



DECEMBER 1974  
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE  
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

# new wine



## THE BEST OF 1974



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**BEST OF  
NEW WINE  
1974**



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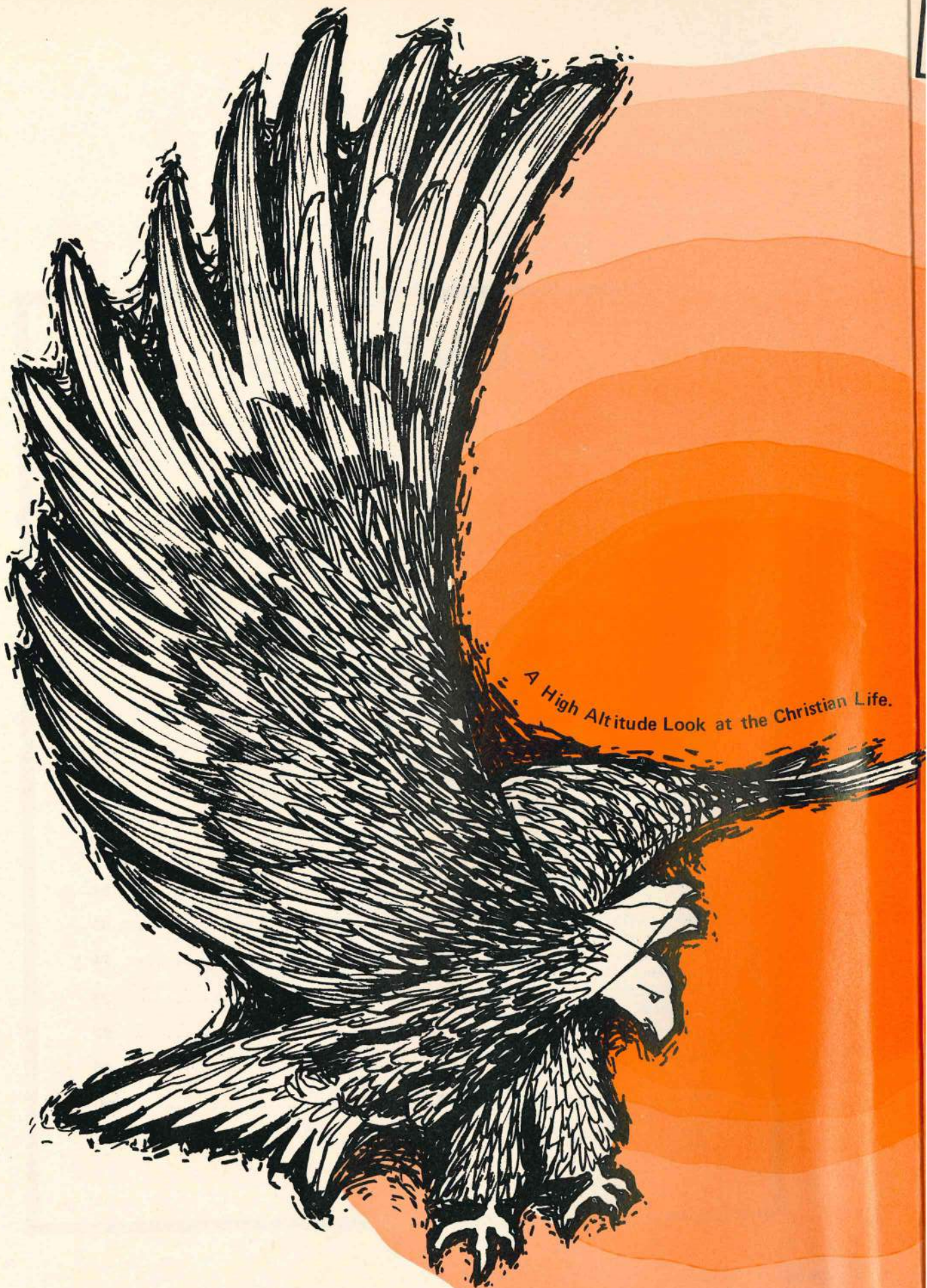
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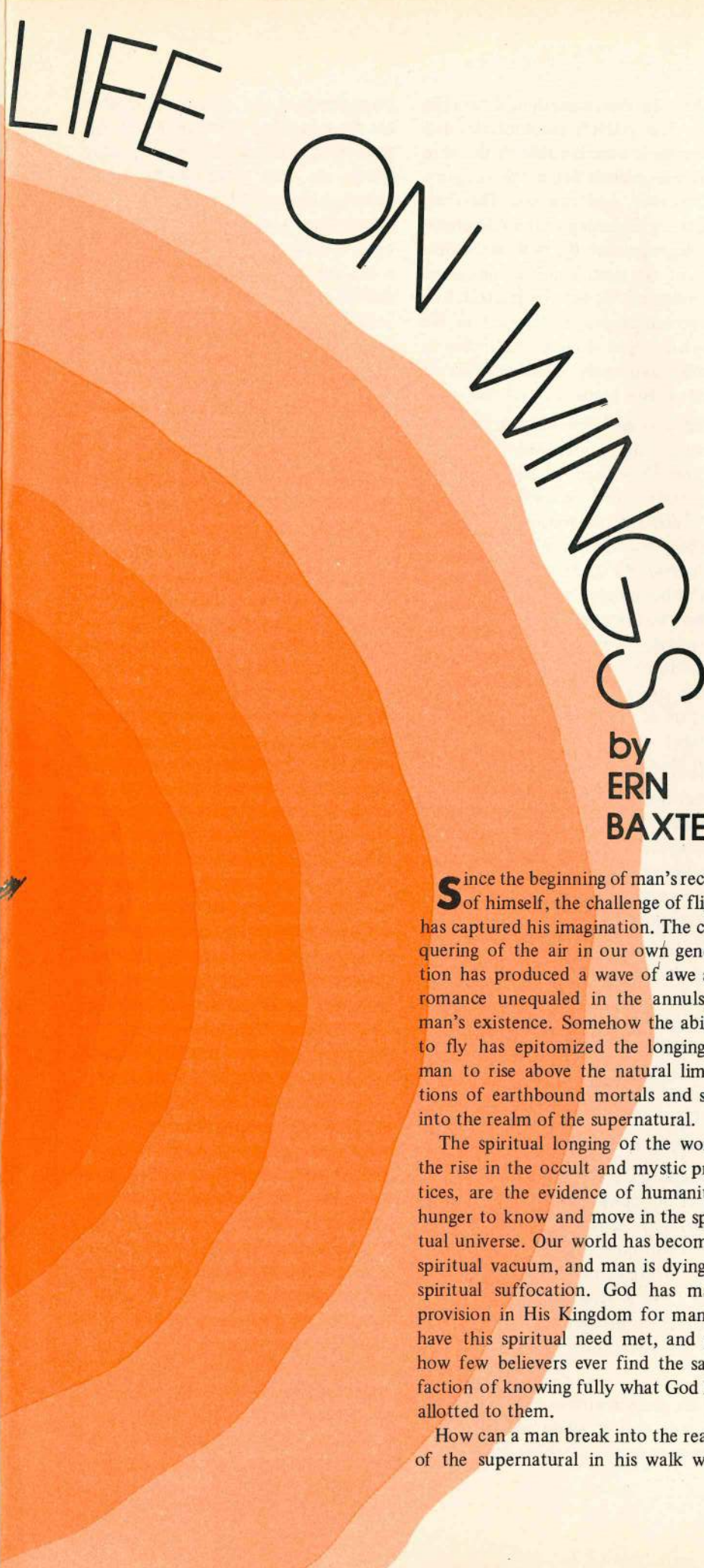
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A High Altitude Look at the Christian Life.





