that teaching and preaching is a minimum requirement, and that teaching and preaching should be in the local assembly, but also in the highways and byways.

We won't start on missions today, but that is what Paul's preaching was about - REACHING THE LOST.

5. FELLOWSHIP: Acts 2:42 tells us that the church was a fellowshiping church. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Did you notice that along with fellowship, in the same verse, in the same sentence Luke mentions "prayer" and continuing in the apostles doctrine. OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD - PRAYER - FELLOWSHIP!

Don't forget the trio. We tend to want only that fellowship, but all three are involved.

Along with fellowship there should be at times the teaching of the Word, and prayer. Indeed, this is what most churches attempt to include within their prayer meetings and prayer breakfasts.

So, it would seem that we should add the Word and our obedience to it, prayer and fellowship to our minimum requirement list.

6. SINGING AND SUBMITTING: Along with all of the above there is singing and submitting. Turn to Eph. 5:19,20. Here we see again, one of those things we really like to do at church linked directly with another of the not so pleasantries that we are also to do. Not only are we to be a singing people, but we are to be a submitting people. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Submitting ourselves one to another. A sermon in itself! There are other thoughts here beside submitting and singing. The text also mentions making melody in your heart, which would seem

to indicate a spiritual uplifting. The text also mentions giving of thanks to the Lord and that means prayer again.

We also see fear of the Lord - the awesome respect of God. That I do not see in very many churches or believers. Most today have little respect for God.

To the list of minimum requirements we should add singing, submitting, spiritual uplifting and giving thanks.

7. THE LORD'S TABLE. It is mentioned in I Cor. 11 and some believe that the references in the book of Acts to the breaking of bread may also relate to the Lord's table observance.

The remembrance of the Lord's table is very definitely the thought of remembering what Christ has done for us as individuals. There is required in that, the fact of salvation in the life.

The minimum requirement from this text would be that the people that you will be associating within the church will be believers - brothers and sisters in Christ.

This is not to say that unsaved people won't come to your church or that they should be excluded. They ought not have a say in the direction of the church, nor in doctrine, but they can attend.

8. BAPTISM: Baptism is seen through the early part of the book of Acts, as a common occurrence in the early church so should also be an integrated part of the local church today.

Not only is there the thought of the people being believers, but also there is the thought that they have been obedient to the Lord in Baptism.

We might assume that another minimum requirement should be OBEDIENT believers.

As we look at the local church we should be able to see at least these items present. These may be arranged differently than in our church, but they are some of the BASICS that we should be able to expect in all churches that say they are following a Scriptural example.

Not only should we see these things as an integrated part of the church, but also we should see these things as integrated parts of the believers involved!

Let's just run through the list of minimum requirements that we have assembled. How does your church measure up - how do you measure up.

GIVING

WORSHIP

PRAYER

TEACHING

PREACHING

EVANGELISM

THE WORD

OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD

PRAYER

FELLOWSHIP

SINGING

SUBMITTING

SPIRITUAL UPLIFTING

GIVING THANKS

REGENERATION

OBEDIENCE IN BAPTISM

Let's consider the thought of the minimum requirements as being a part of the individual lives. It should be the natural thing for all believers to have these items as part of their lives.

Today, do we see believers vitally interested in GIVING? If the whole of Christianity would only tithe, we would have ample funds to fund all missionary work that is desired and do away with all of the church debts across the nation, and have money left over.

Today, do we see believers vitally interested in joining in on the WORSHIP services? Many churches would double in size if their members all showed up on the same Sunday.

Today, do we see believers that are vitally interested in PRAYER?

Today, do we see believers vitally interested in having a part in the TEACHING & PREACHING ministry of the church? One church's teachers have one week per month off to rest and be feed.

Today, do we see believers that are vitally interested in EVANGELISM? Several years ago we were involved in an evangelism conference. It was a two-day get together put on by a fundamental Baptist church. They had three missionary speakers with messages and seminars geared to teach and challenge people towards evangelism. The first session on Friday evening was attended by the churches missions committee, the pastor and his wife and maybe 15 people. This church had an attendance of nearly 200. They had sent invitations to every fundamental church in the area.

The next day there were the usual missions committee and pastor and wife plus two people. We are not interested in evangelism in this country.

Today, do we see believers that are vitally interested in OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD? One of our friends was pastoring in Nebraska and some of the youth were involved in a very bad car accident. The wreck was caused by alcohol that was secured from the liquor cabinet in one of the youth's homes - a church member's home. The pastor went to confront the man about what had happened and the pastor was told in not very nice words to leave - what the man did in his own home was his business - certainly not the pastors.

Boy do we see believers that are vitally interested in FELLOWSHIP! Of course it is not necessarily the spiritual fellowship that the Scripture teaches, but we do enjoy our fellowship!

I have observed that many people only attend when the fellowship dinners are being put on. This is not necessarily bad, for it may draw them into the assembly, but to attend potlucks only is not a

sign of real spirituality.

Today, we seem to get along quite well with the SINGING aspect of our church services, although singing is to bring honor and glory to God, not to the performer. We were in a worship service and a young blonde was the special singer. She did her very loud song with the hard beat with her toes tapping and her hand slapping her thigh. When she finished she walked down the aisle and was very disgusted with the people. She verbally told us that we were dead.

Music is becoming very divisive in the church today. The contemporary versus traditional music. Two services are the answer to some, but I am not sure why we would want to separate the people of our church that are supposed to be a unit.

Today, do we see believers that are vitally interested in SUBMITTING to one another and the church leadership?

One of the main problems on Christian College campuses is the lack of submission to authority. The young people have not been required to, nor learn to submit to authority in the home or church, so why should we think that they would when they get out into the world?

Today, most believers are stuck on the SPIRITUAL UPLIFTING that they gain from the church. Yes, the uplifting should be there, however each believer should be involved in uplifting others as well.

Quite often people see the church as where they are fed, uplifted and nurtured, but they never view themselves as giving anything of that nature back to the church. The church is where we all benefit from one another.

Today, do we see people that are vitally interested in GIVING THANKS to God for what He has done? Quite often it isn't "thank you Lord," but its "GIVE ME MORE!"

Today, do we see people that are vitally interested in knowing if another person has experienced REGENERATION? Normally the only time we worry about this is when the person comes to join the church.

I would encourage you to ask people if they are Christians, and when they say yes, as most will

do, ask them how they came to know the Lord. That will begin to let you know if they know what being a Christian really is. Personal testimonies are neat, uplifting and very special.

Today, do we see people that are vitally interested in OBEDIENCE IN BAPTISM? Baptism is an item that we should not press, yet it is an item that is commanded and we should be instructing people about baptism.

It is a very important step in the spiritual life. We tend to fail to talk to new converts about it, when that is the very time that we should bring it up. In the Scripture baptism seems to have been the natural second step of the spiritual life after salvation.

When teaching a class in theology we covered baptism and one of the students came to me after class and spoke of never having been baptized. She had never been taught how important it was to the believer and to the Lord. She immediately took steps to be baptized. She came from a good Bible believing church - just had never been taught.

God set the pattern for the early church. He was Central in everything. The people were there to praise HIM, not themselves. The people were there to learn of HIM, not of everything under the sun. The people were there to sing of HIM, not all the philosophical lyrics that we hear today. The people were there to give to HIM, not to all of the benefits that come along desiring the church to join in. The people were there to PRAY to HIM, not to be entertained. The people were there to fellowship around the Word, not to just sit talking about the news, weather and sports. The people were there to hear the WORD OF GOD taught, and not to hear of the latest book or New Evangelical author that will titillate their fuzzy spiritual center.

I am appalled at some of the advertisements that I am seeing from good publishers concerning some of the more prominent authors. I saw one from Moody Press about one of the famous preachers that stated that he was a man that could make the Bible live! Hog wash! The Bible is the Living Word of God! There is no mortal - not even the famous four or five that can make it live! God made it live!

I just stated that God sets the standard, however I fear that the world sets the pattern for the church in many cases today.

Indeed, some in the church are indicating that this should be the norm. Let me read a quote for you. "Established churches tend to do church the way many fast food chains sell burgers. They

come one way, have it 'my way' or don't have it. We need to think church the Burger King way, 'Have it your way.' By doing church so secular people can understand, we gain an opportunity to present the priceless truths of Scripture. This priceless truth can bring redemption to this different generation. If we do not invite them to have church 'their way' they may never hear the good news of Jesus Christ." (CB Northwest newsletter 1996; I CHANGED MY MIND by Dwane Shockley, Executive Director, CB Northwest)

Apply that thinking to a strong Catholic neighborhood and they would want you to have mass so the people could have it their way - EXTREME - Yes, but that is the logical end to the thinking.

NO, THEY AND WE SHOULD HAVE IT GOD'S WAY - NOT THE WAY THE LOST WANT IT! GOD SETS THE STANDARDS - NOT YOU - NOT ME - AND CERTAINLY NOT THE LOST!

God is a side light in the average American Christian home. Where is family unity? Where is church unity? Where is the obedient Christian? Where is the powerful church? Where is the fruitful church? Where is the sharing church? Where is the sacrificial, dedicated, persecuted, holy, forgiving church?

In history basically. A few exist, but not many in America as a rule.

We have to go back to the above standard, the standard of the Word of God before we can expect results.

We recently saw a bumper sticker: "If you're far from God you need not wonder who moved."  
We have to get back to God.

How do we change?

1. Realize we are empowered by the Holy Spirit within us.
2. Realize this power is for us to use.

3. Realize God wants us to change for His glory.
  
4. Realize that we have the guide for a proper church in the New Testament, and that God expects us to follow that guide.
  
5. Realize that without Him we cannot do it.
  
6. Ask God to help us change. We needn't flounder in trouble - we only have to say "Lord take over."

### GOD IS IN THE BUSINESS OF CHANGING LIVES

#### HE CAN CHANGE SINNERS TO CHRISTIANS:

The Gospel is the good news of Christ. It is good news because He can save us from a life of sin and from the eternal punishment that awaits all of lost mankind.

Romans tells us that every single man woman and child is lost and on their way to eternal torment unless they accept Christ. The Word also tells us however, that all we need to do to avoid damnation is to believe a few simple facts. a. Christ was God Himself come in the flesh. b. That Christ was the perfect Lamb of God and that He died for your personal sin. c. Acceptance of these facts and the work that Christ did on the cross ushers the person into eternal life with God.

#### HE CAN CHANGE CHRISTIANS TO WORKERS:

There are thousands of stories of people that have committed themselves to serving the Lord in thousands of ways. Each and every believer should be desirous of serving the Master that paid the price for his or her sin.

Many churches today are only warehouses for Christians. He can change warehouses into fisheries. We are to be fishers of men! NOT Warmers of pews!

Spiritually we have the same command as Adam and Noah received. Reproduce and fill the earth with God's children.

We have talked about what the minimum requirement for a church is. I trust that we as a body of believers will never fall below that minimum requirement, and be striving to include many more Biblical requirements.

We are here to help build HIS church and not our own. He said that He would build His church -- we have only to take care of the requirements!

Many churches there are that are built to honor the people, or to honor the building, when they should be built to honor their founder and Savior Jesus Christ the Lord.

At least I hope and trust that all of you can call Him Lord this morning.

I would like to leave you with a thought.

Pulpit Helps/Aug. 1996; p5; article entitled THE USER-FRIENDLY CHURCH by

Terence D. McLean || "People often ask me 'How is your church going?' and I generally respond by saying that 'We started from scratch and we're still scratching.'

"When you start a group with no denominational affiliation and no financial backing it is not only evangelistic but also entrepreneurial, and it is not easy.

"But I wouldn't have it any other way. When you simply teach and preach the Bible with no entertainment or promotion, it is not easy.

"When you disregard traditions and battle the infiltration of errors and outright paganism while never passing an offering plate, it is not easy.

"But I wouldn't have it any other way. Yet, I would welcome more people and so I have come up with the idea of the user-friendly church and 'No-Excuse Sunday.'

"We are putting out cots for the people who say that Sunday is their only day to rest. And for those who say 'If I go to church, the roof will fall in.' we have hard hats that meet OSHA specifications.

"The people who say the church is too cold will be asked to change places with the people who say the church is too hot, and that should solve those problems.

"The people who don't like the hypocrites who attend church will be given stones to throw, and sin will never be mentioned in the service, only love.

"Cotton balls will be provided for the use of those people who complain that the pastor is too loud, and hearing aids will be given to those who complain that the pastor speaks too softly.

"Microwave dinners will be given to those who say that they cannot attend church and cook too.

"The subject of money will never be mentioned, no offering plates will be passed and the concept that the church may have needs will never be presented.

"Much of the service will be music of the Top 40's style, with lots of very attractive people getting extremely emotional.

"There will be a special area with grass and trees and pond for the people who only feel close to God when they are fishing or surrounded by nature.

"Stenographers will be provided for the people who say the pastor goes too fast, and Bibles that have only pictures without words will be given to those who find the Authorized Version too difficult.

"And for those who stayed up too late Saturday night, the lights will be dimmed and a wooden frame will be put around the pulpit to give the illusion that you are watching television.

"Most of the messages will be about how wonderful we all are, except for some messages about

all the wonderful things that God is going to do for us because we are so worthy.

"Now what more could a church do to be user-friendly?"

"These accommodations should make it possible for everyone to attend and to have a great time.

"Except, of course, for those precious people who really care and want to do it right."

I trust you agree that we should do it right - we should do it God's way.

#### FOR YOUR FURTHER STUDY

#### THE CHURCH--WHAT IS IT? REALLY!

- 1.) Commissioned: Acts 1:8
- 2.) Obedient: Acts 1:4 and 1:12
- 3.) Born Again Christians: Acts 1:13,14
- 4.) Organized: Acts 1:15-26; 2:14; appointing deacons Acts 6:1ff; appointing elders Acts 14:23
- 5.) Empowered: (Power promised Acts 1:8) 2:1-14 (later many miracles)
- 6.) Preaching: Acts 2:15ff
- 7.) Baptizing: Acts 2:41
- 8.) Fruitful: Acts 2:41; 2:47; 4:4

9.) Living: Acts 2:42; 2:46

a. Christian walk 2:42; 2:46

b. Fellowship

c. Lord's supper Note: Meeting daily--we should be so  
dedicated

d. Prayer

10.) Powerful: Acts 2:43; 5:12-16

11.) Sharing material things: Acts 2:44,45; 4:32

12.) Praising God: Acts 2:47

13.) Persecuted: 4:1-4; (5:17-28) 8:1-3; (II Tim. 3:12

14.) Bold: Acts 4:5-12

15.) United: Acts 4:32

16.) Sacrificial: Acts 4:32 (2:44,45)

17.) Holy (or pure): Acts 5:1-11

18.) Dedicated: Acts 7 Stephen died for Christ

19.) Forgiving: Acts 7:60

20.) Evangelizing: Acts 8:4

21.) Missions minded: Acts 8 on

## PRINCIPLES FOR CHURCH GROWTH

1. Acts 2:41-47 REGENERATE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: The church must maintain a "Christian" membership, otherwise you have unsaved, unfilled, non-led men trying to help in the church! This is not good!

If a person hasn't realized he is a sinner and that he is lost to eternal torment, then he probably hasn't received Christ and Christ has not saved Him.

2. Acts 4:1-4 PREACHING THE GOSPEL:

3. Acts 5:12-16 PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH UNITED:

4. Acts 6:1-7 ORGANIZED WITH GODLY, QUALIFIED MEN:

5. Acts 9:31 ONE ON ONE EVANGELISM:

6. Acts 11:19-21 GOING TO OTHER LANDS:

7. Acts 16:4,5 SUBMISSION TO THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES:

8. Acts 21:20 CHURCH PLANTING IN VIEW:

9. Eph. 4:11-16 TRAINING OF THE SAINTS:

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M10100

TITLE: How To Supplement Your Mate.

READ Gen. 2:18-24

OUTLINE:

INTRODUCTION

I. Wives supplement your husbands.

II. Husbands love your wives.

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION: I was looking for a title for this study and thought of several. How to subjugate your mate. How to subdue your mate. How to straighten your mate. However since I figured there might be someone of the female gender reading this I decided on "How to supplement your mate.

I thought of a couple of good songs that might go with this study. I Surrender All. Give of your best to your master.

As a small boy I used to love to help my father on Saturday when he worked around the house. I'd run after things or sit on the board while he sawing it, or anything he wanted. I was his helper.

You see my father was paralyzed from the waist down. I did the running for him. I did the things that he couldn't do very well for himself. I was his helper, he could have done these things without me but my help made it much easier for him.

Gen. 2:18-24: To supply the context to this passage, God has created man and is about to correct her mistake by creating woman according to the ERAers.

Vs 18. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an

help fit for him." "fit" means meet or fitting to the job - someone that can fill in the gaps.

Vs 19. "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

Vs 20 "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help fit for him."

Vs 21 "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;"

Vs 22 "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

Vs 23 "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

The order is set no matter what is said. I Cor. 11:8-9 mentions that woman was created for man not vice-versa. "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man."

Vs 24 "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh."

Cleave = "to join fast together, to glue, cement" (vine)

Barnes mentions of "one flesh," "involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits..."

Some of the ERA women mention things like, "I gotta be me," "I gotta have my rights," "I gotta have my space" and "give me some room." Any couple arguing about my rights and your rights does not have a Scriptural marriage. There is no room for "individual" rights in a Scriptural

marriage.

Also note women that you are very special! You can know that you can help your husband in some way which no animal in creation can. No animal was suitable to help Adam.

HELPMEEET: Just what did God create for man in this helpmeet? What is a help meet? It is a "help" fit or meet to the job. Not one word but two.

What does a help meet do? Do they help meet the kids? Do they help meet the press? Do they help meet the budget? NO!

Many define this as "supplement." Funk and Wagnall states that supplement means, "to make additions to; provide for what is lacking in." Note: That is supplement and not supplant which means to "take the place of; displace" WIVES BE SURE YOU KNOW THIS!

DEFINITION: Much can be said for this term "help". This term is used of a woman twice - both here in this text. It is used in the Old Testament 21 times and is always translated help. Of the 21 times it is used, it is used of God helping 16 times. The other three times it is used in a derogatory fashion. (derogatory = Is. 30:5; Ezek. 12:14; Dan. 11:34. Some husbands might list Gen. 2:18 as derogatory also. Ha.)

You will note I've chosen to speak to the women first.

This is for two reasons. 1. They need it worse than the husbands do. NO NO! 2. In case we run out of time I want to be sure and get theirs in first. NO NO NO!!!

I. Wives supplement your husbands. You can do this in three areas of life. Body, Soul and Spirit.

1.Body: The physical part of man. Fact: He is lacking in something or you wouldn't have been created to be a help!

HELP by being a good cook. Sarah in Gen 18:1-8 baked bread but it seems that Abr. may have done the rest.

HELP in sickness. Run errands without complaint! Leave him alone if that is the type of person he is. Encourage and assist, as you are able.

HELP him as I did my father. When he's laboring with one of those projects that you have dreamed up give him a hand and I don't mean clapping.

HELP make a living if the need arises. Granted the best place for you is in the home especially when kids are young but a working wife is not wrong. (Prov. 31; Acts 18:3.)

Research seems to indicate that if the wife works there is an improvement to the majority of marriages.

HELP by being satisfied with what he can do for you if it isn't a lot. Don't push him into purchases he can't really handle. If you've done this apologize and get back on track.

HELP by being a homemaker even if you work. Make that place a home no matter what you have to work with. Make him want to get HOME.

B. Soul: The emotional side of man.

HELP to encourage him in everything that you can. Don't be like Job's wife! There the poor man was sitting in ashes scraping himself because he itched so much and she says, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Man what encouragement! What encouragement have you given your husband lately?

HELP emotionally when he's having a ruff time a little sympathy wont hurt a bit. When he's under the weather emotionally don't bother him. When he is excited about something try to be excited with him. What encouragement have you been to your husband lately?

HELP keep the romance in your life. The ring on your finger isn't a ring in his nose. Just because you are married doesn't mean he doesn't like a little romance now and then.

Try candlelight dinners now and then. Even if he comes home and turns the lights on. Keep trying, he may catch on sooner or later.

HELP by being a friend. Somebody he can chum around with. This one is going to be hard for some. Do things that he likes to do. Fishing, hunting etc. He will have fishing and hunting friends so one of them may as well be you!

HELP him by not boring him to death with the details of your homelife. He doesn't really care if Mary came over at 11:45 and left at 2:30. A simple, "Mary came over for a bit" will do.

HELP by standing by him when nobody else is. Can you imagine how close Noah and his wife became while he was working on the ark? Trust God that He is directing your husband correctly.

C. Spirit: The spiritual side of man.

HELP by being an example if he isn't living for the Lord properly. Many men have testified that it was their wife's attendance at church that started them to wise up spiritually. If you see problems in his life spiritually be an example as in a silent example.

HELP by sharing your blessings both from life and from the Word. Oft times Faith will share something from her reading that will really fit into my day as well.

HELP by being a Scriptural wife. If you need to know what is expected of you check out I Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:3-5 and I Pet. 3:1-4. Also Prov. 31.

HELP by cautioning him if you really think that he needs it but don't push him about it. Pilate's wife gave him some good advise in Mar. 27:19.

HELP by praying for him. He needs it badly.

HELP by honoring him as the head of the family. Don't talk down to him, as the TV commercials seem to do with husbands.

HELP by allowing him to be the head of the family.

HELP by being "to his virtues a little kind and to his faults a little blind."

HELP by filling in his gaps. If he is shy help him around strangers but don't mother him. Try not to leave him in a room with strangers to carry on a conversation. If he wants to be a loaner don't always push for having people over. If he is limited physically help him around as you can. Help him in any way that you can. If you can help out with bookkeeping or mechanics fine - do it but don't ridicule his lack of ability.

HELP by not tricking him into doing things that he really doesn't want to do.

JUST FILL IN WHERE YOU CAN!

BE A HELP THAT IS MEET FOR HIM!

An article entitled "Does your husband need you?" by Rita Carver lists three things for wives to do and then a thought that you might want to think about for a LONG while.

1. Accept him - don't try to reconstruct him. God gave Adam a wife not a mother. 2. Don't threaten him. But do encourage his headship. 3. Enjoy him! Titus 2:4 The older women are to teach the younger ones to love their husbands.

The thought: "Don't emphasize doing for him, but being to him."

"DON'T EMPHASIZE DOING FOR HIM, BUT BEING TO HIM."

II. Husbands love your wives:

Note should be made that the husband isn't told to be nor was he created to be a helpmeet, however he is to help his wife become one flesh with him.

God gave us one clear statement concerning this topic, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." Eph. 5:25

THE SAME PRINCIPLES APPLY TO THE HUSBAND AS WE HAVE SEEN FOR THE WIFE.

You are to be one flesh so there must be many similarities in responsibilities to one another!

A. Body:

HELP her in any way you can physically.

HELP her at home if she is helping you at work. We have found a number of husbands that take extreme advantage of their working wives. Some of the men do not work -- instead of helping the wife they are out doing their fun things like sports while wife works to make the living. THIS IS WRONG! If she is nice enough to be out working to help you reach life goals you ought not to be goofing off all the time.

B. Soul:

HELP her in the same areas that she is to help you in. Encouragement: Women need lots more than men! Emotionally recognize their ups and downs. They have their good days and their bad days. Be sure not to pressure them on their bad days or they may have more bad days. Romantically you need to court them and do dumb things for them now and then, you know splurge and go to Dairy Queen instead of McDonald's.

Give up lunch now and then and buy her a flower. Friendship is very necessary especially in the ministry for you may be the only one she has.

Don't bore her with the details of your job.

Stand by her when no one else will.

Dating is neat. You have to remember that just because she caught you it doesn't mean that she automatically dislikes going out. Even for just a cup of coffee or a Coke can be very important.

HELP by cleaving to her. Remember the term cleave has the idea of glued. (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31 etc.)

HELP by making the living if at all possible. If this isn't possible then no problem but help her around the house as much as you can.

HELP by being the head of the home! Make the decisions that you need to. (Eph. 5:23)

C. Spirit:

HELP by being a good example to her.

HELP by sharing your blessings with her.

HELP by being her teacher. (I Cor. 14:35)

HELP by praying for her. You know her needs better than anyone else.

HELP by prodding her gently in areas where she needs to change spiritually, but be sure you have no problem in that area yourself.

HELP by being a Biblical husband. (Eph. 5: Col. 3:19 etc.)

There are many self-help books out about this relationship but I think the Word is the best place to seek help.

CONCLUSIONS:

All things which believers are to be to one another also applies to the husband and wife, for the husband is the brother of the wife in the Lord and the wife is the sister of the husband in the Lord.

In the opening illustration we have some points to apply.

1. My father allowed me to fill in for his deficiencies. Husbands, you should do the same without an ego problem. Allow your wife to fill in where you lack.
2. My father could have done it himself so wives don't get the attitude that he can't get along without you. He probably can.
3. Sometimes I would give ideas and suggestions, but I always knew that he would make the final decision and that that was that. Wives do the same. Wives don't gripe and moan about his never taking your ideas. My dad never took any of mine either.

His is the final decision and it must be upheld. If it proves out that he was wrong and things go wrong, that is not the time to say, "I told you so." That is the time that you can become the encourager that you should be.

One other thought for us to dwell on is this. We've seen that the wife is to be a help fit for the husband.

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE GROOM AND WE ARE PART OF THE BRIDE THAT HE IS GOING TO WED.**

As a scriptural wife to Christ we ought to be doing many things. What kind of wife have you been this week for Christ?

One final thought - Woman was created as a help for her husband - this is her primary role in God's eyes if she is married.

The man ought to in reciprocity show his love toward her by accepting his ministry and fulfilling his responsibilities to her.

Unless both are taking their proper place God can't bless the marriage, as he wants to.

Again: The idea of the helper is to supply what is lacking.

Women if you are married, this is your place and Scriptural role!

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M10150

TITLE: We need to use our gray matter in our gray areas!

INTRODUCTION: YOU CAN PUT YOUR BIBLES ON THE FLOOR - I DOUBT THAT YOU WILL NEED THEM. WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT GRAY AREAS.

I stayed a Sunday afternoon with a couple in South Dakota that were in a straight over the issue of shopping on Sunday. He managed a chain store and was told to be open Sunday afternoons. He was struggling with the need to follow his employer orders and his conviction that stores should be closed on Sunday.

I would like to talk about Gray Areas. Now let me stress that this is a study of our treatment of the subject of gray areas and not a discussion of specific gray areas themselves.

We talk about gray areas, we condemn others that differ from our beliefs in gray areas, and we feel righteous because we have the proper views in the gray areas.

We need to look at how we deal with these areas! We need to set some principles for gray areas! We need to place some logic into gray areas.

We will look at a gray area or two and discuss some of the issues.

#### QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

Question # 1: If a person has a conviction about a particular gray area and he presents it to a class is he in error?

No. He is teaching the Bible as he sees it. He as all teachers and preachers must however, take a particular care in their presentations to be fair to the Scripture and use ALL the references that may or may not relate to the area in question both pro and con.

I have seen men use one verse that was out of context to "PROVE" their position in an area that is rejected by a vast majority of his own "CIRCLE". This should not be!

How wise it is to present a gray area is another question. The situation and receptivity and attitudes of all involved should be weighed. If it were going to cause division it would be questionable.

We find in James 3:1 that teachers receive a "greater judgment" and most agree that this relates to the fact that they affect so many people that they have a greater responsibility. (Heb. 13:17 also indicates the responsibility of the shepherd and leaders.)

If it is presented in a discussion situation there is openness to view both issues and might be very informative to all involved.

Question # 2: If a person that has a conviction about a particular gray area and believes it to be wrong condemns those that hold the other view is he in error?

Yes. Condemnation of another believer is not right in any case. To go to that person and discuss the issue would be right and proper.

Question # 3: If a person believes that this gray area is ok and condemns the person that believes it to be wrong is he in error?

If it is wrong for the previous question people to condemn then surely the standard is the same for both sides! A study of Romans 14:22-23 and context will show clearly that condemnation is not the way of peace!

Question # 4: Some say that these are areas of Christian Liberty. We are free to do as we please in this area, however those same people say anyone disagreeing with them is wrong. Is this really

"LIBERTY" as they tell us? If we have Liberty then condemnation is wrong!

Question # 5: If Scripture is not clear on a particular item why are the people that hold to the belief automatically "WRONG" and why are the ones that do not hold to the belief automatically "RIGHT?" BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE LIBERTY-----RIGHT!!!!

Principles for gray areas:

1. "DO NOT JUDGE" needs to apply to BOTH sides of the discussion.
2. A personal conviction is a personal item which is personal business not open for discussion or condemnation by others as long as that conviction is between a believer and his God.
3. If all the gray areas seem to turn out white in your thinking possibly you should take a little time before the Lord, your Bible and your desk to reconsider these areas. If all the gray areas seem to turn out black in your thinking possibly you should take a little time before the Lord, your Bible and your desk to reconsider these areas.
4. Let the testimony you leave before the lost and young Christians be of concern to you. Is your action in this area going to be a problem to the lost and new Christians that are watching you? (Rom. 14)
5. We should base our Christian living on items that appear in the Scripture in several areas of Scripture, dispensations, and cultures.

Example: Tithing. I think that tithing is mentioned in every dispensation except the church age. This would be indication that the tithe is GOD'S - probably in the church age as well. However there are other principles of giving that appear in only one or two dispensations. These probably aren't for all ages. (Storehouse giving; the three tithe system of the dispensation of the Law.)

I might mention that there is other teaching in the New Testament which indicate that the believer is to give as God has prospered him and this would be more than the tithe from the looks of things. In the Church age the tithe is probably "THE LORD'S" and as under the Law the free will offering is over and above the tithe.

6. Rom. 14:4a,b "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." Rom 14:12 "So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." This is a context of "stronger brother - weaker brother" but the principle should apply.

7. Galatians 5:13-26 seems also to relate to this topic. It speaks of Christian liberty and the fact that probably neither side should be biting at the other.

8. There are some texts that MAY relate loosely to the thought.

Luke 9:49-50; Mk 9:38-40 In these texts we have John asking Christ about someone they had run across casting out demons in Christ's name. The disciples forbade the man. Christ responded that they should not forbid in such a case.

Acts 15:36-41 shows a sharp difference of opinion between Paul and Barnabas over Mark. In II Tim. 4:11 Paul asks for Mark to come to him. The possible application is drawn from silence - the silence of both Paul and Barnabas. Neither one seemed to raise the issue after it happened. CHRISTIANS DO DIFFER BUT IT IS THE ATTITUDE AND VERBAGE AFTER THE DIFFERENCE THAT COUNTS. WE NEED TO LEAVE THE DIFFERENCES ALONE!

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS:

I notice that there is not an attitude of Christian Liberty for the other guy -- only for "ME"!

I notice that the gray areas that have taken a back seat to notice are being resurrected to help condemn someone on the other side of current gray areas under the guise of "those legalists."

I notice that many today are in the business of building MY CHURCH and "MY CONGREGATION" not shepherding CHRIST'S CHURCH. If men today would concentrate on shepherding the sheep that Christ brings their way instead of seeing to it that "THEIR" people "AGREE" with "THEM", the churches would be growing much faster and people would take less time going from church to church looking for one where they can be accepted as they are, and not have to change or keep secret their personal convictions.

I notice that those that hold to the conservative side of gray areas are often labeled legalists. They practice their own things and practice legalism! However those that hold the less conservative

side of gray areas often condemn the "Legalist." INDEED BOTH SIDES OFTEN CONDEMN THE OTHER BECAUSE THEY DISAGREE. If a person is a legalist because he disagrees with me in an area of liberty and I condemn him as a legalist then I am condemning him because he disagrees with me and I am perpetuating my own form of legalism.

I NOTICE THAT BOTH SEEM TO BE LEGALISTIC!

I notice that the conservative side folks are condemned for using only part of verses or verses out of context. The fact that the less conservative folks do the same is ignored quite often.

Example: Col. 2:8 is quoted against the conservative folks. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men," This verse is used to show the conservative folks are teaching the traditions of men. However the rest of the sentence reads "after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." shows that Paul was speaking of things taught that were based on the worlds principles not Christ's. To say that the conservative folks are teaching worldly principles seems somewhat dangerous to me.

There is little more application lest it be Romans 14:19

From the center of a passage speaking of freedom, of voluntary setting aside of that freedom, of each man giving account to Christ comes this statement: "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things with which one may edify another."

I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANY CONDEMNATION - NAME-CALLING - OR RUNNING DOWN THAT EDIFIED ANYONE!

We might also remember that the Holy Spirit is capable of leading each and every one of us. If you are very sure someone is wrong on a point ask God to give both of you wisdom and time to re-evaluate your positions before HIM!

Indeed, to find principles in handling gray areas is almost a gray area in itself. There are very few texts to draw from.

I REALLY WONDER WHY WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME WITH THEM. It seems counterproductive in light of the HUGE job of evangelism that we have facing us.

A Question I like to present to people that are involved in gray areas is this. When we consider how to live before God are we using the WORD as our standard or the WORLD? It seems to me that as we are involved in these areas the controversy lasts only as long as the particular problem takes to become accepted in the Church. The Church follows a little bit behind the world in its lifestyles normally.

Many abhor the trash on the movie screen but a year or two later they are watching it on their TV screens. Many think the new fashions are terribly gross and never wear them until there is a cheap reproduction available. Many think the ethics used in business are monstrous yet we find them filtering into our churches.

IF WE ARE HONEST ENOUGH TO ADMIT IT, WE ARE JUST A TAD BEHIND THE WORLD IN OUR LIFESTYLES.

Let us follow the Word and the Lord and not the World for our Christian living.

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M10200

TITLE: Increasing degrees comes with fire and education

INTRODUCTION:

In many years of ministry I have heard some of the most absurd comments about higher education, as well as lesser education. It seems that the higher educated people tend to look down their noses from their high towers at the lower classes of education. I have heard some very foolish remarks aimed at demeaning the Bible Institute movement.

On the other hand I have heard some equally foolish statements from Bible Institute people looking up their nose at the well educated about those that have sought higher education.

I would like to address both camps in this study.

I ran across a humorous evaluation of the disciples in the context of Christ having submitted their

names for employment in his carpentry shop. The result was that none of them was to be hired due to their character flaws.

The point being that Christ took twelve losers and made eleven of them into world-shaking evangelists and preachers. They went out and turned their civilization upside down. And they only had a three-year education!

Indeed, we see in what the Lord did, a very good example of education being Biblical. He trained them for a specific purpose and turned them loose on the world. They did a fine job, we might add.

We forget that the Lord had the disciples full time and I think that if you do some simple mathematics that you will find hour wise of education with the Lord that the disciples probably had more time in instruction than a Doctor of Theology would.

Someone recently said, "The Lord didn't select the degreed people - the Pharisees, but chose the disciples - the ones without degrees. That is very true, but He then trained them extensively. The Lord also, might we add, chose Luke to record most of the New Testament. He was a doctor.

The Lord also, might we add, chose Paul - a Pharisee to do most of his church planting work in the world, plus write the majority of the rest of the New Testament. We might add the man Moses that was educated in the Pharaoh's court, and it was the most advanced education available in that day. Yet God used him in a mighty way.

The business world uses many tools to accomplish their purpose. They use job descriptions. They fit the man to the job that they want done. If he fits well, he will do well. If he does not have the qualifications, he will spin his wheels and become frustrated.

They use aptitude tests. They see what the person is capable of doing and use this in placing them. So, why do not Christian organizations do the same? Find out what those people are qualified for. Why put a man in a pastorate for 18 months to find out he can't preach, lead, or communicate? Why put a man in as teacher for a year to see if he can teach or not.

All these trials do is cost. The pastor will cause loss to the church and the teacher will cause loss to the student in knowledge not learned.

God has gifted His people. We need to see if those people we place have the proper gifts and qualifications.

The account of the disciples being evaluated was full of fun being poked at the business community for their ways of deciding on new workers. Do we not use resumes and personal interviews? Indeed, do we not weed out people that don't fit our standard? It is only wisdom to test, to know those we place in positions.

I am not sure what the writer was attempting to picture in his feeble attempt at humor.

I would like to just consider some men of Evangelical and Fundamental persuasion and their education. I apologize if there are any errors in this list or omissions in education. I use this list simply to illustrate that God uses differing amounts of education to equip his saints. The point is also to be seen that there are men that God has used that are well educated and others that have little education.

Warren Wiersbe, in "MAKING SENSE OF THE MINISTRY," mentions that Spurgeon, G. Campbell Morgan, D.L. Moody, and Ironside did not have formal education.

Moody left formal school at seventeen.

William Jennings Bryan/lawyer/Whipple Academy/Illinois College/Chicago Union College of Law.

J. Gresham Machen/John Hopkins/Princeton Univ./Princeton Theo. Sem./Univer of Marburg and Gottenberg/Taught at Princeton and Westminster Theo. Seminaries.

A.J. Gordon/Brown Univ./Newton Theo. Sem.

A.C. Dixon/Wake Forest College/Southern Bap. Sem.

R.A. Torrey/Yale Univ. & Div. School/Univ. of Leipzig & Erlangen.

A.B. Simpson/Knox College.

Adoniram Judson/Valedictorian Brown Univ./Andover Theo. Sem.

Donald Grey Barnhouse/Los Angeles Inst./Univ. of Chicago/ Princeton U./Princeton Theo. Sem./Univ. of Grenoble/Univ. of Pennsylvania/Eastern Theo. Sem./Dallas Theo. Sem./Aix-en-Provence, France (Th.D.).

Lewis Sperry Chafer/New Lyme Acad./Oberlin College.

A.C. Gaebelien/privately taught.

Will H. Houghton (Pres. Moody Bible Institute)/D.D. Wheaton.

W.B. Riley (founded three schools)/three degrees from John Brown Univ.

Augustus Strong/Yale/Rochester Theo. Sem./Univ. of Berlin.

C.T. Studd (Miss. to China) /Eton College/Cambridge Univ.

G.W. Truett (Past pres. of South. Bap. Conv.) Three doctorates.

The Bible institute movement did not grow out of a disgust with all education. It grew out of a strong desire to educate a mighty army of the Lord's people with the basic tools needed to spread the Gospel. They did not reject education. They rejected the world's education and substituted Biblical education.

They did not reject all secular knowledge! They still realize all knowledge has value. They did not stop going to doctors because their doctor had a doctorate in medicine from a secular

university. They did not stop going to lawyers because they had a secular education.

It is foolishness to condemn that which you may not have, or may not understand.

There are many jokes offered about seminaries, yet many of these jokes are more serious than funny. The seminary is often referred to as a cemetery, which is not much funnier really than referring to a Bible Institute as a Mental Institute. Neither alumni will appreciate the implications!

At the year end Bible conference where I taught one of the Chapel speakers mentioned that he had read an interview of one of the well-known Bible teachers of our day. In the interview the man said that it took him four years to get through seminary, but that it had taken forty years to get the seminary out of him.

May I suggest that is foolishness? Had he had no seminary training, I would venture that he would not be in the position that he was in.

It is foolishness to say that you don't need education to go into the ministry. If you are disciplined enough to make yourself read the proper books and do the proper study, yes you can be a self educated minister of the Gospel, yet if you don't follow the proper books, you can get into some serious trouble.

I have known several self educated men and they have ministered very effectively for their Lord. God chose to use them in a specific manner, yet the guidance of a formal education is designed to equip for other specific jobs. Neither is incorrect.

The Bible Institute was designed to put a person on the field with only the basics. There is no thought to that person going into college teaching, or into large church preaching etc.

The Bible College was designed to give more education than the three program so that the person could go into city churches and into other areas that require more education.

The Seminary is designed to train the secular college graduate in the ministry. It assumes that you have all basics in the secular education and the seminary emphasizes the spiritual end of things.

It is apparent from this that a secular college graduate could just as well go for a Bible Institute, Bible College or seminary education. It would depend on what his particular needs were and how God was leading him.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

1. God is not looking for educational fanatics. And of course God is not interested in knowledge nuts. Of course God is not interested in degree hounds.

Of course God is not interested in college collecting. Of course God is not interested in learning limbo.