# LIFE ON WINGS

by  
**ERN  
BAXTER**

**S**ince the beginning of man's record of himself, the challenge of flight has captured his imagination. The conquering of the air in our own generation has produced a wave of awe and romance unequalled in the annals of man's existence. Somehow the ability to fly has epitomized the longing of man to rise above the natural limitations of earthbound mortals and soar into the realm of the supernatural.

The spiritual longing of the world, the rise in the occult and mystic practices, are the evidence of humanity's hunger to know and move in the spiritual universe. Our world has become a spiritual vacuum, and man is dying of spiritual suffocation. God has made provision in His Kingdom for man to have this spiritual need met, and yet how few believers ever find the satisfaction of knowing fully what God has allotted to them.

How can a man break into the realm of the supernatural in his walk with

God? In one form or another this question seems to be one of the pressing concerns wherever I travel. We *talk* about what God is doing — but *living* in that divine presence is another matter. Rather than embarking on a heavy dissertation, I want to use a beautiful illustration thought up by the Author of the Word of God — the Holy Spirit.

(28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding.

(29) He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

(30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

(31) But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28–31)

The Bible is an intensely practical book. The Holy Spirit has ransacked the universe for every conceivable image, illustration, and parable to impart the truth of the ways of God to man. Daily activities, interpersonal relationships, the things of nature, and the parts of our bodies; things with which we are intimately acquainted, are captured by Him to describe some aspect of the divine mystery.

## THE EAGLE

This passage speaks of the eagle. As the lion is the king of the beasts, so the eagle is the king of birds. The Holy Spirit has likened us and our God-ward aspirations to the aspiration of being like the eagle.

As I watched the eagles in the Columbia Basin near Portland, I began to understand why they have represented throughout time the God-ward thrust of man: power — freedom — beauty — the lord of his environment through his ability to master the air. They move in regal splendor, for they are born as kings. As the eagle is born with the divine right of kingship, so we



Reverend Ern Baxter, Jr. is a well-known Bible teacher and conference speaker, who brings to the charismatic renewal a ministry dedicated to the "unity of the Spirit" and to Christian maturity.

come from the new birth with the inherent potential of soaring into the very presence of God, Himself. The fact, however, that eagles are so equipped, does not necessarily mean that they will ever get off the ground.

Deuteronomy 32:11 has some interesting information about eagles:

As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovering over its young, spreading its wings to catch them, bearing them on its pinions.

All eagles begin as eaglets and before these unseemly, squalling fledglings take their place with royalty, they must be trained in the ways of the king of birds. This little verse is the Flight Training Manual of student eagles and earthbound Christians.

Picture with me two little eaglets snuggled cozily in a down-filled nest, high on an eerie ledge on some remote mountainside. (Christians often find themselves born into equally precarious circumstances.) Everything is just wonderful; mother eagle sallies forth daily and brings back choice tidbits for those ravenous appetites. During the cold, mountain nights she settles over the nest and the eaglets snuggle securely under those warm, soft wings and look out at the stars not very far away. They are newly born and baptized in the Spirit. Hallelujah!! Life is wonderful and being a Christian sure makes life easy — no more problems! God knew what He was doing when He thought up this arrangement!

One day Mom begins to act very strange. Rather than landing on the nest she hovers momentarily, beating the air with those great wings. As Junior watches her, he thinks, "Mom sure has powerful wings!" That is exactly what Mrs. Eagle wants Junior to know.

Then she does something downright crazy. She grabs a piece of the nest and drops it over the side of the cliff. Then she returns for another chunk, and another, and another. The little eaglets are beginning to think Mom has lost her marbles! By now the framework of the nest is pretty shaky and that nice soft down that made Junior feel so secure is at the bottom of the canyon. Nest life is becoming a standing-room-only situation on what is left of their home.

Can you see what the mother eagle is doing? She is preparing her young for the first stage in eagle training. After our Lord received the Holy Spirit and the declaration of His holy Sonship, the Scripture says that He was *led of the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. I have written in the margin of my Bible at this point, "Is this standard operating procedure?" I believe that God's *modus operandi* is to begin to confront us as soon as possible with the necessity of maturing into something other than nest-bound believers.

Paul told the Corinthians that he could not talk to them as mature men because they were as babes. He did not say they *were* babies, but that they were *like* babies. When a baby slobbers its pabulum down its little chin and milk runs into its little ears, we all laugh and think it is cute. But when a twenty-one-year-old man slobbers his food down his chin, then he is *like* a baby and this is sickening. God does not mind a Christian going through the pabulum stage; it is a part of growing up. But it is tragic in God's eyes when we never grow out of infancy.