It is however foolish to condemn a man of God that is lead of God to acquire a certain education for a certain ministry - even if it includes several schools and several degrees!

I trust that you will not be fool enough to condemn a man in any educational situation. You should realize that it is not the man you condemn, but the God that led him to take the education that he has.

2. INDEED, is not our own personal God all knowing! How can we then condemn seeking knowledge?

3. God does not desire mediocrity; He desires the best. A look at the tabernacle and fittings is proof of His desire for the best.

4. God calls us to complete holiness, not a partial holiness, so why would he call us to a partial preparation?

5. I fear that we have a Fundamentalist mindset that says: Sloppy is super. Get by is great. Mediocrity is magnificent. Ignorant is in. Disorganized is dandy. Uneducated is undeniably out of sight! It's no wonder that some people call us FUNNYMENDALISTS.

6. I am not saying that you need formal education. But, anyone that is to minister the word of

God, must be trained either formally or informally. Those with no informal education today, have informally educated themselves. They dug into the Word and books to see how it was done, and we have some great men that preach the Word with great power.

No uneducated man can take the pulpit and be a successful feeder of the flock. There is education, one way or another!

7. "MEN ARE FOUR (An Arabic Apothegm)...a short, pithy saying

"He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not - He is a fool, shun him.

"He who knows not, and knows that he knows not - He is simple. Teach him.

"He who knows, and knows not that he knows - He is asleep, wake him.

"He who knows, and knows that he knows - He is wise, follow him."

This was given to me by one of the men that really seems to have an aversion to education above the Bible Institute level.

8. Might we submit that it is neither knowledge nor education that is wrong, but the lust and desires for it that is unnatural? It is that person that goes after degrees just to satisfy his own desires, and seeks the glory and pride that they can give.

A person that is lead of the Lord to seek a certain education ought not be condemned for doing as the Lord leads.

9. Prov. 1:5a, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning..." Prov 1 7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Prov 1 22, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge."

With these three references I would like to rest my case.

God sees value in knowledge and seems to be disgusted with those that are disgusted with knowledge.

Let us not reject knowledge, but let us reject the world's knowledge that contradicts God's knowledge. Let us not reject education, but let us reject the world's education that contradicts the precepts of God. Let us not reject Bible College and seminary training, but reject the intellectualism that it often brings.

Let us reject the world's philosophy.

Let us reject ignorance.

Let us reject foolishness.

Let us reject pride.

Let us reject institutional pride.

Let us reject arrogance.

Let us reject the thought that only we are correct.

Let us accept knowledge.

Let us accept what God leads others to gain.

Let us accept that which assists in proclaiming the Gospel.

Let us accept training.

Let us accept one another!

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m10250

WHAT MANY THOUGHT WAS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED MAY HAVE  
TURNED OUT TO BE A DISEASE!

INFORMATION: Having spoken in many churches around the western part of our country it has been noticed that something has been creeping into the church in the last few years.

It is a disease. A disease that is so subtle I fear many may not have even noticed its presence much less its existence. The frightening part of this disease is that most people don't even know they have it, nor that they are transmitting it.

This disease is very contagious between churches and seems to affect the vast majority of the people in any church that is exposed. Indeed if you are a visitor in one of these churches you will know within the first moments which members have contracted the disease and which ones have avoided its effects.

This disease is not isolated to only one group of churches for it has been observed in churches in several different associations and groups.

It is personally believed by this author that this disease is being transmitted from church to church by pastors and other church members that visit churches other than their own while traveling around the country. They attend a church where this disease has taken its toll, and unwittingly take the germ which produces the problem home to their own church where it is introduced to the song leader, or the pastor or maybe the Adult Sunday School teacher, who in turn unleashes the early stages of the disease upon the congregation in a morning worship service. Once this process has taken place the stages of development of the disease are automatic.

Now, let us examine this problem in more detail so that we can begin to diagnose and develop treatment to combat the effects of this sickness.

Have you noticed when you visit a new church how the church people react to visitors? It has been noticed that in many churches the church folk are very standoffish, and at times they seem to avoid the visitors.

Naturally the pastor is frustrated, as are the visitors that wonder if they forgot to use Dial, if they have spinach between their teeth, or if they are REALLY sure.

Just one example will suffice to illustrate what is being observed. I recently attended a church of about two hundred people. Upon entering the building I had no idea where the Sunday school

class was meeting so began walking around the long narrow area outside of the sanctuary. After five minutes of strange looks and wandering around I left in frustration. I returned for the morning service and in all of this there was only one person that indicated that he knew that I was present.

As is usual in these cases the next thing that was noticed was that someplace in the service there was a time when the songleader introduced the visitor to this disease. Visitors have been welcomed from the pulpit and they are relieved that they did not have to stand and say their name, when all of a sudden it is announced that it is time to say hello to the visitors. You are one of four or five new people in the congregation of 200 and you suddenly find dozens of people approaching from all sides telling you dozens of names that you couldn't remember if you had a tape recorder in hand.

The disease is called "Firsttime greeter visit itis". It is somewhat difficult to pronounce so let me give you a layman's definition of the disease. It is called the "I-won't-introduce-myself-to-you-now-

because-I-will-have-to-greet-you-later-in-the-service-syndrome.

EARLY SYMPTOMS: There are early symptoms which usually proceed along the following lines. The congregation is introduced to this disease as a way of being friendly to the visitors that are in your assembly. Everyone is asked to stand and circulate amongst those attending and greet one another. This is usually followed by a series of Sundays in which everyone is much more friendly than before.

This new development worked so well that it has been incorporated into the general procedures of the morning, and maybe even the evening services.

As the disease progresses however, the congregation begins to realize that they are saying hello to the visitors twice. This is somewhat cumbersome after awhile; after all, just how friendly must I be? Besides, how do you say hello twice within fifteen minutes and not sound repetitious? Many will decide, "Well I won't say hello when I enter the service unless I am very close by, then when the correct time for it comes I can be very friendly."

There is no doubt that the best of intentions were in mind when the carrier introduced the disease into the congregation, but the effects never the less continue to erode the friendliness of the church.

LATER SYMPTOMS: The next step in the progress of the disease in the congregation is that there are very few that introduce themselves or even say hello to the visitors, that is, until it is scheduled in the bulletin.

The final symptom even though there have not been any churches that have progressed this far, might well be terminal. Yes, a dead church could well develop. If the outsider does not feel comfortable they will not return, and this will mean little growth, and finally a church that exists for itself.

This report is not written in criticism of this practice for the author has seen it to be very effective in bringing about friendliness among a not so friendly congregation, however be forewarned of the POSSIBLE final outcome that is observable in church after church today.

PROGNOSIS: The infected congregation can most assuredly be cured of this disease by merely realizing that it exists and that they need to be aware of the symptoms. As they see the symptoms creeping up on them they need to combat that symptom by introducing themselves to the visitor that they have just passed by.

Be it known that it is quite uncomfortable to be a visitor and be totally ignored in a church until the pastor or songleader tells everyone to stand and greet the visitors. Have you ever been approached on three or four sides by 150 people all with their hands out. Yes, the greetings are appreciated yet there is a certain air of insincerity, even if they are very sincere in truth, when the greetings of a church are in response to the pastor telling them this is the time to make the visitors feel welcome.

There is a new variation on the disease which has developed and it can make the visitor even more uncomfortable. There is a growing desire to be sure and identify the visitors for the membership, so there are some churches that ask the congregation to stand, but for the visitors to remain seated. Now you have all those hands coming DOWN at you from above.

Upon the second visit to a church that had practiced the aforementioned, the guest felt that this time he could stand with the rest of the congregation because he was not really a first time visitor. The song leader was way ahead of the guest and when the time came, he announced that only CHURCH MEMBERS were to stand, and that they should greet the visitors.

CURE: The obvious cure to this situation is to refrain from making the GREETING OF VISITORS a normal occurrence of the services. If the congregation does not know when this will occur they will not be so apt to refrain from greeting the visitors on their own.

Realize that unfriendliness is a problem of the spiritual life and not an item that you can demand from your congregation. The key is not forced friendliness, but a spiritual atmosphere in the church which brings the people to be the type of believers that they ought to be - friendly and concerned about visitors AS WELL AS ONE ANOTHER.

Many churches use official greeters at the back of the auditorium, or in the foyer to great effect. They introduce themselves to new visitors and begin introducing them around as they are ushered into their seats. A mini-tour of the church or a printed map might be appreciated.

The congregation needs to be encouraged to greet visitors and one another upon their first encounter, and not wait until that SPECIAL TIME in the service.

A greeting during the service is very nice at times if only a few of the people surrounding the new folks turn and introduce themselves, however after five or six rounds of "There's a Welcome Here" and sixty handshakes, a visitor may well wonder if they want to return to the same next Sunday!

As in almost all of church activity we as believers overreact to a new thing. If it works once then it will work well in every service for the next three years. Not necessarily so.

In our own congregations why don't we evaluate our use or non-use of a special greeting time for visitors. Perhaps there are variations that might be tried to make the time more meaningful to new folks.

In a small church where we visited several years ago I was impressed during the LET'S GREET EVERYONE TIME at how many people were very interested in our name and our occupation. After everyone sat down, the pastor proceeded to call on different ones in the congregation to report on who they had met, where they were from and what they did for a living. This was a personable time, and it was an introduction of the visitor to the entire congregation. There was a sincerity in the time that could well be developed into a useful ministry within the church services. It could even be used without the LET'S DECEND ON THE VISITORS MOMENT!

In a day when church leaders are interested in church growth and the expansion of the work we may have a very unsuspecting item in our worship services that is actually working against that which it is designed to foster.

May we be very sure that we are honest, sincere and caring in our greeting of others in our churches!

May we assure that our greetings are not grating the nerves and feelings of those we seek to minister to!

We offer these thoughts as a positive "FOOD FOR THOUGHT" because we have been in a number of churches where the only "friendliness" is during the "WELCOME THE VISITORS" time. We would be quick to add that there are many churches that use this greeting time to great advantage, but they are also very outgoing with their visitors before and after the services as well.

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m10300

IN THAT DAY

Stanley L. Derickson

Many are asking in our day if the attitude in the American church has changed in recent years.

We hear of great things going on in missions around the world and hear of the workers going out to the field.

We hear of the burdens of others to go to the field that they have been unable to reach due to finances.

We hear discussions about how to raise support for missions.

We hear discussions about the cost effectiveness of missions.

We hear facts such as, over 3000 lost souls slip into hell every hour on planet earth, yet it has little effect on many Christians. Why? The fact that they see that many people blown away on television in a month or two of viewing may well relate to the indifference.

How about it average American Christian? Are you as committed to missions as you were 15 years ago? Are you giving as much to missions as you did 15 years ago? Has your own attitude toward missions changed?

In a day when pastors are upset about one of their friend's receiving a bigger and better "pay package" from their new church than they did - in a day when Billy Graham declares on nationwide television that we have almost reached the world (Syracuse, NY crusade, 6-9-1989) - in a day when we are building 3 million dollar gyms for our churches - in a day when some missionaries take longer to raise their support than they do to receive their college training - in a day when Christians can go out of church stating how good the sermon was when the preacher observed their sleeping habits during the service - in a day when the average church goer gives less than the price of a cup of coffee at the local fast food place to missions - in a day when --- why continue? I'm sure you have the idea. We have picked on pastors and church goers that are thankfully in a minority. We might also add that there are some missionaries doing things that could well be added to our list.

Anyone that has lived through the last 20 years in fundamental churches will probably recognize that there have been some changes of attitude. If you haven't then praise God for your church's continuing support of missions, or else shame on you for your lack of observation.

Now we must consider from whence those changes came. I suspect that as most attitude changes came through history, the progression be it theological or otherwise, is from the schools that train the men, to the men that train the church goers, to the church goer that train the children and from the children that weren't properly challenged and now are adults, to more children that won't be trained and challenged. We are reaping much of our problem today from a lack of training and challenge to the people that need to be behind the missions effort.

Are our schools challenging our pastoral students adequately with missions? It seems that the pastoral - missions division in many schools tends to train professionals in one area or the other and fails to teach that the two are very completely interrelated. I fear this not only leaves us with pastors that are not challenged with missions, but with missionaries that have no idea what the pastor is up against. Indeed we have missionary church planters going out to plant churches that they have not been trained to pastor.

Relax if you are up tight about what can be done! The answer is simple!

Every individual, every church, every movement, every organization that comes into contact with information that would strengthen the missions effort - pass that information on. Do it by word of mouth, do it by copying materials that have no copyright for distribution, do it by supplying all the information you can, as cheaply as you can. If we are really interested in doing the Lord's work we should be willing to do so in a not for profit manner!

If we as individuals wait to see if George Smith or his church is going to start doing right with missions, then we will not start addressing the problem.

We as individuals, churches, movements and organizations must commit ourselves and our resources to getting the job done. If we wait for the next guy or church to do it, we will only wait - wait as the lost wait for the message that can free them!

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m10350

TITLE: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ORANGE?

By Stanley L. Derickson

First published in the Baptist Bulletin.

What do I mean by this somewhat obscure question?

It is meant, probably most of all, to illustrate a great lack in our witnessing today.

There is only one logical answer to this question and that is this, "A banana doesn't have any

bones." You say that doesn't make any sense. You are probably right! HOWEVER, I believe it makes as much sense as some of the witnessing that goes on today in America, as well as around the world. Let me illustrate for you.

If you ask a person if they want to be saved, or do they want to be saved from their sin, and this is all you include in your witness, I believe you are presenting a question very similar to, "What's the difference between an orange?"

You have given them a question that probably makes no sense to them.

You have told them they need to be saved - but the question in their mind is, "Saved from what?" If they ask you what they need to be saved from, you will probably reply, "From your sin." Please consider this one carefully - who wants to be saved from their sin? Please tell me who wants to be saved from their sin? **THEY ARE ENJOYING SIN TO THE HILT - WHY BE SAVED FROM IT?** If you think for one minute that the average American is concerned about sin, or even concerned about what sin might be, you are not up to date. The average American today **IF**, and I mean **IF**, he knows what sin is, he certainly is not concerned about being saved from it.

You see, something has happened in America over the last few years! You see, nasty, mean old Satan has gone underground. He has convinced the unsaved that he doesn't exist, he has convinced the unsaved that there is no such thing as sin, he has convinced the unsaved that there is no such thing as hell (even if there is, it's only here on earth), he has convinced the unsaved that everyone is going to heaven, he has convinced the unsaved that a loving God wouldn't have a judgment -- God loves us too much.

Then on the other hand he has convinced the saved that it isn't good to talk about hell (it's too negative), he has convinced the saved that it's only a separation from God, he has convinced the saved that if we talk about hell it will scare people off, he has convinced the saved that hell isn't a useful point of evangelism.

If you tell a lost soul they are going to be "separated from God if they don't accept Christ," **SO WHAT! THEY ARE SEPARATED FROM GOD NOW, AND THEY ARE ENJOYING THEMSELVES IN SIN!**

How do you approach the lost, concerning eternal separation from God?

Do you use terms like, you'll be lost, you'll be separated from God, you won't enter heaven, you need to have a relationship with Christ, you will be condemned, or do you use the term Hell, and describe what hell is, what it is going to be like, and how terrible it is going to be?

A news report a few years ago reported that a survey revealed that 58% of Americans do not believe in hell. That should tell us two things.

First of all, it rather taints the figures that tell us that half of America is born again, but more importantly, it should tell us that we need to help the people to whom we witness to understand that not only are they going to be separated from God for all eternity, but that eternity will be spent in **TORMENT**.

How can the lost person make a proper decision about salvation without knowing the entire story? Christ mentioned eternal torment a number of times in the Gospels. We ought to be giving out the same message, not just part of it.

We cannot wonder too much about why the doctrine of Hell has gone by the way side. We aren't preaching about it anymore, we aren't teaching about it anymore, we aren't showing the concept in our Gospel tracts anymore, and what is really serious is that we are not instructing many of our Bible college and Seminary students in the doctrine.

"What's the difference between an orange?" "Do you want to be saved?"

**TWO QUESTIONS.** They seem to be of the same type, in today's society!

Many don't view hell as being forever, thus we might mention Matthew 25:46 which says in a context of separation of the just and the unjust, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Everlasting and eternal are the same word.) If hell isn't eternal then heaven isn't either, and that is unacceptable in light of Scripture!

**PEOPLE IN AMERICA DON'T KNOW WHAT HELL IS!**

It would be wise for all that witness to include an introduction to what they mean by "separated from God," so that the listener can have a proper understanding of the pros and cons of accepting or rejecting Christ.

The Bible tells us that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). Those that have not accepted Christ as their personal Savior are sinners and deserve the very best that Satan has to offer and that is, his eternal repose, that is his eternal dwelling place, that is his eternal destination, that is the eternal burning fire of hell.

The sinner is lost and on his way to hell, and nothing can stop that descent into the place prepared for them unless they call on the merciful Jesus Christ.

Their choice is heaven or hell. Their choice is eternal delight or eternal agony. Their choice is eternal life or eternal death. Their choice is the refreshing waters of the river of life or the flames of hell. Their choice is eternity with the Father or eternity with the father of lies. Their choice is eternal light or eternal darkness.

Their choice is eternal comfort or eternal suffering. Their choice is eternal joy or eternal sorrow. Their choice is a glorified body or a tormented body. Their choice is eternal fellowship with Christ or eternal fallowship with Satan. Their choice is accept Jesus Christ as their Savior or accept the consequences of following the devil into the lake of fire.

That is if you call that a choice.

**TO ME THE CHOICE IS OBVIOUS TO THE MOST CASUAL OBSERVER!!**

To put it as one flippant observer of the Gospel has put it, 'It's turn or burn!'"

The Lord told us to go into all nations. (Matt 28:18-20) We are not reaching all nations today! Indeed if an impartial observer of statistics were to look at the data they would have to conclude that we are only trying to reach the United States. The figures show that only about ten percent of our Christian workers are on the foreign field. The amount spent to keep the home front going is the vast majority of funds available.

Are we in America really interested in preaching the entire Gospel? Indeed, are we even

preaching the Gospel. The indications are that we are all waiting in our easy chairs, waiting for people to come to us to seek the good news that we have.

It is our generation's responsibility to reach the world for the Lord. There is no other generation that can do the job that Christ gave for us to do!

Let us close with the words of an eyewitness, in the place of torment. "I am tormented in this flame."( Luke 16:24) May these words move us to action. Remember that it is our generation that is to reach the present generation here on earth!

"I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME"

"GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD...."

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M10400

SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MEN

SONS = FALLEN ANGELS, DAUGHTERS = WOMEN

SONS = LINE OF SETH, DAUGHTERS = LINE OF CAIN

SONS = GODLY MEN, DAUGHTERS = UNGODLY WOMEN

SONS = EXTRATERESTIALS, DAUGHTERS = WOMEN

GENERAL FACTS THAT RELATE:

1. The term used of Godly people is else where used in the Old Testament. Hos. 1:10 (Barnes Note's has more on this.)

2. Angels do not marry. Matt. 22:30, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God in heaven."

Indeed the term "sons" does not fit beings that have no sex or marriage.

Does this really state that angels have no capacity for sex? NO, however the implication is quite strong.

It does say however they do not marry. This illuminates them as far as Gen. 6 is concerned. According to some - angels in heaven don't but they are good. How bout bad ones - they might.

Greek scholars mention that angels are always in the neuter instead of masculine or feminine.

They always appear as men in scripture.

Sexless beings producing offspring seems a bit far fetched to many.

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A related problem to this is that the spirit produced a human without a human father.

Another thought is that Christ himself was produced by God a spirit and a human mother. If you say these evil spirits produced many offspring with human mothers you have multitudes of theological and Biblical problems.

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Another slight problem would be this - why did all those fallen angels decide to become males and none of them females? Strange!

3. "giants" = Strong's number 5303 = "nef-eel" = bully or tyrant.

Num. 13:33, mentions that the spies that entered the promised land found these giants in the land. This is post flood times.

Ezra 2:20 shows the term translated "Gibbar". Some feel that the term has the idea of great in stature. They could have been evil or good. Goliath would have been one of the evil ones.

NASB shows that the giants were there before the marriages came to pass.

KJ also shows this. How can the giants come from the union? They can't.

Giants could refer to great things that they did and not stature.

4. "mighty men who were of old, men of renown" were the offspring of the union not the giants.

5. "Demonic creatures" and "half-man half-demon creatures.

There is not a shred of evidence from the scriptures that this is at all possible.

There is no indication that Spirits can have sex much less produce creatures of this description.

THESE WERE CASES OF DEMON POSSESSION.

So how could giants, Demonic creatures or any thing except normal children come from the union of a man and woman even if one or both were demon possessed? The physical functions are not disturbed by possession to the point of producing weird creatures.

6. There is no real reason nor indication that we should see anything wrong with this union.

If there is show it to me.

7. Angels are called Sons of God.

Job 1:6

2:1

38:7

Dan. 3:25

Men are called sons of God.

Jo. 1:12 (Old KJ.)

Ro. 8:14,19

8. The context mentions nothing of any creature except man. Gen 6:3; 6:12

Why would a good writer like Moses be running along in his account and suddenly dump in a new type of creature - angels and ungodly ones at that - in such vague terminology?

9. The text of scripture does not mention angelic beings previously nor for quite some time in scripture.

If this the first time? I would doubt that God would introduce any thing so ungodly without some explanation.

10. Angels are bound. Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4.

(If all fallen are bound where did demons come from?)

11. The terms "took them wives" "signifies a lasting marriage," (per Dr. Scofield in his New Scofield Reference Bible p 22 note 1.)

12. Most positions see that the trouble was caused by Satan to thwart the Messianic line. He accomplished this except for the fact that he missed Noah.

13. The thought comes to mind is how can you have all the earth involved in fallen angels having relations with all the women and no men around - much less Noah and his wife and their family having a normal family relationship.

Indeed where was the Godly life of Seth that we decided lived up to the time of Noah? Why aren't they mentioned when Noah is mentioned as righteous.

We saw that someone may have helped Noah with the ark. The judgment of 6:7 took place long before the ark was built and completed.

14. There is a serious problem theologically with having a spirit being and a human being producing a child. There would be no fallen nature. The fallen nature comes through the human man and not the woman. Thus you would have a whole group of beings without a sin nature. **NO WAY CAN THIS BE ACCEPTABLE!**

You would require the flood to be a judgment upon creatures that had no sin nature. Indeed they may have been sinless for all we know!

15. Some see "wives" as polygamy, the real sin of the text.

16. The text in Job seems to make a clear distinction between the sons of God and Satan. Would indicate they were good angels.

In chapter 38 they are good angels - rejoicing over creation. Thus sons of god cannot be fallen angels.

17. If the nephillim are offspring of angels and women, how come they were there before the unions of the couples. (6:4)

18. If the nephillim were destroyed in the flood, how come they are listed in Num. 13:33? Would God be so foolish as to allow this same thing occur again? NO! If indeed, it happened the first time.

19. I Pet. 3:18ff is a context of man type spirits and there is no hint of anything else present.

20. II Peter 2:4 mentions the fall of angels in connection with Noah per some. You should note that Peter is listing three separate falls. That of angels, that of Noah and that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

21. If Jude 6 is speaking of the supposed fall of angels in Gen 6 then we must understand that the parallel with verse seven must also follow. If the angels of vs. 6 went after strange flesh as did the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. the fallen angels would have been marring the men of Gen 6 not the women.

There seems to me a far distance between leaving an abode and following strange flesh. It is hard to see how you can equate these two ideas.

The interpretation that might be better and more fitting might go along this line.

The angels left their proper abode or heaven. Their wrong was leaving their abode not taking women as mates!

There is no hint of women in the text.

This seems to be two illustrations of God's punishment upon two different groups - one angels and the other men of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Jude 6 & 7 is not related to Gen 6.

22. The term sons of god in the New Testament are the "exact Greek equivalent of the Hebrew" terms used in Gen 6. Matt. 5:9 is the Greek word. (Baxter p 177)

23. Men of renown and mighty men are common Old Testament terms for good men. (Baxter p 179 for more info.)

24. The term wives has been mentioned as being plural. This was a problem in the days of Noah. You might look at Matt. 24:37,38 and Luke 17:26,27 so see that plural wives was a problem in Gen. 6.

25. A man named George Raphin suggests that the sons of god of Job 1 & 2 were actually men that had gone to meet God for worship. Job is a contemporary with Gen. and possibly way back in Gen. The men were just meeting God as Cain and Abel did.

26. Zondervan Picture Dictionary vol. 5 mentions old Hurrian legends that mention pagan gods that had relations among themselves and at times humans. They do not hold that this is what Gen 6 has in mind. Just for your interest.

They go on to state that sons of god was a term at times used of pagan rulers in ancient times.

27. If there is something wrong with angels mating with women and this is a possibility later than the flood why didn't God mention this wrong in the Law where He is quite explicit in sexual relationships that are right and wrong?

SONS = FALLEN ANGELS, DAUGHTERS = WOMEN

THOSE HOLDING THE POSITION:

Benson, Dr. John (Accent Press)

Pink

Pember, G.H.

Bullinger, Dr. E.W.

Miller, Dr. David

Ambrose

Tertullian

Justin

Athenagoras

Clemens of Alexandria

Lactantius

Phillips

Ryrie ties the s of g to angels of II Pet. 2:4 so must hold to this position.

This position has been running around since 200 BC according to Baxter in his STUDIES IN PROBLEM TEXTS.

The book of Enoch mentions it I am told, but I do not have the specific reference.

Some report that the Septuigent translates it the angels of God.

Josephus 1:3:1 (p28 our book) mentions the discussion.

"...for many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and depisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength, for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants. But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and , being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better;-but, seeing that they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land."

Fallen angels - "the sons of God" - married into the human race and produced a race of demonic human beings. This contamination, if it extended to the entire populace, would destroy the possibility of redemption through a member of the human family." (1 P 14 He allows for Line of Seth/line of Cain in a side note. Adult student)

"Satan instigated a plan whereby a certain segment of the fallen angels should take upon themselves human flesh, marry into the human race, and produce a race of half-man half-demon beings." (p 21 Benson Adult teacher.)

The position states usually that the flood was to destroy all of mankind except Noah and family who alone had remained untainted and that the fallen angels were cast into the abyss. I Pet. 3:19; II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6.

This was the only reason for the flood.

#### PROBLEMS:

1. There is no scripture which says angels have the ability to take on human flesh.

There is nowhere that Satan is given this type of power.

If this was a possibility why isn't it happening all the time. Satan would use a tool like that constantly I would think.

2. If the judgment of the flood came upon the union and as a result of it, then why did man get judged for the wrong and the angels aren't mentioned as being judged.

(The answer to this is that the angels did get judged - they are in the pit.

Indeed, they aren't even reprimanded if they are a part of the catastrophe.

3. If this was a possibility why didn't one of the writers of scriptures tell the poor women of the

world how to tell these creatures from men so they would start hanging out with them in the first place?

4. The terminology "Sons of God" is not consistent with fallen angels!

5. If the fallen angels are the ones in the abyss then we have a question.

When did the angels fall? The normal answer is when Satan fell pre-fall of man.

So, if this be true where did these Gen. 6 angels come from.

Are they part of the original fall? If they are then we have the possibility that the occurrence can happen again today. How can a decent girl know when she is going with a fallen angel? COME ON THIS DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

The only alternative left is that there were more angels that fell - a second falling away from God by the angels.

There is no indication in the Word that there was more than one fall. Indeed the texts concerning the fall seems quite conclusive that some fell and others chose to stay with God.

Again, even if we had a second fall we have the possibility of a third and forth etc. This is an untenable position to me!

6. To say that the flood was due to fallen angels is to say men had to die because of the angels wrong. This redefines God's justice if it be true. Especially in light of the fact that God states that it was man's sin that would bring judgment. (God would not hold a possessed man guilty of things that he did because the demon forced him to do it.

6:5,6)

7. If the sin is with the angels why is God not going to strive with man. 6:3?

8. If you have the flood coming to kill off spirit beings - A PROBLEM EXISTS! HOW DO YOU KILL A SPIRIT BEING OR INDEED CAN YOU?

YOU CAN'T!

9. If a spirit could indeed join with a woman and produce offspring why assume that it would be grotesque or a giant?

10. Moses knew the idea of angels and used the term in 16:7; 24:7. So why didn't he use it here if these were indeed angels?

11. How can a spirit being change it's nature and become flesh?

God didn't do it. Christ came through a woman.

Our physical is a container of our spiritual being. Death separates and we can not rejoin our body, till God glorifies it.

SONS = LINE OF SETH, DAUGHTERS = LINE OF CAIN

THOSE HOLDING THE POSITION:

Thiessen

Jamison, Fausett and Brown (Vol. 1 p 88 col. 1)

Chrystom

Augustine

Luther

Calvin

Henstenberg

Keil

Faber

Rice, John R.

Poole

Scofield

McGee, James Vernon

This position lists usually three main arguments.

1. The setting of the passage. It follows the two lines that are mentioned. That of Cain and Seth in the previous chapters.
2. "the weakness of the objections", per Baxter p 170.
3. "the untenableness of any suggested alternative" (also Baxter p 170. He hadn't heard of my view.)

Two and three are not really arguments at all and I'm surprised that he listed them.

Zondervan Picture Dictionary p 494 mentions that the term for god in Gen 6 is the term used elsewhere in scripture for God himself, thus this would eliminate any idea of wrong to the sons.

#### PROBLEMS:

1. If you hold this position you must view all Seth's line as male and godly and all Cain's line as female and ungodly.

You might say not all but then you have ungodly in Seth's line and godly in Cain's line.

2. If you say that the flood is due to this text then you have the judgment of God upon the godly line of Seth.

This contradicts II Pet. 2:5 which mentions, "...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Gen 6:7 also indicates they all were ungodly.

3. If Godly men line intermarries ungodly women and it ends in flood:

You need either several generations for all peoples to become corrupt or you need all godly falling at one time.

Either all go at once or you have possible - several hundred years in this text. (Noah lived 950 years -- 350 after the flood.)

You need hundreds of years to have a whole civilization to decline to total wickedness.

SONS = LINE OF SETH, DAUGHTERS = WOMAN IN GENERAL

THOSE HOLDING THE POSITION:

H. C. Leupold DD in Barnes notes commentary series.

PROBLEMS:

1. If you hold this position you must view all Seth's line as male and godly and all Cain's line as female and ungodly. Really not different that Seth/Cain.

You might say not all but then you'd have ungodly in Seth's line and godly in Cain's line.

2. If you say that the flood is due to this text then you have the judgment of God upon the godly line of Seth.

This contradicts II Pet. 2:5 which mentions, "...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Gen 6:7 also indicates they all were ungodly.

SONS = GODLY MEN, DAUGHTERS = UNGODLY WOMEN

THOSE HOLDING THE POSITION:

Jews

They feel that the sons were princes, nobles, and people of honor while the daughters were females of low birth.

PROBLEMS:

1. If you hold this position you must view all godly as male and all ungodly as female.

2. If you say that the flood is due to this text then you have the judgment of God upon the godly.

This contradicts II Pet. 2:5 which mentions, "...bringing in the flood upon the world of the

ungodly."

Gen 6:7 also indicates they all were ungodly.

Ancient Mesopotamia - 1st dynasties claimed to be sons of God. Is it possible Daughters of men were godly marrying these ungodly men? (Sargon and later)

Quite possible.

Haven't seen anyone holding to this view yet.

SONS = EXTRATERESTIALS, DAUGHTERS = WOMEN

THOSE HOLDING THE POSITION:

Seventh day Adventists hold that Job 38:4-7 proves there is life on other planets thus they would believe women married extraterrestrial beings.

SONS = CAINITES, DAUGHTERS = SETHITES

THOSE HOLDING THIS VIEW:

Bishop Ellicott

SONS = ISRAELITES

THOSE HOLDING THIS POSITION:

Chriswell

PROBLEMS:

1. Israel hadn't come into existence!

FINAL POSITION TO BE DISCUSSED:

THERE IS NO PROBLEM TO BE FOUND IN THIS TEXT.

THOSE HOLDING THIS POSITION:

HELP! I'M LONELY! WON'T ANYONE JOIN ME?

The problem is a figment of your imagination and desire for the bizarre.

Most assume there is a problem here because someone has told them there is a problem here.

1. SONS = in general males of God's creation making union with daughters of men in the same way that Adam and Eve produced Cain and Abel.

In beginning -- "woman" was derived from "man".

Here it seems - "daughters" would have a similar relationship to "sons".

Luke 3:38, "Adam, who was the son of God" (The term son in this case is italics however it is indicated by the use of the term in the rest of the genealogy.)

2. Try this outline on for a moment.

6:1 is indicating the time of Adam and this text is telling us that daughters began to be born of Adam and Eve's union.

6:2 is speaking of marriages of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve and soon after the son's and daughter's of other unions.

6:3 is a statement of God that He won't always strive with man because he is flesh. This is looking to the day when man would begin to die naturally due to the aging process.

God at this point was dealing on a Spirit/flesh basis and soon due to death He would be dealing on a Spirit/spirit basis.

Indeed, there may be a large gap in time between 2 and 3.

6:4 is later in time and is referring to some of the godly men of the time that were doing great things for God.

6:5 is not connected to verse four in any way other than it is a continuation of the record. It is simply beginning a new phase of what Moses is recording for the Lord. It may be generations later as far as that goes.

This is a time when man followed his true sinful nature to the depths that God had to judge.

3. The possibility of intermarriage between the Seth and Cain line may be there.

The phrases, "they were fair" and "took them wives of all whom they chose" may indicate that there may have been problems that developed into the wickedness that God judged later however there is no hint that any mutants were around.

I don't personally feel that there is any wrong indicated even in the above phrases.

4. We state that we believe in literal interpretation which takes the easy plain meaning of a text as the proper meaning.

How in the world can you read into this text so much and still hold to the literal, plain, and easy meaning of scripture?

5. In reference to Job and his use of sons of god can this position answer the term being used of angels. YES!

The term "son of man" is used over and over in Ezek. for a human prophet while it is used over and over by the Lord Jesus to identify Himself the God of the universe. There can be a dual usage of terms in the Bible.

In Gen 6 it is a term for men while in Job it is a term that Job used to describe angels.

I would say that Job is in the time of the early patriarchs and not as early as Gen 6.

6. In reference to Job and his use of sons of God:

The term sons of god can have a dual usage. Job seems to use it of angels. Gen 6 uses it of men and men only.

Hosea 1:10 says of Isr. "sons of the living God" men. New Testament uses the term of men 6 times.

I suspect that Job is a contemporary of the patriarchs rather than of this generation. The idea of

the sons of god in Job 1 being men is interesting, but I'm not sure Job could be dated back that far.

The fact that terms can have a dual usage is seen in the term "son of man."

Son of man is a title that is used repeatedly in the book of Ezek. for Ezekiel himself, yet in the Gospels the term "son of man" is used exclusively by Christ of Himself. We have in Ezek. the term applied to a man and in the Gospels applied to God.

7. Intermarriage has never culminated in such judgment - Solomon, Ezra/Nehem. times, today we have intermarriage between peoples and races and no judgments are forthcoming.

This would be at best an unequally yoked marriage of saved and unsaved.

IT MIGHT BLOW YOUR MIND TO KNOW THAT Davis in his book states that there is not enough evidence to say which position is correct. Again, I might mention that he hasn't heard my position.

8. We have seen that the Seth or Godly idea demands probably hundreds of years so why not give the text literal interpretation and hundreds of years?

If the Seth position can have them so can I!!!!

9. Notice that chapter five returns clear back to Adam for an introduction of the chapter.

It would not be out of line to say that 6:1-4 are introductory to the rest of chapter 6.

You will find that the Old Testament writers introduce things then go back and fill in details. They also take great pains to intro things. Indeed the New Testament writers of the Gospels took great pains to introduce the Messiah. One even goes back to Adam.

10. Notice that Adam is referred to as created by God.

If you go back to 2:22 you will notice that woman is made of man, by God.

This could well explain the thought of the terms. Sons of God referring to the men created by God and daughters of men referring to the fact that woman came from man.

11. The men of renown of verse four are far removed from the total corruption of verse five.

Something drastic had to have happened between the two verses and the only logical explanation to me is that there is a great period of time between the two verses.

Again to have amounts of time between verses is not uncommon in the Old Testament. Indeed some of the prophets talk about the coming of Christ in relation to his birth and manhood, yet in the same verse refer to his return in glory 1900 + years later.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

1. There is no problem in this text unless you read one into it.
2. Beware commentators that find more than a text gives. They are not uncommon!
3. Yes, I'm comfortable being the one and only that holds to this position!

Paranoid yes, but comfortable.

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m10450

"THERE'S GOOD MONEY IN THAT!" Stanley L. Derickson

In the 1960's when I told my unsaved father that I was planning to go off to Bible College to become a preacher, his reply was, "Well, I guess there is good money in that."

He was a very precise man in what he said, and I knew that his comment was based on his

knowledge of the liberal and denominational preachers in our small town.

In my own mind I knew that this was not true of the Independent Bible Church ministers that I was associated with.

The concern that precipitates this article is the fact that I have realized my own thoughts of the '60's are no longer true. The Independent Bible Church ministers are now making good money, indeed in many cases some of the younger ones are demanding it.

I was shocked when I found a young pastor I was visiting spent an entire two-day visit talking about the material end of the church he was going to be pastoring. He spoke at length of the work the people were doing to redecorate the parsonage for them. His pay package was pretty good in his mind until he received a call from one of his friends about the pay package that he had been offered. It was bigger than the young pastor's!

REALLY! Pay packages, insurance allowances, car allowances, retirement packages, medical insurances, housing allowances, conference costs, and vacation pay! Where do we get off?

Matt 6:33 tells us that if we seek HIS kingdom HE will take care of our needs. God has been pleased to allow us to assist Him in the building of HIS church and we are demanding that the church care for our needs!

I recently was told of a man that had candidated and had been called to pastor the church, but he proceeded to hold out for more insurance money. Just what are we telling our parishioners? It would seem that the people are being told that they must pay for their shepherding, and we might say in some cases pay dearly. Not only this but the people are being told that the call to a ministry is hinged on money.

A missionary told me that he had recently spoken to a pastor that was leaving his church because he couldn't make it on his present salary. The new church was going to pay him more money. The missionary asked the pastor how much he was making where he was. The reply was, "\$40,000 per year."

It is obvious to all that these examples are the minority or at least we trust that they are; however the minority usually becomes the majority as a problem grows.

If there are attitudes that are perpetuating this DESIRE, or in some cases the DEMAND for material compensation, may it be suggested that there are three observable attitudes within the church that may be a part of the problem.

#### MATERIALISH ATTITUDES:

Materialism has been with us in growing amounts for many years, but the tide seems to be swamping some in this day. Many are so tied up in the material world that they have little time for the spiritual world and the activities of the church.

Indeed, in some of our churches we seem to tend to strengthen the world's draw by planning our activities within the world's criteria. There are pizza parties, there are catered banquets, there are rented facilities and catered get-togethers, there are retreats, there are all sorts of fun activities that exclude the people that don't have the money to participate.

Our churches are getting into the electronic revolution and most have a TV set or two with a VCR, sound systems that run into the thousands of dollars, etc. Many have projection systems that are run by computers. The padded pews, carpeted classrooms, bigger and better buildings might even relate.

#### HUMANISH ATTITUDES:

The thought of humanism that the individual is all-important has certainly made its inroads into the Lord's work in this country. The believer feels that he is an end unto himself and must make himself comfortable, make himself self-sufficient and in general be free from the restraints of the church.

This thought is causing much of the personal sin in peoples' lives. They have no authority over them, not even God, and they can do their own thing as they feel right in doing it.

#### SELFISH ATTITUDES:

The humanish attitude results in the thought that "I am important" and "everything that I do must

benefit ME!" Heaven forbid that we get involved in someone else's life. That would take time away from ME!

Is this not what we viewed in the examples set forth early in the article? I want more money, I want adequate insurance, I want a bigger pay package!

This certainly sounds like Mark 10:21 doesn't it? Let me quote that for you in closing, "Then Jesus, beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

Of course that was spoken in the kingdom context and some might not want to apply that to our time so let's also take a look at Philippians 4:11-14, "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, in this to be content.