Interestingly enough, the discomfort of our bewildered eaglets has been deliberately caused by the one who loves them most. How often when we have a streak of trouble do we cry out, "The Devil is attacking me!" Are you positive it is the Devil? Maybe the One who loves you most is stirring up your nest.

Like many believers, the little eagles conclude that standing on that windy ledge is at least tolerable and they can

make the best of it. But dear old Mom has more in mind than just a nest stirring. She catches one of the little fellows in her powerful beak and nudges him toward the edge of the ledge. The poor little guy wonders what is happening now. His little heart is beating faster and faster, and as he is pushed closer to the edge he thinks, "NO, it can't be!" *But it is!*

With one final push he starts to plummet toward the bottom of the canyon — he is sure this is the end. Then out of nowhere there is a swoosh of Mom's mighty wings and Junior is heading for the safety of the ledge on her powerful back, quite relieved. The first time God kicks us out of the nest and catches us before we hit bottom, we gasp, "Oh, thank heaven! I was sure God had let me down that time."

Back on the ledge our would-be king is just getting over being dizzy when Mom starts pushing again. "Not again," he moans, as he starts his second tumble. "What if Mom doesn't make it this time?" But she does. Several trips later Junior begins to get the feeling that Mom is trying to get a point across. Between rides he suddenly remembers Mom's huge wings hovering over the nest. He looks at his own straggly wings and thinks, "I wonder if . . . If she does that again I'm going to give mine a try!" Rest assured he gets another chance. Mom will not stop until Junior finds the gumption to try his own wings.

Little eagles are gangly creatures, wobbling shakily on untested wings. But each desperate plunge brings a little more mastery of his wings. One day he spreads those wings and rather than falling, he finds himself rising up and up and up, riding the mighty air currents far above his ledge home and the nest that confined him. No longer a fledgling begging for tidbits, he is learning to become one of the eagles — he will be a king.

Ministers and evangelists often make becoming a Christian like being born on a satin pillow with a cordon of angels wafting us through life and depositing us at the foot of the celestial throne. Only after we are well settled in our nest do we learn that God



is more intent on the production of character than the provision of our comfort. We have made God our celestial Santa Claus and if we do not get everything we want we stomp saucy little feet and open our mouths and scream for the goodies. But because He is our Father, and not Santa Claus, He will box our saucy little ears and tell us to "hush up." He will not tolerate our spoiled ways, but will *force* us into situations that will *require* us to mature and learn to use the wings He gave us. He wants us to become eagles. God never built a nest you could walk out of — they are all designed to fly away from. Some Christians have been over the cliff so many times that they enjoy the ride and could care less about learning to fly. They will never get one inch higher than the nest where they were born.

### KINGS

The Bible land knew two types of eagles: the Golden Eagle and the Imperial Eagle. The Golden Eagle speaks of us as partakers of the divine nature and the Imperial Eagle speaks of us as kings. In the Scripture, the two go hand in hand.

Our divine right is to reign as monarchs in our own lives! The circumstances which confound and befuddle the world become launching pads to new heights in God. Satan and his henchmen become the snakes which an eagle bisects with a slash of his mighty talons or drops from dizzy heights to be crushed on the rocks below. This is our inheritance.

Some years ago I was managing a campaign in Cleveland, Ohio. Upon departing the city for a few days, I told one of the committees, "Get a plot of ground where we can pitch a tent for about three thousand people and we will take care of the expenses later."

When I got off the plane upon my return, the chairman met me and said, "We have a wonderful place for the tent."

"Wonderful," I said. "How much did you have to pay for the land?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars a day."

"What!" I gasped. (Back in those

days fifteen hundred dollars was like fifteen thousand today.)

We had decided not to make a big thing of money, so there was little we could do but trust God. After the first day and a half we were five thousand dollars down — a rather awkward place to be.

That afternoon I preached on Romans 5:17: "We reign in life by one Christ . . ." As I finished I said, "Now as you meet one another for the next few days, address each other as 'King so-and-so.' You may address me as 'King Baxter.'"

That night I was handed an envelope addressed to "King Baxter." I opened it and read a delightful note: "Dear King Baxter, My wife and I have a feeling that our fellow king has a need. Out of our royal treasury we wish you to accept the enclosed check for \$5,000." I may not always have it, but there is money in the royal family.

### MOUNTING UP ON WINGS

The writer of Proverbs said that among those mysteries of the universe which were too hard to understand, one was the "mystery of an eagle in the air." The symbolism of this passage is the Christian's inexplicable potential which is like the eagle's, who can fly higher than any other bird and never wiggle a wing. What do I mean by "wiggle a wing"?

Did you notice that the Psalmist said that eagles "mount up," and not "flap up"? Eagles were not made to go flapping about — they were created to soar high and free. Eagles learn to fly without struggling because they understand the air currents. An eagle will perch on a rock and wait, testing the winds. When the right wind is blowing he lifts into the air with a royal scream. Herein is one of the eagle's secrets in being able to mount up — waiting. Those that wait, says the Scripture, will be the ones to mount up. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength . . ." This is the key to public worship as well. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, and you know not from whence it comes

nor whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." A Christian should fly without effort because he understands the secret of the winds.

I was once in a public worship service being led by a minister friend who had every natural gift for leading worship — voice, musical talent and personality. The worship was good, but it was not what the Spirit wanted. In the back of the auditorium a man kept raising his hand as if he wanted something quite urgent. Finally the pastor acknowledged him, "Yes, Brother." The man started singing a fine old chorus, "Glory and Honor . . ." All he wanted to do was get a chance to ride an air current that had been blowing on him for some time. That meeting took off and we rode that breeze of the Spirit all evening. There is a breeze in every meeting if we have the patience to wait for it. If we do not, then we join the crowd that says, "OK, let's whip it up, Come on, now . . ." No thanks, it is easier to soar than to flap!

### HIGH FLIGHT

Something in an eagle demands he fly higher than all the other birds. He often flies well beyond the view of the naked eye.

He rises past the crows on the telephone wires who screech, "Cawwww, Cawwww, stop and we'll give you the latest on the Sunday school superintendent, Cawwww, Cawwww."