"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

"I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me."

It would seem that Paul was satisfied with the pay package that GOD was pleased to give him.

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M10500

TITLE: NON

OUTLINE:

1. NON-CHRISTIAN

2. NON-INVOLVEMENT

3. NON-CENTS
4. NON-FORGIVENESS
5. NONCHALANT
6. NON-COMMUNICANT
7. NON-COMS
8. NON-COMBATANTS
9. NON-ADULT
10. NONAGON
11. NON-APPEARANCE
12. NON-COMPLIANCE
13. NON-CONCURRENCE
14. NON-CONDUCTOR
15. NON-EFFECTIVE
16. NON-ELASTIC
17. NON-ENTITY
18. NON-FEASANCE

In relation to our study on commitment let us consider the contents of this concoction.

"LACK OF COMMITMENT CAN CREAM THE CROP, BUT CONSECRATION COULD  
CREATE CROWNS"

But on the contrary if the devil hasn't conned you, you must concede, that is if you have a conscience, that you ought to consider your consecration to God.

Even though you contribute and even though you consent to God you cannot conceal your lack of concern for your contemporary congregation. You might also conclude that the devil will give no concession even though he is condemned.

The Trinity had a conference to conceive a concise concept to conciliate the convicts and God. Christ consented to condescend and converge on mankind to set a concrete contact with man.

The devil and his contingency continued to conduct their contamination program. He conjured false doctrine and contradicted Christ's contribution. He conspired and contrived to conduce and convince men to condone their condemned condition.

Those that concurred connected themselves with his confederacy. These were constrained to join constantly in the conflict to confound and confuse the contrite. Their conspicuous contempt consumed them in their conceit.

Those that confess and put their confidence in Christ begin their convalescence. They that concentrated and contemplated the consequences became conscious of the content of the devil's contract and its context. The contest was something that confirmed God and conquered the controvert.

When the great congress convenes a great concert which contains the great consolidation will be held. This will confront the contrary and will be a contrast between God's conservative followers and the devil's contraband. This will convey consternation to the devil and congratulations to God. For those that construed correctly this is the consummation of God's control.

The construction of the confines to constrict the devil and his conclave are not conjecture nor concoction. Don't let the devil confiscate your consecration or change the contour of your mind. Condense your excuses and congeal your commitment to Christ.

Written by two conscious, consenting converts.

"NON" (NON-COMMITMENT)

I would like to have a little fun with words as we think along the lines of commitment in this

study.

Intro: Some of you may know that we have a black ball of fur and scruff that we call a dog.

This dog at one time was committed to digging holes. He would dig a hole every chance He had.

If you left him out long enough he would even dig several holes. HE WAS COMMITTED TO DIGGING HOLES.

Big holes, little holes, long holes, and deep holes. He reminded me of that old chorus "DEEP AND WIDE."

As we began scolding him and punishing him he was not deterred in the least. He would just dig very small shallow ones that you weren't sure if they were new or old holes. He also began to dig his holes under the deck instead of out in the open.

He was totally committed to the destruction of the surface of our yard.

He was committed to digging holes.

How committed are we to serving the Lord that saved us?

Now I am not relating a dog to a Bible verse but I would like to read about a man that was totally sold out to the Lord.

Col. 4:12,13, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greeteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hieraplolis."

NOW ON THE OTHER HAND THE WORLD IS FULL OF NON-COMMITMENT.

The US will not commit itself militarily.

Congressmen won't commit themselves on anything except possibly lying.

Citizens won't commit themselves when they see crime happen.

Judges won't commit criminals to prison.

Businessmen won't commit themselves to back up their work or product.

Men and Women won't commit themselves to lasting things like marriage.

Teenagers won't commit themselves to obedience to their parents.

Parents won't commit themselves to raising their kids properly. CHRISTIANS SEEM TO BE HAVING PROBLEMS IN THIS AREA ALSO!

Pastors won't commit themselves to a stand on the issues.

Pastors and Christian workers won't commit themselves to more than a year or so to a ministry before moving on.

Church boards won't commit themselves to much more than increasing the debt or stalling progress.

Church members just won't commit themselves to help out, to contrite, to witness, to anything except consume what others prepare spiritually.

Today let's consider for a moment the question of WHY WOULD A CHURCHGOER BE NON-COMMITTED?

## WHY WOULD A CHURCHGOER BE NON-COMMITTED?

1. The primary reason might be that they are NON-CHRISTIAN.

The unsaved can be committed to the church, but they can never be truly committed unless they are born again by the blood of the Lamb!

I have spent a lot of time on the internet lately and am finding there is a wide divergence on what a Christian is. I have been reading notes on one of the forums. A couple of conservative believers have been discussing back and forth with men that believe that you must be baptized to enter the kingdom of God.

The Bible is quite clear that salvation is by grace not of works - the grace of God is where salvation comes from not something that we do to attain it. Baptism is only a step of obedience to the Word of God.

Accepting the fact that Christ was God come in the flesh to die for your sin is the one and only requirement for salvation.

If you are born again and a church attender and non-committed you may be suffering from the "NON SYNDROME.

2. NON-INVOLVEMENT will lead to NON-COMMITMENT.

As you give up regular attendance to the Word at home and to the preaching at Church you will lose your involvement with God and commitment slips away.

The other side of this will be total involvement in the church activities. This will mean that you are fellowshiping with believers and being exposed to the Word of God and being challenged spiritually.

The result will be a growing desire to commit yourself to the Lord and his work.

3. NON-CENTS can lead to NON-COMMITMENT.

As your giving dwindles so dwindles part of your blessing from God.

One way to become committed to missions is to start supporting missionaries.

You become interested in their ministry - their people and praying for them will usually result.

A prayerful heart is a moldable heart and Isa. tells us that God is the potter. (Isa. 64:8)

Mal. 3:8-10 speaks of giving and blessing. Yes, this is an Old Testament concept, yet has New Testament ramifications.

Have you ever heard of an unsatisfied giver? NO!

Have you ever heard of a church that was supporting missions heavily that was having money problems? None in my 20 plus years in the ministry.

One of the main factors in our involvement in missions is the fact that we started supporting missionaries many years ago. We became interested in their ministry and became challenged with the needs of the world.

4. NON-FORGIVENESS leaves many Christians outside of God's best for them.

Mk. 11:25,26 "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have anything against any, that your Father also, who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, who is in heaven, forgive your trespasses."

Only by YOUR forgiveness of ALL who have wronged you can God forgive you.

You are not in complete fellowship with Him unless you forgive them and He forgives you.

Not only is your fellowship hindered, but you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit in your daily walk.

5. The key to getting the right guy or gal to pay attention to you when you are dating is to be NONCHALANT.

This means that you act as if you don't care - play it cool.

Be indifferent. Remember that dog I mentioned? When he would see me looking at his holes, he would be so nonchalant you'd think he had disappeared.

Because Christians don't care or because they grow cold they don't commit themselves.

Rev. 3:15,16 speaks of this type of Christian. Christ will spue them out of His mouth!

Matt. 24:12,13 says sin will turn some cold in the end times. There's no reason to believe sin won't turn us or leave us cold now!

Being cool and indifferent may be good for dating, but is terrible for the believer.

**GET INVOLVED! GET EXCITED! LET THE LORD PUT SOME REAL DRIVE INTO YOUR LIFE!**

6. NON-COMMUNICANTE is a long word to say prayerless.

One that is not in direct communication with God is one that is not committed.

On your knees once per day or as some do - pray all day as well as their quiet times.

If you aren't committed to your prayer closet you will not be committed to much of anything

spiritual.

If you do not have a regular quiet time please try it. Take a time during the day - preferably early in the morning when you can find a quiet spot just for you and the Lord and commit yourself to meeting Him there every day. Make that time of day special. Don't allow anything to interfere.

7. In the Armed Forces they have NON-COMS. This is a term that is short for non-commissioned officers.

They are ones not under commission.

Many Christians today act as though they have never been commissioned.

They certainly have been commissioned. They just have not realized it or are ignoring their commission.

Mk. 16:15, "And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

This verse is a commission to every single Christian, but many have never accepted it as their responsibility.

If you aren't committed to doing all you can for missions then take time to consider it. Take the effort to pray and commit yourself to the Lord's work.

Missions is why Christ came to die on the cross. Read Jn. 3:16! The world is the view!

8. Some feel there are plenty of Pastors and Missionaries around to do the work so they relax.

These, in the military are termed NON-COMBATANTS. They are civilians living in a place occupied by troops.

Eph. 6:11 tells us to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil."

Vs. 12-20 speak of the armor itself. God didn't prepare recliners for NONCOMBATANTS, only armor for His soldiers. He only provided ARMOR.

We as believers are in the middle of a spiritual conflict that is going on. We are either in armor standing against the enemy or sitting in OUR easy chair allowing Satan to take ground.

For those that think there are enough pastors I say consider that 1/2 the world has not heard the Gospel, and that we have 60,000 closed churches in America today.

Don't sit any longer. Pick up the armor and stand against the wiles of the Devil and take your commission seriously.

9. The Corinthian church had an immaturity problem. NON-ADULT characteristics in the spiritual life will keep Christians from true commitment.

They can be challenged to commit themselves to what they know!

Any place you see spiritual immaturity it is your place to begin training that person so that they can be mature and be productive as a believer.

10. Then we have the NONAGON. You've heard of hexagons, pentagons and octagons but we want to look at the NONAGON.

You ask what does a nonagon have to do with commitment.

Let me tell you.

First of all a nonagon has nine sides.

Still puzzled?

Well what are sides but lines? The nonagon also has nine angles.

Ask a Christian to do something in the church and all you get are lines and angles. They just aren't going to get involved in doing something.

Isn't that what Moses gave God - But Lord I can't talk well enough!

Isn't that what Peter gave those asking him if he were a disciple.

Isn't that what we give God when He tries to move in our lives?

11. A.W.O.L. means Absent Without Leave. NON-APPEARANCE at church is a hindrance to any Christian's life.

Some of us aren't AWOL we're just P.O.W.'s or M.I.A.'s.

Church attendance is a way to solidify your Christian life.

Fellowship in the Word and with one another is imperative.

12. NON-COMPLIANCE to God's laws and requirements is sin and a sinful life can never be completely committed to God.

The first thing we tell people when we witness is that SIN separates them from God. After we're saved it separates us from his fellowship.

As you hear the Word and you realize that you have sin in your life take time to meet with the Lord and clean things out so you may be on the right track with Him.

13. Someone that knows God's will for their life that refuses to do it is guilty of NON-CONCURRENCE.

He does not agree with God on what he should do.

"NO," is not an acceptable answer to the Lord's leading.

I fear for that person's health and life.

14. In heating and electricity we have a term called conductor. A conductor is a substance that will transmit or conduct heat or electricity easily.

A NON-CONDUCTOR is a substance that resists transfer of heat or electricity.

You are a poor conductor of electricity. That is why it hurts so much when you get shocked. That electricity really has to push and shove its way through your body.

The Holy Spirit, if allowed freedom can conduct God's business with you. He can transfer your faith to others through you.

If he has no freedom then you are a NON-CONDUCTOR. You resist Him.

As with electricity if you're a poor conductor you will have much more pain. You will never be really happy.

15. The previous problem produces the problem of NON-EFFECTIVENESS. Your Spiritual life is at a standstill - you can't witness effectively - you can't teach effectively - you can't do anything for God effectively.

16. One of the great hindrances to progress in older churches is the quality of being NON-ELASTIC. Unchangeable.

The seven last words of a dying church are "WE'VE NEVER DONE IT THAT WAY BEFORE."  
Don't block progress unless it is non-scriptural.

I have suggested churches try something new and they have turned it down strictly because they've never done it that way before.

While on deputation I hit upon an idea that was new. I suggested a mini-missions conference. I would come for Sunday through Wednesday and have three sessions on Sunday then one Monday and one Tuesday then have a potluck and session on Wed.

Only one church tried it. It was a new young church that would try anything. They loved it and the people were really challenged by the conference.

I am certain many churches did not like the idea, JUST because they hadn't heard of it before.

17. If many of these things are present in your life then you are a NON-ENTITY before God.

NON-ENTITY is defined in two ways:

NON-EXISTENCE or a thing that doesn't exist.

A person utterly without consequence or importance. This is not to say you are unimportant to God but as a servant your service is without consequence - you can do nothing of any importance.

God can draw some good out of what you do but it is purely accidental on your part if you are in this shape.

18. NON-FEASANCE is "omission of performance of legal duty." We are bought with a price - we are servants - we are responsible to serve the one that bought us.

By service it is not meant an hour of two a week.

It means lots of time.

It means all the time that you can spare.

It means all your life!

Getting up to go to work in the morning should be your gift to God. You should view your work as God's place for you unless He should lead you to something else.

My thoughts do not come from a knowledge of you or your church.

They come out of a number of years of observing Christians and churches in general.

If there has been anything that has struck a string in your life then speak to the Lord about it soon.

**SOMETHING HAS TO BE WRONG WITH THE CHURCH IN AMERICA!**

In many ways the church of America is doing wondrous things however in other ways one is left to wonder.

1. When I see that numerically the church is a dying organism I must wonder. We aren't even reproducing ourselves fast enough to keep up with the population growth.

Our son just ran across a woman that believes that God wants Christian women to have lots of babies so the church would grow. Now think about that for a moment. There is no guarantee that a baby born into a Christian home is going to become a Christian. That is the hope, that is the prayer, that is the work of the parent, but there is no guarantee.

We are to be reproducing ourselves spiritually!

2. When I see that there are lost souls in America that have never heard the simple Gospel -- I

must wonder.

3. When I see that over half the worlds population has never heard the name Jesus Christ -- I must wonder.

4. When I see that there are dozens and dozens of missionaries trained and ready to go to the field but can't because they lack support -- I must wonder.

5. When I see that there are veteran missionaries that can't return to the field because their supporters have dropped away and they can't find new ones -- I must wonder.

6. When I see that there are 60,000 closed churches in America today -- I must wonder.

7. When I see that there is more spent on animal care in this country than the total of missions work in the world -- I must wonder.

8. When I see that churches look to the budget for funds rather than the Lord in faith for provision -- I must wonder.

9. When I see that there are dozens of pastors and missionaries leaving the ministry for good -- I must wonder.

DOES IT MAKE YOU WONDER?

Something has to be wrong -- even when so much is so right with the church -- SOMETHING HAS TO BE WRONG!

I think some of the observations we've considered in this study relate directly to the problems we've observed in the church!

I'm sure that if you feel you need to speak to someone this morning about salvation or about dedication that one of the men of the church would really like to speak with you before you

leave. God is looking for servants.

PEOPLE THAT REALIZE THAT HE BOUGHT AND PAID FOR THEM.

PEOPLE THAT ARE WILLING TO SAY -- WHATEVER YOU SAY LORD!

NOT SUPERSAINTS - JUST PLAINFOLK LIKE YOU AND ME -- SERVANTS!

COMMITTED SERVANTS!

BE A NON-CONFORMIST ----- BE COMMITTED!

In closing I would like to remind you of some men that were committed to the forming of this country as a free nation.

I would like to mention some of the signers of the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

When they signed that document, they signed, among other things, a phrase toward the end that stated that they were pledging their life, their fortune and their sacred honor upon that document.

Let me tell you their sacred honor meant much more to those men than most peoples names mean to them today!

Let's consider some of these men that faced loss of all and death for their ideals and desires for this country.

(From a reprint of part of a Paul Harvey "THE REST OF THE STORY" in Pulpit Helps I think.)

Carter Braxton: He lost his sailing fleet, properties and home to pay his debts that resulted from his commitment to this country.

Thomas Lynch, Jr.: After signing the document his health took him to France for recuperation. His ship never arrived.

Thomas McKean: He had to move his family five times in five months. He served in congress at no pay while his family lived in poverty.

Thomas Nelson: Borrowed on his own name and properties 2 million dollars to help finance the war. He repaid all of it on his own and the nation never reimbursed him. In the last days of the war Nelson told Gen. Washington to destroy his home because the enemy was inside.

He died bankrupt.

Francis Hopkinson: Lost his home.

Francis Lewis: Lost his home. His wife was imprisoned and died.

Richard Stockton: Was captured and mistreated. His health broken he died early and his estate was sacked.

Thomas Heyward, Jr.: Was captured.

John Hart: Driven from his home while his wife was on her death bed. The thirteen children scattered all directions. After months of hiding he returned to find his wife dead, his children gone and his estate gone.

Lewis Morris: Lost his home, properties and family.

Philip Livingston: Died within a few months due to the hardships of the war.

John Hancock: Lost all when Boston burned.

"Of the fifty-six, few were long to survive. Five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes...sacked, looted, occupied by the enemy, or burned. Two lost their sons in the army. One had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six died in the war, from its hardships or from its more merciful bullets."

If these men were willing to stake their lives, their fortunes, and their names on this country, THEN WHY ARE WE SO HESITANT TO STAKE OUR LIVES, OUR FORTUNES, AND OUR NAMES on the Lord Jesus Christ that saved our miserable souls? And don't tell me you can stake your life, your fortune and your name on the Lord in two hours a week at church!

Discipleship costs. It costs in time, in emotional involvement, and in many other ways.

How about checking out your commitment this week?

I would like to close with some thoughts from a day when commitment was the normal thing for a Christian.

These are questions from the Holy Club of Oxford in John Wesley's day. Each member asked the questions of themselves daily while in private.

"Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am a better man than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?"

"Am I honest in all my acts or words, or do I exaggerate?"

"Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?"

"Can I be trusted?"

"Am I a slave to dress, friends, work or habits?"

"Am I self conscious, self pitying, or self justifying?"

"Did the Bible live in me today?

"Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?

"Am I enjoying prayer?

"When did I last speak to somebody else with the object of trying to win that person for Christ?

"Am I making contacts with other people and using them for the Master's Glory?

"Do I pray about the money I spend?

"Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?

"Do I disobey God in anything?

"Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?

"Am I defeated in any part of my life? Am I jealous, impure, critical,  
irritable, touchy or distrustful?

"How do I spend my spare time?

"Am I proud? Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?

"Is there anybody whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard?  
If so, what am I doing about it?

"Do I grumble or complain constantly?"

"Is Christ real to me?"

MOST BELIEVER'S QUIET TIMES ARE SO SHORT THEY COULDN'T EVEN READ THAT LIST MUCH LESS CONSIDER IT!

BE A NON-CONFORMIST -- BE COMMITTED!

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m10550

THE CUTTING EDGE - The internet and the Christian tongue

By Stanley L. Derickson copyright 1997

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In reading several Christian boards and forums on the Internet over the last few months, I have made some observations. I would like to list them for you as if I were an alien from outer space, my only exposure to mankind is reading these Christian boards and forums. Just imagine that I am sending a report of my observations back to my superiors on my home planet.

1. Here on this planet there are two types of beings. They call themselves "Lost" and "Christian."
2. Christians disagree often. They don't seem to like each other much. They become obnoxious with one another - very sharp tongued.
3. Christians are very self centered. They drive people away from themselves by their actions and words.
4. Christians confuse the Lost people that ask them questions.
5. Christians say they love one another, but they treat one another as though they are unlovely.

6. When Christians have discussions they dwell on minute detail, while ignoring great vistas of information. They debate and re-debate with a slight twist to attempt to cover up the fact that it is the same debate. The Lost tell me they are foolish, even make fun of their antics.

Let's elaborate on the above list for just a moment before considering how we can resolve this awful Christian Internet observation. The points mentioned are fairly self explanatory. I have observed rude, obnoxious, and offensive words on these boards, and all in the name of "discussion" or "debate" or "instruction." The problem is that with the attitudes displayed, there is little positive instruction happening.

I observed a new Christian ask a simple question of doctrine. Within three days he was confronted with several very pointed and detailed postings that only caused confusion. When Christian believers enter into these public discussions we need to remember our responses can and probably do affect lives. There are many people reading these boards and not participating - making judgments. Also consider that we are not just crossing swords with another Christian, our blades are hitting those we don't even see.

I've also read those passing judgment on one another, telling people they are going to hell because the same detail of doctrine. They might as well say to each other, "go to hell." What kind of public Christian witness is that? We shouldn't say such things in public - or dare we even think such things in the recesses of our minds.

Why are Christians so viscous when they are shielded from public scrutiny? God knows what is going on even if the people on these boards can't track you down and confront you personally.

## THE QUESTION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

A divisive person in a local church should be subject to church discipline. In Cyberspace we have no such luxury, we have no recourse concerning the offenders. The only method of confrontation is by posted message. Or is there something more we can do?

I suggest that in the church discipline process, the end result is for the unrepentant person to be cut off from the church body (Matthew 18:15-17). However, in these matters I must be careful not to equate Internet discussion boards with a local church. There is no organized church that can take disciplinary actions on the Internet, but a similar process might used.

In cyberspace we might consider the same biblical principle. First, confront the erring person. If there is no change, then confront them again with witnesses. If still no change, then cut them off - don't read their postings, don't respond to their postings, and don't respond if they email you. I suggest one further step: contact the board operator and ask them to intercede.

Within church discipline there is also the desired process of restoration. Again, following a similar process, a group of regulars should restore to fellowship one that has admitted his error, apologized to the members of the board and sought reconciliation with His Lord.

Again, I would stress that I am not suggesting that these boards/forums are a church, nor do I suggest that any of us has authority over another believer in these public areas - however this discipline principle is a biblical principle. This process may or may not bring them to consider what they have been doing on the net. But whatever process we use, we need to do something to stop the offending that continues every daily. Christian believers are to act appropriately, and when they don't they need to be called on their error.

#### CONSIDER THIS

I'll end with some items for us to consider as we place our thoughts on the Internet. If each of us would give more consideration for our actions we might eliminate some of these problems.

1. Each time I submit a message to a board/forum, do I read it from someone else's viewpoint? From a lost person's viewpoint? From a new Christian's viewpoint?
2. Am I glorifying God or am I glorifying myself in this posting?
3. Is there anything offensive in this posting?
4. Can I swing this discussion into an area that would be more informative or edifying?

Please understand, I am not suggesting that we compromise our beliefs as we meet differing

beliefs, but we can certainly do it in a much nicer, kinder way.

I trust that we might all mirror the image of Jesus Christ as we interact with each another on the Internet. Our actions could well draw others to our Savior as well - the ultimate prize of Spirit led communications.

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m10600

DAD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS By Stanley L. Derickson

I've recently learned of a new Sunday school class concept that may be of interest to many in the Christian Education field.

It is a system that takes very little work. It is a system that takes very little planning. It is a system that takes no teacher.

I suspect that some are interested in this concept already.

While visiting in Washington, my wife overheard someone mention that he was going to attend his dad's Sunday school class.

She asked what class the father went to. The person grinned and explained that their church has elective Sunday school classes for the adults. Many of the adults are, for one reason or another, not totally interested in the classes offered. Many of the adults have started taking their Sunday school hour at the nearby restaurant. Indeed, the number of church people has become so consistent that the restaurant now reserves tables for them every Sunday.

Humorous? Yes! In truth, SAD!

This illustration is given only to bring our thought to what might be going on in our own churches. Indeed, in other churches it has been observed that about as many leave after Sunday school as arrive for church between Sunday school and church.

What might we learn from these observations? At the very least we should be considering the

why of people not being interested in Sunday school and/or church. The church leadership after all is to lead and feed the sheep. If the sheep are straying, it is the responsibility of the shepherd to not only draw them back to the flock, but to determine what is enticing them away from the flock, or on the other hand what may be causing them to feel they want to leave the flock.

There are two suggestions to help in this problem, or possible problem, within our churches. We need to evaluate our present programs, and if necessary reorient them to adequately feed and nurture the believers.

## EVALUATION

It would be surprising if more than a few of our churches ever evaluate the effectiveness of their ministries.

The obvious is that we need to assure ourselves that our elective programs, and other programs, are as effective, and as fruit-producing, as we assume they are.

There are a number of reasons why this situation could occur - even in your church.

1. Elective classes that are ineffective in capturing the interest and attention of people. When teaching audio-visuals class I enjoy taking great efforts to emphasize that using audiotapes in classes is not the best method for the entire hour. The boring and lack of attention aspects are usually promoted at the end of the class period. The following time that the class meets, an audiotape is used. The students usually enjoy the humor, but are soon involved in the practical understanding of how boring audiotapes can be.

Churches often use classes and materials that seem on the surface to be good, yet consider the class very little. How will the class react to this material? Or might it be asked if they will find it practical.

For example using a series on raising children with a class of believers that have all of their children in High school or college may not be the wisest option for you to take.

2. Inefficient teaching staff. This is not meant as a question as to the teaching staff's intentions or

devotion. It is to point out that the most devoted, and best intentioned person cannot teach efficiently if they are not properly trained in at least some of the basics.

I recently came across a quote that is memorable. I do not remember where I saw it, but share it for your consideration. "Sanctified incompetence is still incompetence."

3. Lack of spiritual depth of individual believers. We all too often place new converts in classes where they are not even able to tread water. The instituting of new convert classes should prepare the new believer for the classes that they need to continue to grow.

One of the main premises of education is to build upon that which is known. You haven't seen too many grade schools starting students on square root. They begin by teaching the student the concept of numbers then move to the most basic of mathematics functions.

4. Uninteresting topics. It has been observed by some that an adult over twenty years in a Sunday school may have studied Ezra and Nehemiah four times and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit at least that many times.

Yes, Ezra, Nehemiah and the Holy Spirit are important studies for the believer, however we tend to overdo some studies to the boredom of the students.

5. Lack of challenge. Sitting for 60 minutes in a not-so-interesting class, with no involvement, can be hard on more than the physical posterior, indeed, spiritual posteriors may be numbed as well. This may give us a clue to the lack of involvement of some adults in some of our well-planned programs.

Evaluation may even mean going to your people to find out what they need to help them in their spiritual walk and education. A number of years ago a large church Christian Education committee called for a meeting of delegates from each adult class to gather input as to what the classes needed and felt they would like in their classes. The meeting was set and the delegates gave idea after idea to the committee. The committee chairman took the remainder of the meeting to tell the delegates what the committee was going to do in the coming months. The plans of the committee resembled little the ideas and needs of the class delegates.

The necessity of our day is to listen and respond to the needs of the people rather than go forward

with OUR plan and goal.

## REORIENTATION

The evaluation may find all of your programs in fine shape, however if you find problems you most certainly need to begin to make some changes.

It might move some to consider more informal learning situations where people can interact and share problems and solutions for their troubles (that they have found) in the Word.

In a Sunday School class a number of years ago a lady that had been in the church for years stood and declared that she really had a struggle understanding a certain doctrine that had been mentioned in class. The teacher promptly moved on with his next point. If needs aren't being met as they are shared, we are in essence stating that, "We aren't interested in your needs."

Part of the problem in churches using elective systems for their adults is that they have no curriculum. They simply view what is on the market, and pick and choose what they think might work.

The term curriculum comes from a term that refers to the racetrack. It simply means that a curriculum is a track, or course, which is laid out to guide the student to some end.

Indeed, when you watch the Daytona 500, or the Olympic runners running around the track you are watching the drivers and runners follow their curriculum. Might we observe the obvious comparison to some Sunday school curriculums - they lead people in circles.

It is not the point of this article to sell publishers' curriculums, but it might bring some to realize that a course is of prime importance in getting our believers from one point to another in their spiritual education.

There are many possible solutions to the Sunday school situation that was cited, including erecting your church building fifteen miles from the nearest restaurant. However it would seem through evaluation and reorientation such a situation might be corrected, or even better, avoided.

Too often we pay little attention to the success of our adult programs and assume all is well. May we be sure to feed the flock while we begin to observe the straying sheep, and seek to lead them back into the flock of our Master.

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M010650

TITLE: SOUNDING OFF ABOUT SANE SOUND

By Stanley L. Derickson

The other day I was walking into the neighborhood supermarket and a little Volkswagen Rabbit drove through. The music emanating from that little car was overwhelming. The bass beat was such that when I looked at the car I was wondering if the car would be bouncing. As it drove by I looked into the rear deck area and the usual cargo cover had been removed and a speaker was spilling over into the back seat area.

So, why did I bring up this subject? My mind naturally moved to the thought that this was just a sign of the times and our young people. Sunday morning I sat down to worship and how about it - BOOM-BOOM- BOOM during the choir special. The bass in the sound system had to have matched if not outdone the resounding reverberations from the Rabbit.

The soundman had the canned music cranked up to a level where I was able to catch only a few words from the choir - not a small choir, but about forty voices. After trying to catch a few words I gave up and looked around at the other frustrated worshipers.

A little later in the service a young lady proceeded to the platform and sang a beautiful song of commitment to showing forth the love of Christ. Phrases like "seeing Christ through her" - "her showing the love of Christ" - "reaching others" - such a song, and from the woman that we, the newcomers, had attempted, in vain, to speak to three times before the services began.

The point? What are we doing in the area of music in our churches? The speaker systems can run into the big money, the soundboards can be several thousand dollars, and the result can be painful to sensitive ears. I was given a tour of a church that had spent over \$40,000 on their sound system. (That would support two missionary families on the field for a year.)

The use of sound in church services has developed in different ways over the years. John the Baptist for example used the SX-VOCAL system. Later as megaphones were discovered I'm sure someone used it to reach a little larger crowd. In the early days of crowds the amphitheater was a useful tool as well. Soon things developed into the amplifier. Public usage of electronics was not so much for quality, as for volume and reaching power.

Somewhere along the line the thought of a "Sound System" dawned. The PA or Public Address system was for reaching those crowds with little regard to quality. The sound system concept was developed in churches and other areas where the natural quality of sound was the criteria. The desired result was for everyone in a large area to hear the speaker as naturally as possible - as if you were right in front of the person talking.

In recent years we seem to be regressing back to the thought of loudness with little respect for quality. When the canned music is cranked up the vocalist had better swallow that mike to be heard. Don't assume I am against canned music, sound systems etc. I wonder however just how these items are used and to what effect they are used.

Our attention might go to Ephesians 5:18-19, "And be not drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

A few thoughts. "...in which is excess...." I won't comment on that.

"...making melody in your heart...." I won't suggest that the volume vibrates our inner organs, but there is a possibility in the reality of that comment. Webster in his Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary mentions concerning melody, "a sweet or agreeable succession or arrangement of sounds...." I assume that the apostle Paul was speaking of melody that is acceptable to all and pleasing to all rather than sounds that are having a divisive effect in our churches.

Recently in a church in the Midwest we were introduced to a service that was a little different. It consisted of the usual offering, announcements, and sermon, but the song time was about an hour long with keyboard, guitars, piano and organ. Much of the time was spent standing as we sang. In viewing the congregation I noticed that many were not singing, and several were seated. Before the song time was over most of the middle age to older people had seated themselves and had stopped singing. Need we assume very much to suggest that there is friction in that church over the music?

The question is this, just how do we update our services in a way that is acceptable to all?

The common answer is to use a mixture of the old standards and the contemporary choruses. This seems to work well in many churches.

There is also a need for those choosing music for the services to consider the meaningfulness of the words in the music we sing. Some of the contemporary choruses when sung reverently can be very meaningful to the worshipper, however some of the songs have words that are as meaningful as nausea.

It has been observed over time that the churches that have added the trendy music to draw young people and young couples have not drawn any great numbers of either, but in some cases have

lost middle aged and older members. Being a student of logic, I always ask why, and the answer seems somewhat obvious. I have also observed that the singing in churches that concentrate on the "up to date" have some very strong singing services when they have an old hymn night. The young people are usually joining right in with the enjoyment.

Drop the newer music? No, just be careful how and why you use it. Junk the sound system? No, just have operators that listen for a resultant quality rather than quantity. Go back to traditional services? Not necessarily. If the new forms are relevant to the congregation then the worship will normally be more meaningful, however if the new forms are thrust (Example: Rock and roll/guitar version of the doxology.) upon unresponsive congregations there may well be friction.

We are in worship services to worship, and if we have people that cannot do that because of the music, then we as leaders have set up a situation which is not Biblical. True, there may be people that are unresponsive to "NEW", but those people must be shown the proper way, not jammed into an uncomfortable situation of someone else's making.

May we bring people to our services to approach the Lord, not the sound system.

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M10700

LUCIFER'S OTHER CHURCH by Stanley L. Derickson

We've all heard comments about the wolf in sheep's clothing. We all relegate that in the Christian sphere to the liberals and false teachers that teach wrong doctrine under the umbrella of "Christianity."

It is the purpose of this study to suggest that today we may see little ways in which it is really the Devil that is creeping in under that umbrella.

The Devil has been copying the Lord's ways, means and ideas since the beginning.

I trust that you will take these thoughts with a grain of salt until you do some thinking about it on your own. I have been tossing something around over a long period of time and feel that there may be some truth in it. In this study I would like to just think of the Devil's influence on the church.

He doesn't have to copy the church or the Lord's doings, he now just has to wait a few months until the church copies the world's ways and he has his "stuff" in the church at the church's invitation.

Just what are some of these items that we, the church, copy?

When I was growing up the rock and roll stations introduced us to the top 40's! Today we have

top 40's of Western, Blue Grass, Popular, Rock, Heavy Metal AND NOW WE HAVE THE CHRISTIAN MUSIC TOP 40's!

We have had toy action figures with us for a number of years, at least since Star Wars and in the late 80's we were introduced to BIBLE ACTION FIGURES!

We have for years had Sunday school songs and choruses, but now we have Christian words put to everyday tunes of the world. (Brother John, I've Been Work'n' On The Railroad etc.)

The world gave us heavy metal, and the church now has "CHRISTIAN" HEAVY METAL!

The world gave us rap, and the church now has "CHRISTIAN RAP!"

The world had great problems with divorce, and now the church has accepted the same principle of operation, "Try it you'll like it, if not, divorce it."

Historical novels have been with us for years and years, but the Christians of our time just have to have their CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL NOVELS based on the lives of Biblical characters.

How about Bible Trivia? The terms in the title of that game ought to say enough to help us understand our subject in this study BIBLE - TRIVIA! REALLY!

I walked into a Christian's home in the late 80's and noticed several Jr. Hi young people playing Bible Pictionary. One of the young people was exploding with excitement because she had the answer first, and she hollered at the top of her lungs, "The Blood of Christ!!!!!!" I really think that the blood of Christ should have a little more dignity than that!

The rock groups had their guitars, bass guitars, keyboards, and now so do the churches.

We need to have a good evangelism program so we are out there using one that smacks of Madison Avenue. Is this wrong? What is the program anyway? To bring people to the Lord? Why do we need a spit and polish program when we don't need it? If we needed it our Bibles would have First and Second Evangelism instead of Romans.

The world has given their employees packages of benefits and pay and termed it many things, but today we have many pastors that judge a prospective church on the pay package that they offer. Within the pay package are items such as: salary, parsonage allowance, travel, conference expenses, vacation pay, clothing allowance, medical insurance, social security, retirement package, moving expenses, relocation expenses, and anything else the pastor-to-be can suggest. Someone has suggested that these people live by FAITH. F inancially secure, A ffluent, I ncome rising, T ax sheltered, and H ome paid for.

The prospective pastor must now, in some circles, release his credit report and history to

prospective churches.

Christians have condemned the costly cathedrals of the Roman church yet we are building bigger, and better, and snazzier churches than ever.

We have known for centuries that the Lord holds each and every one of us as very valuable. We know that we all have great value in God's eyes, yet we have invited the "self image" and "self worth" philosophy into our churches, and many of our youth are thriving on it.

We despise bigotry yet we have educational bigotry in many of our fellowships and groups. We have some looking down their noses at minimum-education-people, and the minimum-educated in turn condemns the higher-education-people as over-educated. For that matter how many of the churches that you have been in have black people as members, unless the whole church is black? Or Asians? Or Spanish American?

The Roman Church had their problems with not allowing the lay people to have the Bible to read for themselves! Never will fundamentalists do that, we have said for many moons, yet we have many seminaries teaching their students, OUR PASTORS, that you cannot properly understand the Bible unless you know the original languages. Not too many steps down the road and we may have the Romanists telling us off about that one.

How about the teaching and preaching of the church today?

How accurate is it?

I have seen men declare boldly something that is in the Old Testament that was for an age past as fact for our living, yet ignore other teaching in the Old Testament or the New Testament that declares that the principle has been set aside.

Recently in a sermon a man declared boldly that the sin of the father will be visited upon the children, and he gave an illustration of a father that went into adultery and a month later his Godly teenager started sleeping with a friend. Now the story may well be true, yet it does not prove that the principle is for today. Indeed the Book of Ezekiel chapter 18 seems to say that God has changed that principle!

I sat in a Sunday School class in a Baptist church and listened for half an hour about the bills that the church had and that we had to take offerings to pay those bills before the Lord returned so that we wouldn't have to take offerings when the Lord was here. Proof? Yes, of course he had a proof text! I Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." THAT WAS PAUL SPEAKING BY THE WAY - NOT CHRIST!

How Biblical is it?

I have heard many, many sermons that the speaker used a bit of a verse as a spring board to go off into some topic that he wanted to cover and never again return to the Word for direction or proof.

Recently a pastor was talking about a book that he had read by a certain author. His whole message centered around the precepts that this man had set forth in his book. As we left I told my wife I was tempted to tell the pastor that I had been reading a book that set forth the same principles and that I really enjoyed the book - the BIBLE!

How honest is it?

We say that we reject the principles of modern day counseling and the psychiatrists of days gone by, yet we still hear "Christian counselors" that are rerunning the old "why do you hate your father or mother," Freudian principles.

How about missions today?

Are we following Biblical principles? Or, are we out there trying man's concoctions? One group is trying to start churches by telephone. The same principles that insurance salesmen use to sell insurance over the phone!

We are seeing more and more Christians feel that we should use the world's principles. When I was on deputation and the support wasn't coming in a Christian sat me down and told me what I was doing it wrong. He mentioned that I wasn't being a good PUBLIC RELATIONS man. He thought that the church was all-wrong in sending people out on deputation. His thought was that we should introduce advertising campaigns into the church and raise money as a secular Ad Campaign might raise money.

Are we totally committed to reaching the lost?

Again, when I was on deputation I sat across the table from a man that was questioning the "COST EFFECTIVENESS" of missions. If the missionary can't produce certain results then he is not being cost effective and should be brought home or sent elsewhere.

The telephone evangelism that I mentioned earlier is based on the same principle. If you can't raise enough interest by making so many phone calls in an area then it is not cost effective to go ahead and start a church in that area.

WHAT HAPPENED TO "SAVING THE LOST AT ANY COST!"?

WHAT HAPPENED TO "SOLD OUT FOR GOD!"?

WHAT HAPPENED TO "GIVING ALL FOR GOD'S GLORY!"?

One more question. "WHAT HAPPENED?"

The world has had radio for many years, and believers have used secular stations to propagate the Gospel. In recent years we have "Christian Radio" that is for the - WHAT PURPOSE?

If it is for the propagation of the Gospel, why do I hear so little Gospel on it?

If it is for the edification of the saints, why do I hear so much false doctrine on it?

I have people constantly telling me how great the listening is on Christian radio, yet every time I tune in on Sunday morning, I hear I'm going to hell because I sinned last Tuesday. Or that I'm going to hell because I don't belong to brand X church group. At least they are talking about hell!

The real crime is that we have fundamental, conservative Christians supporting those stations! God's money is going to help propagate false doctrine and play "Christian" rock!

Sure I can be selective in what I listen to, but how about that lost person that tunes in looking for help and finds some false teaching to follow.

I'm not against giving to Christian programs, but do it directly to the ministry and encourage them to change to secular stations where the lost people listen.

I promised myself that I would not mention dress when I was finishing up these comments. I would not want to talk about dress. Yes, I would like to talk about dress. In fact just a comment or two, (or three or four). As I try to live a godly life, why would I want to use the same sort of language the world does? As I try to live a godly life, why would I want to frequent the places that the world frequents? As I try to live a Godly life, why would I want to live by the same standard that the world lives by? As I try to live a Godly life, why would I want to educate myself as the world educates itself? As I try to live a Godly life, why would I want to look and dress like the world looks and dresses? End commentary.