But the eagle calls back, "I'm not interested! I'm going up beyond the clouds where I can look full into the face of the sun."

Even though an eagle flies high into the blinding sun, he is equally adapted to dark mountain valleys. He has two sets of eyelids. With his earthly eyelids he can see perfectly well at ground level, or he can roll down his heavenly ones and play in the glaring glory of the sun.

Christians must know how to walk on the earth as well as fly in the glory. It is possible to become so spiritual that we cannot see reality in our daily lives. Never become so spiritual that you will not provide for your family,



love your wife, play ball with the kids or take out the garbage.

"Take out the garbage! I'm a son of God!" you may object.

Friend, with what dignity a son of God can take out the garbage!

As the eagle mounts high above the clouds, he sails those great air currents into the very presence of God. You I are not fashioned for the dirt and pollution. We were not born to be dirty crows on a telephone line. We are appointed to the pure worship of God, to climb into the rare atmosphere of the Holy of Holies.

Some ask, "How far can I go, Baxter?"

*"Enoch walked with God and was not because God took him."* That eagle flew high! One day he flew so high that God said, "Enoch, it is closer for you to come on up than to go back."

How high? A wonderful man of my congregation, whose job it is to care for beautiful, prize-winning horses, drew me aside after the service one morning. He was a very timid and gentle man; he spoke apologetically as he said, "Pastor, one of the horses in my charge is very sick and not expected to live. Do you think . . ." his voice trailed off before he finished.

"You wonder if I believe God can heal your horse, don't you?" I asked.

He admitted that that was what he wanted to know.

"Do you believe that He can?" I questioned.

"Yes, Pastor, I do," he answered.

I took his hands and together we asked God to reach out and heal that horse.

I am one of the few pastors that I know who has a picture of a horse hanging on his wall. People can tell me, "I don't believe that God heals horses!" They can let their horses die — God healed this one.

How high? George Mueller was once told by a captain of a ship on which he was a passenger that the ship could not make New York on schedule because of a dense fog that had set in. "We'll see about that," said George Mueller. As George Mueller prayed the fog lifted and the boat hastened toward

his waiting appointment in New York.

People can say, "I don't believe that God lifts fogs!" They will stay in a fog, but God lifts fogs for people that have the faith to have fogs lifted.

God has made us eagles like Himself and He wants us to fly! All the experiences which we become so excited about — our conversion, our baptism in the Holy Spirit, the spiritual gifts — are but a part of our introduction to the supernatural life that demands us to become God-like because we are partakers of the divine nature.

The eagle is purposed for the high places — Obadiah 4 states that it sets its nest "among the stars." If we find ourselves unhappy and frustrated, if Christianity does not become what we hoped, then it may be that we have not comprehended God's calling to nest high. We are created to live in a divine atmosphere, and we will die if we dwell in a polluted world.

How high? My answer: How well do you understand the air currents? How thoroughly do you know the moving of the Spirit of God? Perceiving the Spirit of God is more than a subjective feeling. It is minding the things of the Spirit. It is right conduct, obedience to the Word of God, knowing the will of God and doing it. The Spirit and Word are inseparable. If you do not allow the Word of God to rule your life, but allow sin into your life, then you cancel your ability to ride the air currents. You have become a flapper. You may shout louder and LOUDER, sing harder and HARDER, pray longer and LONGER; but you will not rise an inch, you are flapping your wings in dead air.

### NECESSITY OF FREEDOM

An eagle free in his natural habitat is a very clean bird. If, however, he is placed in captivity he becomes one of the dirtiest birds in the world. In like manner, a Christian who has become captive and lost the freedom of the Spirit of God, will become "a dirty bird." Do you know what the deepest bondage is a Christian can fall into? Allowing himself to digress into religious forms which are not accord-

ing to the Word of God. Religious bondage is not just ecclesiastical ceremony, it is most often that which was once full of life but is now part of "the way we do things." It is God confined to your system. "Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Paul was speaking of the bondage of religious form. The wine of the Spirit is always new, and if we try to place it in old wineskins, the skins will burst, and both will be lost. In all the world there is nothing more cruel and dead than a bunch of religious people who have lost the anointing.

What is there left after the anointing departs? We are told in 2 Kings 6 that in the siege of Samaria that all the people had left to eat was asses' heads and doves' dung. It is not very pretty is it? This is God's view of what remains after His anointing is gone. Asses' heads typify human wisdom without God, and doves' dung is all that is left after a dove flies away.

When you come into the presence of God, you can rest assured that it will not be because of your PhD, or because you have memorized the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. We come to live in the presence of God by knowing the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. Understanding the movement of the winds is the only way we will ever find the altitude to dwell in the presence of God. It makes no difference if you are a Doctor of Philosophy, or a garbage collector, you stand on equal footing in God's economy. Can you understand what I am saying? Otherwise Christianity is reduced to a philosophical system that is likened to asses' heads. It is merely human wisdom without divine content. Twenty-eight hundred times in Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, he says, "Let us assume." This is human wisdom without divine content.

Doves' dung represents what is left after the Holy Spirit has departed. All over the world and in every segment of religious life we find edifices, remembrances, and practices that serve as monuments to a time when the Holy



Spirit brooded in divine presence, dispensing His beautiful gifts. The Holy Spirit was forced out — He was unwanted because He threatened the structure of ambitious ecclesiastics. But when He was gone, the forms had to be maintained for the people's sake. The Pharisees wanted to keep the form, but not Jesus; He was too unpredictable and disruptive.

Many of the rites and ceremonies in the traditional church are what is left of something that was once spontaneous and full of life.

Often when I am under a strong anointing I will begin to chant my message. Once in a service in Phoenix I came under an unusual anointing and began to chant. After the service a young Greek Orthodox English Professor from the University of Arizona rushed up and began to greet and hug me after the custom of a Middle Easterner, saying, "My Brother, where did you learn the Gregorian chant?"

"The what?" I asked.

"The Gregorian chant," he insisted. "I know priests who have studied it for years trying to master it as well as you have."

A little bewildered and embarrassed I had to admit that I was not even sure what the Gregorian chant was.

"Then where did it come from?" he questioned.

"Oh, I think I *can* tell you that," I answered. What had once been done quite naturally under the anointing of the Spirit of God was now carried on as part of a church rite, void of the spontaneity of the Spirit. I do not mean any of these things disrespectfully, but at one time when hands were laid on heads for confirmation and the words were uttered, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," something happened. Now, it often is empty hands on empty heads. It is the tragedy of doves' dung. All we have left is a memory of a beautiful bird. The Christian must know the freedom to ride the wind into the face of the sun.

## WHEN EAGLES DIE

Every eagle will have his down time.

NEW WINE

He may be sick or molting, but he never panics. He finds a rock and sits there letting the healing power of the sun do its work. If you find a low place in your life, do not start running around trying to find God — for the people will say to you, "Here is Christ, there is Christ," and it will bring frustration. David said, "I waited patiently on the Lord." God often has a work to do and all we are asked to do is wait. There will again come a time of mounting up on wings, but the waiting must come first.

Every eagle knows when his time for death has come. He finds a high rock where he can watch the setting sun and settles down to wait, and then dies watching the sun.

There is only one picture on my study wall and it is that of my saintly, maternal grandmother. As a very young child Grandma took over much of my rearing. My earliest memories are that of toddling up to the picturesque little picket fence in front of her home on a Saturday morning looking forward to all the delicious smelling goodies that she took from the cavernous depths of her vast old-fashioned oven. How I loved her.

Because of the religious confusion that was in our home, I walked in rebellion as a teenager, but Grandma never let go of me. She was living in our home by that time, and I can remember well stumbling into the house at three or four o'clock in the morning and seeing her light shining under the door. I could hear her sobbing, "Oh, God, oh God!" Even though I usually felt like kicking the door down, I knew that it meant something.

The time came when God got me. I had dissipated my life until I was a moral, physical and spiritual wreck, before He found me. Using what musical talent I had, I set out in the Lord's work and soon found myself in the ministry.

Grandma ended up moving with us to Vancouver where I had my first important charge. She came to every service and sat in the front row and just smiled at me. (I don't think she

ever heard a word I said.) She was saying, "You answered, Lord, you answered." She was nearly eighty and had the most beautiful white hair you ever saw.

Every day for four hours, Grandma would sit in her old rocker and rock out an anthem of praise and supplication to God for me. Her prayers sustained me in a way that I was to realize only after she was gone.

Grandma always lived alone — she was too independent to live with us. One day when I was visiting her for a meal she suddenly said, "I'm going home."

"Home?" I asked, "Home where?"

"I'm going home to be with the Lord," she replied like it was something quite ordinary.

"Oh, Grandma," I objected, "don't do that!"

"Yes," she insisted, as though she and the Lord had talked it over and it was all settled.

A little unsure of what to make of it, I asked, "What are you going to do?"

Quite positively she answered, "I am giving notice on my room, I will go back to the prairies to spend Christmas with the children, and then I am going home."

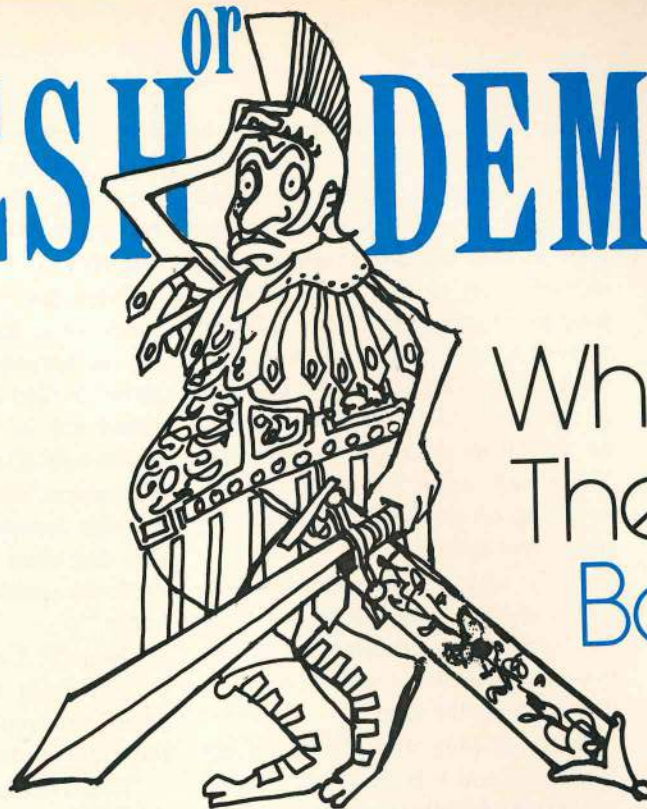
That is exactly what she did. With Christmas only three months away, she went back to the prairies for the holidays, wrote her Christmas cards and put everything in order. When she was ready she called all the children together and did all the decent things one does when one dies. She called for the pastor and had him read her favorite psalm (she was two verses ahead of him by memory) and told everyone good-bye. When she had attended to everything she turned her face toward the sun and slipped into the presence of God.

Grandma was an eagle. She died as eagles die, looking into the sun. Somehow I think this is how saints were meant to step into eternity.

There is great reward in God for those who will dare to be eagles and learn to soar into what God purposed us to be. 🦅



# FLESH <sup>or</sup> DEMONS?



Where's  
The  
Battle?

by Bob Mumford

**T**hese two words — *flesh* and *demons* — represent live and active enemies in the life of the believer. We are all aware that the Christian life is a warfare from start to finish. Therefore, it is well to know the facts, as well as the faces, that our enemies present. How can we fight intelligently and effectively until we know the force we resist? How can we choose weapons and plan strategy when we are not certain of the foe? It is vital that we distinguish between these two adversaries.