Recently I heard a "put on" news cast of the Triumphal Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. The commentator described it as a parade that was to be put on during Passover. He went on to mention that this was not a parade that was put on by the religious leaders because it obviously had political overtones. The man interviewed a bystander that described Christ as a troublemaker. REALLY! Wasn't a special bunny that lays colored, decorated eggs enough, must we put Easter on the level of the local news?

How about the Christian performers that minister around the country for \$8,000 per show?

Maybe the Christian publishers that are in business to reach the world for Christ - at 24.95 a

copy. If all these books on the market are so needed by the world, why are we making people rich by publishing them and charging big bucks for them. IF ALL THIS INFORMATION IS SO NEEDED BY THE WORLD WHY NOT GIVE IT AWAY SO WE CAN GET ON WITH THE LORD'S WORK?

Might we mention that not only are we allowing the world into the church, but also at times we are working with the world? Translation agencies that turn their translations of the Bible over to the Roman church rather than sound church works. Evangelists that turn their converts back to the dead state churches - their "religious roots." Mission agencies that work within the local Roman churches. THESE ARE AGENCIES THAT FUNDAMENTAL PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTING WITH THEIR LORD'S MONEY!

How do we treat the name of God? We abhor those that make light of the Lord's name yet recently I heard of the "GOD SQUAD" adult Sunday school class. Cute, but is it honoring to God?

We don't talk about the Devil or his demons in our churches much anymore, so in essence we are removing those items from a generation's religious mindset. Those same young people watch the occult, demons etc. on TV and assume that it is good viewing. We have church kids involved in the current occult games.

Do you feel that the church is making the "Holy" things common and everyday?

It seems that the church has taken many "things spiritual" and placed them on a plain that is so common that the children of our day are going to have a hard time understanding why church, the Bible and Christianity are of any importance at all. Do we really know what evil is anymore? Do we really recognize the Devil's ways when we are looking at them? Do we really understand the ramifications of what we are doing in the church today?

**GOD FORBID THAT WE PERPETUATE WHAT IS GOING ON IN MANY OF OUR CHURCHES!**

**IF ALL "WOULD BE" MINISTERS ARE GOING TO DO IS FURTHER WHAT THE DEVIL IS DOING IN THE CHURCH TODAY, THEN DON'T GO INTO THE MINISTRY! GOD DOES NOT NEED YOU! HOW DARE YOU USE GOD'S MONEY AND YOUR TIME TO ASSIST THE ADVERSARY!**

If on the other hand you are going out into the world to use the Bible as your handbook for Christian living, for church planting, for church organization, for family building, then GO FOR IT, AND MAY GOD BLESS THE DAYLIGHTS OUT OF YOU!

**BOLD? HEAVY? OPINIONATED? I CERTAINLY HOPE SO! IF IT ISN'T THEN I HAVE FAILED IN WHAT I WANTED TO DO IN THIS STUDY! If you are not awake to the Devil's**

work in the church in this country now, then I suspect that you have missed the point of what you have just read.

I would like to close with a passage of Scripture: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Keep the order on that right! It's submit to God and resist the Devil NOT submit to the Devil and resist God!

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m10710

## ON WHAT DAY WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

Position presented: Wednesday the 14th day of the first month (Nisan – April).

This has been a much talked about topic for many years. Few place their thoughts in writing as my research has revealed. Very little is written that I've been able to find. That which is written is not totally correct as we shall see.

The three basic views are: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The latter is of course the traditional view as can be seen on any calendar when you see the Friday before Easter marked as Good Friday.

The normal Wednesday and Thursday views are of a more recent vintage but to me are lacking. The presentation of the Wednesday view is lacking when examined with all of Scripture.

The view presented in this paper is a Wednesday crucifixion but is based on better proof than the Wednesday presentation I have seen. This hopefully will be a more correct presentation.

The best way to prove the Wednesday view is by process of elimination. If we disprove the Thursday and Friday views then the Wednesday view is all that is left. It will then be shown that the Wednesday view fits all of the facts of the Scriptural account.

The traditional Friday view is based on the Jewish idea of a day. A.T. Robertson states "The well-known custom of the Jews was to count a part of a day as a whole day of twenty-four hours. Hence a part of a day or night would be counted as a whole day, ...." 1

Mr. Scroggie quotes Rabbi Elazer ben Axaryah, "A day and a night are an Onah (Hebrew for a portion of time), and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it." 2

With this information people, who hold to the Friday view see Christ being crucified and buried Friday and being raised by Sunday morning. If Christ were buried before 6 P.M. Friday then we have the first day. Saturday 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. is the first night. Saturday 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. is the

second day. Sunday 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. is the second night. Christ was then raised shortly after dawn (6 A.M.) that the women would find the grave empty.

The explanation itself disproves the position. Only two nights are involved thus contradicting Christ's own words when He likened His time in the earth to Jonah's three days and three nights in the fish.

Mr. Scroggie mentions an early attempt to answer this objection. "An early attempt to account for 'three nights' reckoned as a night the darkness from 12.0 to 3.0 P.M. on the Friday (Matt. 27:45), ...." 5

This is quite lacking in its effort to explain the problem.

To hold to the traditional view you must take Christ's 'three nights' as meaning two nights. This is not an acceptable interpretation to most literalists. There is another problem which has not been considered by people holding this view. We will see that a Friday burial is impossible in view of Scripture. By viewing the Old Testament we know that the Jews were not to labor on the Sabbath. We also know that the Passover was followed by the beginning of the week of unleavened bread. The first day of this week also was a Sabbath with no work.

(Exodus 12:3-8; Leviticus 23:6,7) Thus if the burial were Friday, the Passover Saturday and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was Sunday, the women could not have been going to the tomb on a Sabbath. We will see more concerning the Sabbaths later.

The next view is much closer to fitting the facts as Scripture lays them out yet it too is lacking. This view states that Christ was buried before 6 P.M. Thursday thus the first day. 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. was night one. Then 6A.M. to 6 P.M. was day two. Then 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. was night two. Saturday 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. was third day. Then Christ was raised sometime between 6 P.M. and 6 A.M. Sunday for the third night.

We need to mention that the Jews saw a twenty-four hour day as running from 6 P.M. to 6 P.M. The views presented in this paper use this thinking only.

This view fulfills the three days and three nights required if you see a part of a day as a whole day. This must stretch the rules of literal interpretation however, and some are not willing to stretch the rules this far. (This view fits well with the facts of Scripture with this one exception.)

The Wednesday crucifixion however affords the possibility of fitting all the facts from Scripture together with strict literal interpretation of 'three days and three nights' into the Wednesday view. Though Mr. Scroggie lays much detail for this position, it seems from Scripture that while his view is correct his proof is somewhat lacking. He goes into detail as to when and where things happened to fit his theory together but tends to split verses from one another chronologically

where there is no need. He is also in contradiction with the Old Testament concerning the date of Passover. The Old Testament calls for Passover to be the 14th day of Nisan and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to be the 15th day of Nisan. (Exodus 12:3-8; Leviticus 23:6,7) Mr. Scroggie lists the Passover as the 15th and makes no reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread which was also a Sabbath (Leviticus 23:6,7).

Mr. Scroggie, as others also do, tries to show that the phrases "the third day" and "after the third day" refer to the same thing. This type of thinking ought to trouble the literalist. Actually there is no need to tie these phrases together for there is good reason to see them for what they are—slightly different in meaning.

When the Scriptures speak of "on the third day" it is referring to that specific third day. However when the text speaks of after the third day I would suspect it refers to after seventy-two hours. The three times "after the third day" is used it should be noted that the context is His death. He will be killed and after three days He will be raised (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). His beating and crucifixion preceded the burial by about three hours thus after three days could indicate after seventy-two hours He was raised. This fits well into the chronology of this view and allows for Christ's being raised "on the third day" while keeping the phrases separate as they should be.

A chart will help lay out the chronology of the view of this paper.

As the accounts are read and correlated we find a chronology as is presented on the following chart.

Jesus and the twelve disciples were together sometime before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (probably Tuesday the 13th) Christ instructed that the Passover be prepared and they celebrated Passover after 6 P.M. Wednesday the 14th. They were actually early in their eating the Passover yet it was eaten on the day that the lamb was to be killed. The four accounts must be taken together and Matthew, Mark, and Luke must be interpreted in light of John's account. John states that it was not yet Passover thus the accounts stating that it was the Day of Unleavened Bread must be interpreted as meaning that the day was close at hand. (Luke indicates this.)

While the twelve and Christ were celebrating Passover Judas left to make final arrangements for the betrayal. (This was Wednesday the 14th after 6 P.M.) Jesus was arrested later and the trials began. Then sentence was passed and He was crucified that day. There are several passages showing that the Jews hurry to get it over with for they wanted to celebrate Passover (after 6 P.M. on the day of the crucifixion).

The unusual part of this is that the Jews were busy preparing to kill the Passover lambs for their meal at the same time their true Passover Lamb was dying on the cross.

Christ was buried just prior to 6 P.M. Wednesday and at 6 P.M. the first day of unleavened bread began and the Jews celebrated.

Christ remained in the tomb for three days and three nights being raised before dawn so that the tomb would be empty when the women came Sunday A.M. shortly after dawn. As can be seen on the chart these are three full days and three full nights in the tomb to fulfill Matthew 12:40. The chart fulfills all the details of Scripture as I see them.

Either a Thursday or a Wednesday crucifixion would be quite possible however the Wednesday view fits the facts stated in Scripture better. The Friday view is quite forced and unnatural.

The whole point however is not "when" but "that". It is important THAT He was crucified and THAT He rose again on the third day as He prophesied.

"And I beheld and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God a kingdom of priests, and we shall reign on the earth."<sup>4</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1 A.T. Robertson, D.D., LL.D., Litt.D., A Harmony of the Gospels (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1950), p. 290.

2 W. Graham Scroggie, D.D., A Guide to the Gospels (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co.), p. 570.

3 Scroggie, p. 570.

4 Revelation 5:6-10.

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## THE GOOD - THE BAD BY THE UGLY or THE WORLD CHRISTIAN VS THE WORLDLY CHRISTIAN

K.J. I John 2:15-17 15. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17. And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

If all Christians lived by these words Christianity would be revolutionized!

The world would be set on its ear.

Think of it -- EVERY Christian living according to these words!

I once asked a church group to recall to mind someone in their past that was totally sold out to God. After the services several were talking and mentioned that the same couple had come to their minds. The couple had left a proper testimony!

### INTRO:

A few years ago we were privileged to meet and get to know a young couple that were in their thirties. He was a man that I would class as a "World Christian." Let me share a little about this man.

The term "World Christian" is relatively new and has the idea that a person is committed to living for the Lord and reaching the world.

1. He was in Sunday School, church, evening service and Wed. evening prayer meeting every week.

2. He was a part of the missions committee and the prime mover on that committee, leading it into a number of very worthwhile projects.

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4. He started and spearheaded a visitation program that added several families to the church in the first few months.

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She was in the choir and active in the church even though she worked full time.

9. He worked in one of the state prisons and was constantly under pressure from the world system yet he never submitted to it.

10. They were very involved in giving.

11. He was probably THE KEY MAN in his local church.  
A true "WORLD CHRISTIAN!"

Now to define a world Christian.

I'd like to share some thoughts from a book called WANTED: WORLD CHRISTIANS by J. Herbert Kane. p. 137ff

"As a child of the kingdom the believer then becomes a World Christian. By calling he belongs to a universal fellowship - the Christian church. By conviction he proclaims a universal message - the Christian gospel. By commitment he owes his allegiance to a universal king - Jesus Christ. By vocation, he is a part of a universal movement - the Christian mission.

"Not all believers, however, live up to their high calling as World Christians."

What does a World Christian hold true?

1. "A World Christian is one who acknowledges the universal fatherhood of God." Mankind comes from one source and that is God Himself. He provided ALL of mankind salvation! Not just a select few.

2. "A World Christian is one who confesses the universal lordship of Christ." Not that we as individuals make Him Lord of our lives but that we recognize that He is Lord by decree of Almighty God. He is Lord of our lives! We only have to chose to live like it.

3. "The World Christian is one who recognizes the cosmopolitan composition of the church." The church today as it was in the apostolic times is a group of people from all walks of life. We are rich and poor. We are educated and self-taught. We are healthy and sickly. We are to be made up of all peoples!

4. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the absolute priority of world missions." Not tomorrow but today! John E. Skoglund mentions in his book TO THE WHOLE CREATION: THE CHURCH IS MISSION p. 94, "Church and mission are one, and cannot in any way be broken apart. To break them apart is to make both cripples....It [mission] is the mark of the church."

5. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the universal scope of the Christian mission." It is the world not just the USA!

6. "A World Christian is one who recognizes his own personal responsibility for world missions." He is by nature sold out to do all that he or she can to help the world mission effort.

Now for a moment let me describe an example of what I mean by a "Worldly Christian".

1. He may or may not be at SS and church and maybe somewhat regular at Sun. evening but not usually at prayer meeting.

2. He is tied up in the church softball league. (Never misses a game or practice.)

3. He is not involved enough to be on any church committees.

4. He is not influential or enough of a spiritual leader to be placed on the board.

5. He never goes on visitation.

6. He very seldom does anything for the church---doesn't show up on workday.

7. He very seldom associates with the church people.

8. He seldom gives more than a token offering - enough to make himself feel comfortable.

9. He is a man that is too tied up in what HE is doing in his own life to really get involved in the church.

I am using "HE" for our discussion for simplicity. This applies equally well to both genders!

I'm an equal opportunity teacher!

NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT LET'S CONTINUE.

## I. THE CONTRAST

Let us take a moment to consider the two terms that we have in our title.

THESE ARE THE EXTREME ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM!

WORLD CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world but is not of the world.

A believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to him concerning his entire life including each and every facet of that life.

WORLDLY CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world and that is of the world.

A believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to the missionaries and pastors of the world and a few real work-horses of the church.

Let's take some time to contrast these two classes of believers.

1. WORLD CHRISTIANS view the great commission as incumbent upon each and every believer that has been washed in the blood of the lamb.

Matt. 28:19-20 "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen."

They are concerned with missions! They are CONCERNED ABOUT THE 2-3 BILLION LOST PEOPLE THAT HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL!

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS - You see, there we are, the missionaries are to go out into the world and evangelize. We are to invite the people into the church and the preacher is to win them to the Lord!

NO! WE, YOU AND I, all are to be evangelizing where we are and bring those that we win into the church for training in the Word.

This text tells each one of us that we are to be evangelizing AND discipling those that we win to the Lord.

THIS TEXT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MISSIONARIES OR PASTORS! IT HAS TO DO WITH EVERY BORN AGAIN BELIEVER!

2. WORLD CHRISTIANS view giving as a pleasure, a ministry, and a service to their King.

In her 80's - can't give much - picks up bottles and cans to sell to send a few dollars to the missionaries.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS view their giving as a duty, a payment on what they owe, or maybe their part in spreading the Gospel.

While on deputation a pastor asked me for a list of needs in the financial area. I asked why. He told me, "Stan these people feel guilty about the missions effort. If they see your needs they can give to you and then they won't have to go. They are doing something for missions that way."

3. WORLD CHRISTIANS are usually as involved in their local church as they can be. They are part of the planning and the outreach of the church into the community and into the world.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS on the other hand are usually content to allow others to do the work of the church. They like to sit back and evaluate the labors of others. The evaluation quite often is in the negative.

4. WORLD CHRISTIANS are often the ones that are entertaining the missionaries that come through to speak.

Helping the missionaries in any way they can.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS will normally not feel comfortable being in that close an association with a missionary.

We know a number of churches where the pastor is the only one that will take in missionaries. We know of one church where one couple always ends up with the missionary. They do not mind it, indeed they enjoy their ministry very much - the sad part is the families that are missing out on getting to know the Lord's workers.

5. WORLD CHRISTIANS are normally a praying people. They are involved in the prayer life of the church. They often are praying at home for the world and it's lost millions.

We met a man whose mother devotes her entire evening one evening a month to praying for missions. No television, no nothing - just praying for missions.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS are normally praying people as well, however their requests are normally centered around their own needs and seldom get around to the world or the lost.

Normally their prayer life gets more serious as their self-sufficiency fails!

## II. THE CAUSES FOR WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

### 1. Lack of knowledge.

a. Not in the Word on their own. How can they hope to learn of their life with the Lord unless they are reading His instruction manual.

I recently heard a pastor mention the hours he spent trying to put together his children's swing set. Finally in total frustration he went to the instruction booklet to see how it was done.

Many people are wondering how in the world to get their lives together, yet they have never opened the instruction manual!

b. Not in the Word in the Church.

#### 1.) Poor preaching.

Some of the preaching we've been subjected to in recent years is a total disgrace to the Lord that the men pretend to serve.

The Lord's word is so precious and some of his servants are just plain perverting it today!

#### 2.) Poor listening.

I, being involved in Christian Education am often interested in how people are reacting to sermons or lessons that I am presenting or sitting in on.

I often observe the congregation and consider the things that they are doing. I've observed people, trimming finger nails, sleeping, doing softball stats, staring out the window, staring at the ceiling, playing with their children, talking to their wife or the person sitting next to them, etc. Very little serious listening is going on in our churches today!

We have spoken several times in a church in WY. where everyone in the congregation was there to listen and to hear!

What a joy to minister to a LISTENING CONGREGATION!

### 2. Lack of interest.

The spiritual life is variable between spiritual and fleshly things and interests.

The spiritual person will naturally follow and seek Godly aims, goals and achievements.

The fleshly person will naturally follow and seek worldly aims, goals and achievements.

If a person is operating in the flesh he will not be interested in spiritual things.

He may be in church, but he may be completely tuned out.

He may be in the Word, but he may be completely tuned out.

3. Lack of spiritual discernment.

This comes from lacking the Holy Spirit's work in the life.

a. The Spirit can't work if self is in control!

b. The person may only be a professor and not really a Christian.

Application of I John 2:15-17 might well run along these lines.

If you submit to fleshly desires and allow them to run on their own, you may wind up in many many types of problems.

A couple of high profile preachers can well attest to this fact.

If you submit to buying all your eye sees and desires you will become as many Americans --  
SERVING MATERIALISM.

Indeed, just the desire of things that you see that you can't afford can be in this area of lust of the eye.

If you are proud of who or what you are then how can God use you?

If you are that tied up in yourself you will have no time for God!

Indeed, God may find that He has no time for you!

Is it not easy to see where a worldly Christian is?

THE NEXT QUESTION OBVIOUSLY IS WHAT ARE

III. THE CAUSES FOR WORLD CHRISTIANS

1. Lack of attachment to the desires of the flesh - not that the desires aren't there but that the believer has those desires under proper control.

He controls his desires; his desires do not control him.

REPEAT

2. Lack of attachment to the things of the world.

Not that they own nothing but that nothing owns them.

NOW LISTEN TO THAT ONE AGAIN!

Not that they own nothing but that nothing owns them.

PONDER THAT ONE THIS WEEK!!!

We have for the first time in our marriage of 30+ years settled into a situation that is what most would call permanent.

We have always been in progress - temporary in college - temporary at pastoring a new church - getting ready for the mission field - etc.

We are faced with a confrontation between our "pilgrim" - "passin through" attitude which is Scriptural, and the settling into a permanent spot attitude, which can easily become worldly.

WE ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD!

My it would be so easy to go out looking for things to go along with "permanence". (Nice furniture, Nice drapes etc.)

Hebrews 11 shows Abraham as a "pilgrim" - one that is "passin through this life".

vs 13 "These all [speaking of Noah, Sarah and Abraham] died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

vs 16 adds to their concept of this life and adds a very neat comment from their Lord!

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

Abraham had material gain and possessions, but that gain and those possessions did not possess

him!

This may not be true of believers today.

From ANAM notes May/Aug. 88.

"Protestants Are Earning More But Giving Less

Although Protestant churchgoers are earning more money, they are giving less of it to their churches. This is the conclusion of a recent nationwide study of 31 denominations.

"Giving declined by 8.5% from 1968 to 1985, while disposable income increased by 31%. The average percentage of the disposable income given to the church dropped from 3.05% to 2.79% during that time period. One researcher commented that 'people are placing a higher value on their life-styles than on their church.'"