First of all, let us acknowledge that Satan is the source from which problems with both flesh and demons emanate. He is the corrupter of the flesh, being responsible for bringing into a sinful state the perfect creation of God. He is also the propagator of demons. They work within the framework of his order. There is a set limit to the powers of Satan. Armed with two basic weapons, deception and accusation, he is most often successful in his operation — *except where and when Jesus is in command!*

## LEGAL DECLARATION OR LIVING DEMONSTRATION?

There is a difference between the legal declarations of God and the claiming, or living out of these declara-

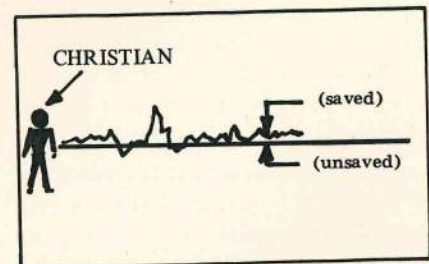
tions. On the one hand, we have the forensic or legal transactions that have been imparted to us by God through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there is the experiential or entering into the promises. This principle needs to be thoroughly understood before we can successfully move into Christian warfare. Consider these two examples.

In the Old Testament, God said to Israel, "I have given you the land." This was a legal declaration. However, the Israelites had to move in and possess the land through actual experience and warfare . . . step by step . . . battle by battle . . . situation by situation. God had given the promise, "I have given you everything your feet shall tread upon." But the people had to pick up their feet and move forward under their own propulsion. Through following God's guidance and obeying His commands, they laid claim to the promise.

Moving into the New Testament, we are promised a new life in Jesus Christ through *His* life, death and resurrection. We have imparted righteousness. But, as believers, we must live out that righteousness step by step. Many Christians live merely on the legal statements that, "All that Christ has purchased for me is mine! . . . Jesus paid it all!" Both of these statements are fact and yet many who

make this claim live defeated lives — out of fellowship within the family circle and with daily associates . . . as well as carrying burdens in financial, emotional and physical realms. What is wrong? What they have been given legally through their acceptance of Christ as Saviour, has not been worked out experientially in their lives.

Pictured below is the trend of living many Christians experience. They are subsisting on minimal provision. If they had any less, they hardly would have anything!



This is definitely *not* the normal Christian life — the one God wants and intends for His children. He has provided for so much more! Christ purchased for us the joy and privilege of walking and living in the Spirit. He meant for us to overcome in both the area of flesh *and* demons. We *acknowledge* that the victory has already been won by Christ, but *recognize* that it must be claimed by individual believers.

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**BOB MUMFORD**

Outstanding Bible teacher, in demand around the world; also author and leader in the present sweep of the spirit.

## THE FLESH: SCRIPTURE SPEAKS

Listen as Paul deals with this problem in the lives of the Galatians (5:16-26). Remember, he is writing to born-again and Spirit-baptized believers:

(16) This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

(17) For the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit wars against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other: so that you are unable to do the things that you want to do.

(18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

(19) Now the works of the flesh [Notice Paul does not give demons the blame for the following conditions. He knew, and he wants us to know, that we can have a head full of Bible truths and know all about walking in the Spirit and yet we can be walking in the flesh!] are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

(20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

(21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Do you see that knowing the right way does not guarantee any kind of walk in the Spirit? Do you see, too, that we may have been blaming the outworkings of the flesh on demons? Many times we hear, "The devil made me do it!" We need to make a distinction right here and see that God does not permit us to lay the blame for these on demon activity. He says to us, "The works of the flesh are . . ."

The first four sins mentioned are

sexual sins. We are living in a day when our "flesh" is fed sex morning, noon and night. Little wonder that it thrives so well!

Then along comes a beguiling couple, "idolatry and witchcraft." Interesting, isn't it, that witchcraft initially is not a demon. There is something inside us that is open to fleshly curiosity in realms that do not belong to us. Later we shall see how this "something" opens the door to enemy occupation.

Next we have a list of evidences that cut a little closer to home than the above. They appear a bit more respectable but are just as despicable: hatred . . . variance (literally, self-willed and so stubborn as to cause splits) . . . emulations (a strong form of jealousy) . . . wrath (a heightened form of anger) . . . strife . . . seditions (undermining people and situations) . . . heresies . . . envyings . . .

Paul brings to a close this long recording of the works of the flesh with three more ugly outworkings: murders, drunkenness, revellings. Finally, for want of further detailing, he just says, "and such like." We gather that his list is not complete! For that matter, we might add self-pity . . . gossip . . . criticism . . . and others that fit our own particular "works of the flesh."

As a warning, he states: ". . . those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Notice, he does not say that these "shall not go to heaven." One can be "legally" saved and yet walk in God's minimum provision. The riches available to us are:

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

(23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

(25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

What about verse 24? I want to give you this in a literal translation found in both Old and New Testaments, "They that are ruled by King Jesus have crucified the flesh with the affec-

tions and lusts thereof."

Did you see even *one* mention, in all of this exhortation, about *demons*? Is it possible that we have been attributing to demon activity the things that Paul tells us are works of the flesh? In order to see this teaching is consistent with his instructions to other first-century churches, we turn to his letters to the Thessalonians and the Romans. These bear out our principle of legal declaration and living demonstration.

For this is the will of God even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour (I Thessalonians 4:3-4)

What was Paul saying these believers were doing? By implication, in asking them to abstain, we can assume they were engaged in moral breakdowns. He is telling them they should have control over their own bodies. Remember Paul's listing fornication as one of the "works of the flesh"? Weymouth's translation of the latter portion of verse 4 is: ". . . that everyone of you should learn how to gain control over your own body." How is this possible?

As a teacher, Paul is both practical and precise. In his letter to the Romans, he delineates the process of "reigning over" or "ruling" our bodies and their desires.

For if by one man's offence death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life (Romans 5:17).

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your-



selves to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:12-16).

Do you get the picture here of a Christian "slave"? There is no intimation whatever that if the Christian died he would not go to heaven. It has nothing to do with heaven. That is a legal transaction already effected and sealed . . . it is a gift to the believer. But it is possible for a Christian to become a slave to sins of the flesh.

When we face real problems and situations in life, we need real answers! If it is a sex problem . . . stealing . . . anger . . . jealousy . . . fear — there is a battle going on. If something inside is eating at your vitals, you want to know *why* and *how* this can be resolved. You may say, "I rebuke you, Devil!" but the devouring process continues.

The key word, as given by Paul, is *yield*. From the very first and faintest *yield*, the chains of slavery begin to materialize. Each succeeding yielding becomes another link and soon is forged a binding that makes one a "slave." No matter what the form of sin, we become a slave to that sin. We may not like to hear this, but it is basic Bible truth.

Solomon, noted for his wisdom, left us some thoughts on yielding and ruling in everyday living.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city (Proverbs 16:32).

Solomon spoke from experience. Hadn't he been ruler over conquered cities — and yet fallen prey to a spirit out of control?

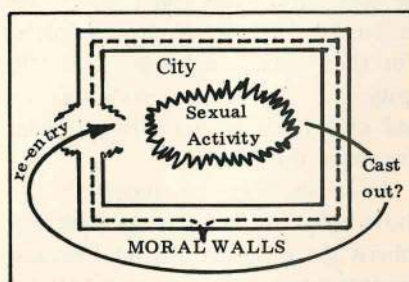
Two other "conquerors of cities," Alexander the Great and Nero, were also slaves to their fleshly pursuits. The former battled violence, anger and lust — and at the height of his career died with syphilis. The latter, although a man of might on the outside, was driven within to homosexuality and other debilitating sins.

This is a universal truth. It applies to ministers . . . school teachers . . . homemakers . . . psychiatrists — all

are cut from the same cloth and subject to the same wear and tear. Knowledge, training, experience — these are not sufficient to meet the attacks of the enemy. In fact, the greatest single profession in the world today with the highest number of suicides is psychiatry. And they are supposed to have all the answers! A person can say, "You're not to react that way . . . that is a Freudian complex." An exterior of calm assurance may be a cover-up for an interior out of control. Could this have been true of Solomon as he said, "He that has no rule over own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Proverbs 25:28).

### BROKEN WALLS . . . ENEMY ENTRANCE!

We have established the fact that the norm for the Christian life is to learn to control one's body and rule over one's spirit. This is what the Lord has provided for and desires from us. Then, why isn't this an actuality in our lives? Does the below diagram provide some answers?



Do you see the moral walls of a man's life . . . the cause of battle within . . . the break? Can you see why deliverance, as a ministry, might be rejected by some who consider it ineffective? Does a proper understanding of Proverbs 25:28 offer help in answering some questions?

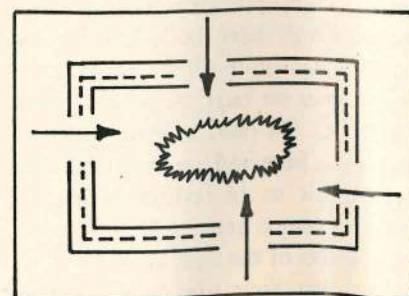
Our first demon under discussion is sexual perversion. It could just as easily be labeled anger . . . stealing . . . alcoholism . . . drugs . . . or any of a dozen other evils that plague Christians. They needn't, but they do. God has provided "the way," but it is a matter of individual choice — just as

it was with the Israelites in laying claim to their portion of the Promised Land.

Sex, as ordained by God from the beginning is the beautiful outworking of His provision for male and female — "and they shall become one flesh." In Genesis chapter 2, we read of God's crowning creation, man and woman. Jesus referred to this divine order which God established, and Paul had much to say about the sanctity of the institution of marriage. It is man who has brought about the perversion of God's perfect provision for his sexual satisfactions.

Throughout nearly seventeen years of counseling, I have seen men and women driven to extremely demanding situations. They may cry out . . . pray . . . fast . . . seek to believe God for relief. One may suggest deliverance as the remedy. Even if deliverance is experienced, can you see how this may not be a permanent solution to the problem? What about that break in the wall? Is the demon aware of re-entry possibilities? You can bet your life he is! And we should be, too.

Let us ask ourselves . . . how did that single break in the moral wall occur? Remember the word Paul used in Romans 6:12-16 . . . *yield*. The individual yielded — and the wall suffered a break. It could start with being introduced to immorality in the sexual realm through a baby-sitter (parents, care is needed here), or through pornographic material on a local bookstand, or any of a dozen other evil outlets rampant in our society. After the initial yielding, the second and third follow, paced by Satan to the personal weakness of the one in control of the city. Here is how the city walls come to look before too long.





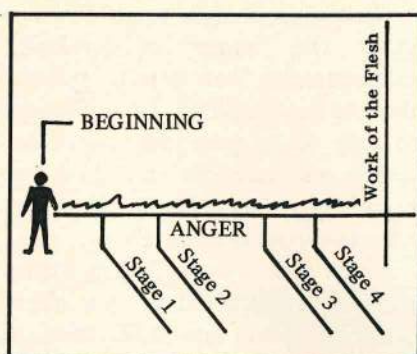
Taking another "plague," let's watch the principle at work. The command of God says, "Thou shalt not steal." Members of the early church were told, "Him that stole, let him steal no more." At age thirteen, stealing may begin at the local dime store . . . then comes bigger loot — boxing gloves, baseball equipment . . . finally — a car! The walls are breaking down and the fact now is that the individual would steal if there were no demon. He has become a "stealer" by the works of the flesh — yielding to evil desires as the opportunities come his way. In psychology, this weakness is called "kleptomania." Whatever the label, it is stealing and began by yielding to the desire to have something that did not belong to him. Demon activity may result, but casting out the demon is not the complete answer.

What is the relationship between the works of the flesh and the demon occupancy . . . the casting out and the coming back to re-inhabit and to haunt?

### BULWARK OR BREAKDOWN?

We return to our key word, *yield*. This small word denotes action, as well as choice. In road signs, "yield" demands "giving the right of way." Paul said we could either "yield ourselves as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin — or unto God . . . for instruments unto righteousness." The first choice results in gradual, but certain, breakdown of the moral fiber of the personality. This moral fiber forms the bulwark so that neither the works of the flesh nor demons can invade our spiritual city.

We have used sexual sins and stealing as examples — now we shall use anger. This may be considered by some as not as gross a sin as the other two; but in the sight of God, anger — uncalled-for and uncontrolled — is sin. It follows the same principle we have been examining and can result in a series of steps that lead to murder! Another diagram serves to picture this progression.



We are going to build a hypothetical case. Say that as a little boy I got angry. Temper tantrums were my outlet (*Stage 1*). Did you know temper tantrums in a child serves to break down the moral walls in his life? Parents: are you listening? Galatians 5:20 included "wrath" as a work of the flesh. Wrath is temper tantrums some decades removed from childhood.