3. Lack of attachment to their way of life.

A world Christian MUST NOT BE PROUD OF HIS WAY OF LIFE.

Enjoying that way of life is okay.  
Increasing that way of life is okay.  
Continuing that way of life is okay.

HOWEVER

Becoming proud of who and what you are - as we used to say in the Navy - NEGATORY!  
NEVER! NO! CONTRAR! NOPE! NO GOOD! ABSOLUTELY NOT! INFACIT IT'S A BIG  
FAT NO NO!

NOW!

If you control your fleshly desires

AND

If you control your eye's desires

AND

If you control your life's ambitions or desires

THEN WHAT?

Logically speaking you are going to be:

1. Morally correct.
2. A pilgrim in this life - looking for the next life.
3. Open to God moving and changing in your way of life.

And if these are true you are going to be:

1. A good witness.
2. Open to going without all those things that the ads say you have to have to be happy.
3. Willing to give up your present way of life for what God leads you to do.

In other words you'll be a World Christian.

#### RESULT

God may leave you right where you are to be a good world Christian concerned for the millions of lost souls in the world and doing all you can to reach them for Christ in your local church.

Then again He may lead you to leave all that you have and lead you to go into the world to preach the Gospel.

The difference between the "world" and the "worldly" Christian here is that the world Christian will without second thought walk out on his present life and walk into the life that God has prepared for him.

The worldly Christian will never move out of his way of life even for God.

His only hope is to become a "WORLD CHRISTIAN!"

#### IV. CONCLUSION

1. If you are a world Christian
  - a. Beware the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life!

This trilogy is Satan's mainstay in his bag of tricks!

Are these not the areas where he tempted even our Lord Jesus Christ?

Luke 4:1-13 contains the account.

Temptation # 1 was hunger - the lust of the flesh (1-4)

Temptation # 2 was the kingdoms of the world - the lust of the eye (5-8)

Temptation # 3 was His control of the angelic host - the pride of life (9-13)

DON'T BE PROUD! THAT IS PRIDE OF LIFE!

b. Concentrate on continuing on in your state as a world Christian!

As a pastor we once knew used to put it,

"KEEPING ON KEEPING ON!"

2. If you are a Worldly Christian

a. You had better do business with God soon!

I would suggest today before you leave!

b. You had better make changes in your way of life!

You had better control, from this point forth, your lust, your desires, and your pride of life!

God does not seem to allow for this type of person in His plan. He is very emphatic through John in verse 15 where he says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The immediate context is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

If you are having problems in any of these areas you have not the love of the Father!

3. If you are riding the fence you are not a world Christian nor are you a worldly Christian.

You are a fence riding Christian.

You are what John mentions in Revelation three, "lukewarm".

YOU'RE IN A MUDDLE!

If you're a world Christian you are in a minority.

If you're a fence riding Christian you are in a muddle.

If you are a worldly Christian you are in a mess.

YOU, diagnose yourself - not me - not your neighbor - not your church leaders - but yourself.

Are you a mess, a muddle or a minority?

You have today been confronted with some knowledge - you now have the responsibility to honestly evaluate your life and come to conclusions and needed changes!

Then you are responsible to act on those conclusions and commit yourself before God to make those changes in your life.

If you are here today tied up in immorality, or in materialism or in yourself you need to do business with God before you leave!

When I speak of immorality I do not mean necessarily wrong sexual relations though that may be the case, but if you are involved in viewing the wrong type of movies, videos or magazines or reading improper books you may well be feeding your lust of the flesh.

While on deputation we spent the night in the home of some people that were from outward appearances "Good people"!

The next morning we found out that they were the leading pornography dealers in the area. They had big pornographic video parties in their home.

The lust of the flesh can enter into other areas as well. Any desire of your body that you allow to control you is a lust of the flesh which is out of control.

The closing thought of our text in this study is the thought that you need to consider well.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the flesh.

He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the eye.

He that doeth the will of God is one that is not proud of his way of life!

The hymn writer penned the following words: "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun." (Amazing Grace vs 6.)

If we as believers really believe this concept why are we so tied up in the world. Our life here is brief - as a vapor, as James 4:14 describes it - we will be here only a moment in relation to

eternity ---- so why are we so tied to this life and how little it offers when compared to eternity with its rewards and glories?

TODAY! are you a world Christian?

TODAY! are you a fence riding Christian?

TODAY! are you a worldly Christian?

TODAY IS THE DAY THAT GOD HAS CONFRONTED YOU!

ARE YOU GOING TO ACT UPON YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE OR LEAVE IT WHERE IT LIES AND CONTINUE ON?

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLD CHRISTIAN YOU WILL RECOMMIT YOURSELF TO WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLDLY CHRISTIAN THAT YOU WILL TAKE TIME RIGHT NOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH GOD!

John finishes his book of I John with a very appropriate phrase that I would like for you to consider. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Indeed, is not idolatry what we have been talking about in this study? The idol of self-indulgence, the idol of me and the idol of way of life. Indeed, I believe John knew exactly where our hearts tend to roam!

Please consider the following:

"I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The dye has been cast. The decision has been made. I have stepped over the line. I won't look back, let up, slow down or back away.

"My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

"I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk with patience, live by prayer, and labour with power.

"My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the

maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, spoken up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go 'till He comes, give 'till I drop, preach 'till all know and work 'till He stops me. And when He comes for His own He will have no problem recognising me. My banner is clear, I am a part of the fellowship of the unashamed."

Anonymous.

"FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH; TO THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE GREEK." Romans 1:16

Let's take a few moments before we close to spend time before the Lord in prayer about our present lives. Let's bow our hearts in prayer.

I will close in a few moments and we will be dismissed. If there is anyone that wants to talk to me or one of the church leaders feel free to seek one of us out and tell us that you would like to talk.

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THE GOOD - THE BAD BY THE UGLY or THE WORLD CHRISTIAN VS THE WORLDLY CHRISTIAN

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2. "A World Christian is one who confesses the universal lordship of Christ." Not that we as individuals make Him Lord of our lives but that we recognize that He is Lord by decree of Almighty God. He is Lord of our lives! We only have to chose to live like it.
3. "The World Christian is one who recognizes the cosmopolitan composition of the church." The church today as it was in the apostolic times is a group of people from all walks of life. We are rich and poor. We are educated and self-taught. We are healthy and sickly. We are to be made up of all peoples!
4. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the absolute priority of world missions." Not tomorrow but today! John E. Skoglund mentions in his book TO THE WHOLE CREATION: THE CHURCH IS MISSION p. 94, "Church and mission are one, and cannot in any way be broken apart. To break them apart is to make both cripples....It [mission] is the mark of the church."
5. "A World Christian is one who recognizes the universal scope of the Christian mission." It is the world not just the USA!
6. "A World Christian is one who recognizes his own personal responsibility for world missions." He is by nature sold out to do all that he or she can to help the world mission effort.

Now for a moment let me describe an example of what I mean by a "Worldly Christian".

1. He may or may not be at SS and church and maybe somewhat regular at Sun. evening but not usually at prayer meeting.
2. He is tied up in the church softball league. (Never misses a game or practice.)
3. He is not involved enough to be on any church committees.
4. He is not influential or enough of a spiritual leader to be placed on the board.
5. He never goes on visitation.

6. He very seldom does anything for the church---doesn't show up on workday.
7. He very seldom associates with the church people.
8. He seldom gives more than a token offering - enough to make himself feel comfortable.
9. He is a man that is too tied up in what HE is doing in his own life to really get involved in the church.

I am using "HE" for our discussion for simplicity. This applies equally well to both genders!

I'm an equal opportunity teacher!

NOW THAT WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT LET'S CONTINUE.

## I. THE CONTRAST

Let us take a moment to consider the two terms that we have in our title.

THESE ARE THE EXTREME ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM!

WORLD CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world but is not of the world.

A believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to him concerning his entire life including each and every facet of that life.

WORLDLY CHRISTIAN = A believer that is in the world and that is of the world.

A believer that believes the Word of God to be God's personal letter to the missionaries and pastors of the world and a few real work-horses of the church.

Let's take some time to contrast these two classes of believers.

1. WORLD CHRISTIANS view the great commission as incumbent upon each and every believer that has been washed in the blood of the lamb.

Matt. 28:19-20 "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age. Amen."

They are concerned with missions! They are CONCERNED ABOUT THE 2-3 BILLION LOST PEOPLE THAT HAVE NEVER HEARD THE GOSPEL!

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS - You see, there we are, the missionaries are to go out into the world and evangelize. We are to invite the people into the church and the preacher is to win them to the Lord!

NO! WE, YOU AND I, all are to be evangelizing where we are and bring those that we win into the church for training in the Word.

This text tells each one of us that we are to be evangelizing AND discipling those that we win to the Lord.

THIS TEXT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MISSIONARIES OR PASTORS! IT HAS TO DO WITH EVERY BORN AGAIN BELIEVER!

2. WORLD CHRISTIANS view giving as a pleasure, a ministry, and a service to their King.

In her 80's - can't give much - picks up bottles and cans to sell to send a few dollars to the missionaries.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS view their giving as a duty, a payment on what they owe, or maybe their part in spreading the Gospel.

While on deputation a pastor asked me for a list of needs in the financial area. I asked why. He told me, "Stan these people feel guilty about the missions effort. If they see your needs they can give to you and then they won't have to go. They are doing something for missions that way."

3. WORLD CHRISTIANS are usually as involved in their local church as they can be. They are part of the planning and the outreach of the church into the community and into the world.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS on the other hand are usually content to allow others to do the work of the church. They like to sit back and evaluate the labors of others. The evaluation quite often is in the negative.

4. WORLD CHRISTIANS are often the ones that are entertaining the missionaries that come through to speak.

Helping the missionaries in any way they can.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS will normally not feel comfortable being in that close an association with a missionary.

We know a number of churches where the pastor is the only one that will take in missionaries. We know of one church where one couple always ends up with the missionary. They do not mind it, indeed they enjoy their ministry very much - the sad part is the families that are missing out on

getting to know the Lord's workers.

5. WORLD CHRISTIANS are normally a praying people. They are involved in the prayer life of the church. They often are praying at home for the world and it's lost millions.

We met a man whose mother devotes her entire evening one evening a month to praying for missions. No television, no nothing - just praying for missions.

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS are normally praying people as well, however their requests are normally centered around their own needs and seldom get around to the world or the lost.

Normally their prayer life gets more serious as their self-sufficiency fails!

## II. THE CAUSES FOR WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

### 1. Lack of knowledge.

a. Not in the Word on their own. How can they hope to learn of their life with the Lord unless they are reading His instruction manual.

I recently heard a pastor mention the hours he spent trying to put together his children's swing set. Finally in total frustration he went to the instruction booklet to see how it was done.

Many people are wondering how in the world to get their lives together, yet they have never opened the instruction manual!

b. Not in the Word in the Church.

#### 1.) Poor preaching.

Some of the preaching we've been subjected to in recent years is a total disgrace to the Lord that the men pretend to serve.

The Lord's word is so precious and some of his servants are just plain perverting it today!

#### 2.) Poor listening.

I, being involved in Christian Education am often interested in how people are reacting to sermons or lessons that I am presenting or sitting in on.

I often observe the congregation and consider the things that they are doing. I've observed people, trimming finger nails, sleeping, doing softball stats, staring out the window, staring at the ceiling, playing with their children, talking to their wife or the person sitting next to them, etc. Very little

serious listening is going on in our churches today!

We have spoken several times in a church in WY. where everyone in the congregation was there to listen and to hear!

What a joy to minister to a LISTENING CONGREGATION!

2. Lack of interest.

The spiritual life is variable between spiritual and fleshly things and interests.

The spiritual person will naturally follow and seek Godly aims, goals and achievements.

The fleshly person will naturally follow and seek worldly aims, goals and achievements.

If a person is operating in the flesh he will not be interested in spiritual things.

He may be in church, but he may be completely tuned out.

He may be in the Word, but he may be completely tuned out.

3. Lack of spiritual discernment.

This comes from lacking the Holy Spirit's work in the life.

a. The Spirit can't work if self is in control!

b. The person may only be a professor and not really a Christian.

Application of I John 2:15-17 might well run along these lines.

If you submit to fleshly desires and allow them to run on their own, you may wind up in many many types of problems.

A couple of high profile preachers can well attest to this fact.

If you submit to buying all your eye sees and desires you will become as many Americans --  
SERVING MATERIALISM.

Indeed, just the desire of things that you see that you can't afford can be in this area of lust of the eye.

If you are proud of who or what you are then how can God use you?

If you are that tied up in yourself you will have no time for God!

Indeed, God may find that He has no time for you!

Is it not easy to see where a worldly Christian is?

THE NEXT QUESTION OBVIOUSLY IS WHAT ARE

III. THE CAUSES FOR WORLD CHRISTIANS

1. Lack of attachment to the desires of the flesh - not that the desires aren't there but that the believer has those desires under proper control.

He controls his desires; his desires do not control him.

REPEAT

2. Lack of attachment to the things of the world.

Not that they own nothing but that nothing owns them.

NOW LISTEN TO THAT ONE AGAIN!

Not that they own nothing but that nothing owns them.

PONDER THAT ONE THIS WEEK!!!

We have for the first time in our marriage of 30+ years settled into a situation that is what most would call permanent.

We have always been in progress - temporary in college - temporary at pastoring a new church - getting ready for the mission field - etc.

We are faced with a confrontation between our "pilgrim" - "passin through" attitude which is Scriptural, and the settling into a permanent spot attitude, which can easily become worldly.

WE ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD!

My it would be so easy to go out looking for things to go along with "permanence". (Nice furniture, Nice drapes etc.)

Hebrews 11 shows Abraham as a "pilgrim" - one that is "passin through this life".

vs 13 "These all [speaking of Noah, Sarah and Abraham] died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

vs 16 adds to their concept of this life and adds a very neat comment from their Lord!

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."

Abraham had material gain and possessions, but that gain and those possessions did not possess him!

This may not be true of believers today.

From ANAM notes May/Aug. 88.

"Protestants Are Earning More But Giving Less

Although Protestant churchgoers are earning more money, they are giving less of it to their churches. This is the conclusion of a recent nationwide study of 31 denominations.

"Giving declined by 8.5% from 1968 to 1985, while disposable income increased by 31%. The average percentage of the disposable income given to the church dropped from 3.05% to 2.79% during that time period. One researcher commented that 'people are placing a higher value on their life-styles than on their church.'"

3. Lack of attachment to their way of life.

A world Christian MUST NOT BE PROUD OF HIS WAY OF LIFE.

Enjoying that way of life is okay.  
Increasing that way of life is okay.  
Continuing that way of life is okay.

HOWEVER

Becoming proud of who and what you are - as we used to say in the Navy - NEGATORY!  
NEVER! NO! CONTRAR! NOPE! NO GOOD! ABSOLUTELY NOT! INFACIT IT'S A BIG  
FAT NO NO!

NOW!

If you control your fleshly desires

AND

If you control your eye's desires

AND

If you control your life's ambitions or desires

THEN WHAT?

Logically speaking you are going to be:

1. Morally correct.
2. A pilgrim in this life - looking for the next life.
3. Open to God moving and changing in your way of life.

And if these are true you are going to be:

1. A good witness.
2. Open to going without all those things that the ads say you have to have to be happy.
3. Willing to give up your present way of life for what God leads you to do.

In other words you'll be a World Christian.

RESULT

God may leave you right where you are to be a good world Christian concerned for the millions of lost souls in the world and doing all you can to reach them for Christ in your local church.

Then again He may lead you to leave all that you have and lead you to go into the world to preach the Gospel.

The difference between the "world" and the "worldly" Christian here is that the world Christian will without second thought walk out on his present life and walk into the life that God has prepared for him.

The worldly Christian will never move out of his way of life even for God.

His only hope is to become a "WORLD CHRISTIAN!"

IV. CONCLUSION

1. If you are a world Christian

a. Beware the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life!

This trilogy is Satan's mainstay in his bag of tricks!

Are these not the areas where he tempted even our Lord Jesus Christ?

Luke 4:1-13 contains the account.

Temptation # 1 was hunger - the lust of the flesh (1-4)

Temptation # 2 was the kingdoms of the world - the lust of the eye (5-8)

Temptation # 3 was His control of the angelic host - the pride of life (9-13)

**DON'T BE PROUD! THAT IS PRIDE OF LIFE!**

b. Concentrate on continuing on in your state as a world Christian!

As a pastor we once knew used to put it,

**"KEEPING ON KEEPING ON!"**

2. If you are a Worldly Christian

a. You had better do business with God soon!

I would suggest today before you leave!

b. You had better make changes in your way of life!

You had better control, from this point forth, your lust, your desires, and your pride of life!

God does not seem to allow for this type of person in His plan. He is very emphatic through John in verse 15 where he says, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The immediate context is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.

If you are having problems in any of these areas you have not the love of the Father!

3. If you are riding the fence you are not a world Christian nor are you a worldly Christian.

You are a fence riding Christian.

You are what John mentions in Revelation three, "lukewarm".

YOU'RE IN A MUDDLE!

If you're a world Christian you are in a minority.

If you're a fence riding Christian you are in a muddle.

If you are a worldly Christian you are in a mess.

YOU, diagnose yourself - not me - not your neighbor - not your church leaders - but yourself.

Are you a mess, a muddle or a minority?

You have today been confronted with some knowledge - you now have the responsibility to honestly evaluate your life and come to conclusions and needed changes!

Then you are responsible to act on those conclusions and commit yourself before God to make those changes in your life.

If you are here today tied up in immorality, or in materialism or in yourself you need to do business with God before you leave!

When I speak of immorality I do not mean necessarily wrong sexual relations though that may be the case, but if you are involved in viewing the wrong type of movies, videos or magazines or reading improper books you may well be feeding your lust of the flesh.

While on deputation we spent the night in the home of some people that were from outward appearances "Good people"!

The next morning we found out that they were the leading pornography dealers in the area. They had big pornographic video parties in their home.

The lust of the flesh can enter into other areas as well. Any desire of your body that you allow to control you is a lust of the flesh which is out of control.

The closing thought of our text in this study is the thought that you need to consider well.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the flesh.

He that doeth the will of God is one that controls the lust of the eye.

He that doeth the will of God is one that is not proud of his way of life!

The hymn writer penned the following words: "When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun." (Amazing Grace vs 6.)

If we as believers really believe this concept why are we so tied up in the world. Our life here is brief - as a vapor, as James 4:14 describes it - we will be here only a moment in relation to eternity ---- so why are we so tied to this life and how little it offers when compared to eternity with it's rewards and glories?

TODAY! are you a world Christian?

TODAY! are you a fence riding Christian?

TODAY! are you a worldly Christian?

TODAY IS THE DAY THAT GOD HAS CONFRONTED YOU!

ARE YOU GOING TO ACT UPON YOUR NEW KNOWLEDGE OR LEAVE IT WHERE IT LIES AND CONTINUE ON?

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLD CHRISTIAN YOU WILL RECOMMIT YOURSELF TO WHAT YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

I TRUST IF YOU ARE A WORLDLY CHRISTIAN THAT YOU WILL TAKE TIME RIGHT NOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH GOD!

John finishes his book of I John with a very appropriate phrase that I would like for you to consider. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Indeed, is not idolatry what we have been talking about in this study? The idol of self-indulgence, the idol of me and the idol of way of life. Indeed, I believe John knew exactly where our hearts tend to roam!

Please consider the following:

"I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The dye has been cast. The decision has been made. I have stepped over the line. I won't look back, let up, slow down or back away.

"My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, mundane talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

"I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognised, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk with patience, live by prayer, and labour with power.

"My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, my Guide is reliable, my mission is clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, spoken up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go 'till He comes, give 'till I drop, preach 'till all know and work 'till He stops me. And when He comes for His own He will have no problem recognising me. My banner is clear, I am a part of the fellowship of the unashamed."

Anonymous.

"FOR I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION TO EVERYONE THAT BELIEVETH; TO THE JEW FIRST, AND ALSO TO THE GREEK." Romans 1:16

Let's take a few moments before we close to spend time before the Lord in prayer about our present lives. Let's bow our hearts in prayer.