Here I want to introduce another important word — *handle*. As we *yield* to a weakness, a *handle* begins to form. Satan is quick to detect this lever, knowing he can use it to maneuver us into a place where the moral wall is impaired . . . the first stone crumbles . . . before long a hole appears . . . surrounding stones become affected . . . soon an entire section of the wall falls.

Watch now the progress. If I entertain *anger* . . . as I yield . . . can you see the handle forming? I may try to excuse myself — call it bad temper, just a personality trait. I may not consider my yieldings too important — may pacify myself by saying I am not as violent as some people I know.

Then one day as I again "yield to the works of the flesh," an incident as small as a faulty P.A. system in the building where I am speaking may trigger a spark (*Stage 2*). The spark keeps smoldering and I go to the parking lot to get into my car. There I find someone has parked next to my new automobile, leaving a beautiful crease right down the fender. I explode! (*Stage 3*). "What's the matter with these people. They're supposed to be Christians?"

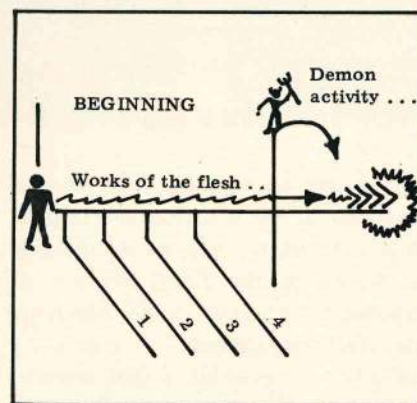
What is happening? Anger on anger — I am continuing to yield. When the

driver of the car shows up, I am waiting for him with both barrels loaded. His adverse response to my accusations leads to a fist fight.

Following our diagram, I am at about *Stage 4* — and along comes a special anointing born in hell — don't laugh, this happens — and I pick up a jack-handle and strike out in blind rage. Do you get the *growth pattern* — irritation to blind rage! When I "come to my senses" and the police officer asks, "What happened here?" I blankly say, "I don't know." What happened, really? Demon activity came in at a given point and drew the developing work of the flesh into an area where I never intended for it to go.

You may say, "My anger never gets out of control." Perhaps it hasn't yet! But have there been instances of anger where murder has been in your heart . . . and given the right situation . . . things could have developed for which you would have to be eternally sorry?

For the sake of clarity, I want to present for a second time our stage by stage procedure. We will leave blank the particular area of operation, discuss a few possibilities, and leave each reader to make application and/or substitution!



Remember what we said about *sex* within God's prescribed lines? But outside . . . that is yielding to the flesh. Little attentions to someone else's wife/husband can be a beginning . . . telephone calls on pretext of good intentions . . . sending little presents . . . playing little games . . . what is happening? Along comes a copy of Playboy magazine — or a



torrid love scene on television . . . explosion point may come anywhere along the line. That is why you don't fool around with even the smallest inclination in this direction. Suddenly and unexpectedly you find yourself involved in an extra-marital affair. You never intended to go that far . . . but once you give the devil a *handle*, he delights in dragging you on out to the end — forming conclusions which cause eternal loss!

What about *witchcraft*? It may begin with reading your horoscope in the daily newspaper. That's not a demon — but it is a *handle*. "Don't make any business transactions tomorrow." The next night you have a dream. The following day you see a "dream book" at the newsstand. Before you know it, you are in the occult. A Ouija board now appears on your agenda. Remember — *to whom you yield, to him you are a servant*. Did Paul have his progression grounded in reality or not?

Consider the ultimate cop-out — *suicide*. It starts with feelings of self-pity and travels along our same lines and finally opens one to demon activity. Before you realize it, there stands a compelling suggestion that you take your own life . . . life isn't worth living, anyhow . . . no one really cares — explosion! And it is not only unbelievers that explode!

### HOW TO HANDLE THE HANDLE

How are we to gauge whether our reactions to life situations are responsible and mature, or if we are yielding to works of the flesh? We are all exposed to conditions under which we may feel resentment . . . anger . . . self-pity . . . possible sexual stimulation. These are all a part of the world in which we live.

We have seen that it is God's will that each of us should learn how to gain control over his body (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4). We have, also, looked at the way God has ordained that we go about this "learning" process (Romans 6:12-16). Now what we have to do is put into practice these teachings. Not so easy, is it?

Granted, it is easier to put down on paper the "stages" of developing inconsistencies than it is to evaluate them in our own lives. Two guidelines to help us to gain insight into our actions and reactions are: (1) is my response(s) compulsive? (2) is my response(s) out of control?

I wish each of us could draw a chart upon which we could set up a line of demarcation and say, "Everything on this side of the line is acceptable and right — everything on the other side is contributing to breakdown of the moral walls of my city." But, it isn't that simple. A review of some of our conclusions to date may help.

(a) There is a difference between the *normal* Christian life and the *average* Christian life. God intends the former — most of us experience the latter. We need not continue in that condition.

(b) There is a difference between the works of the *flesh* and the works of *demons*. The former can precipitate the latter when continuing indulgence is permitted.

(c) The works of the flesh form a *handle* by which the devil manipulates us into *yielding* to his pressures. Demon activity can spring into evidence at a given point along the way.

(d) Deliverance from demonic control will not avail *permanent cure* when one's moral walls are impaired — even a small hole permits re-entry.

(e) *Eliminate the handle!* You may counter with the question, "Isn't there any guideline I can count on before I yield often enough to permit a handle to form . . . to cause a break in my moral walls . . . to reach the area of compulsive and uncontrolled behavior?"

### Dx. and Rx.

I want to use two words from the medical field to answer that question: *Dx.* — *Diagnosis*, and *Rx.* — *Prescription*. Flesh or Demon? Many people never find out which because there has never been a proper diagnosis.

**DIAGNOSIS:** Suppose someone comes to me — "Bob, I think I have a demon of envy. It pains me to see

others prosper, be successful or enjoy life. Can you help me?" Where do I begin? I probe into the foundation upon which that life is operating. Do you recall Paul asking some questions of a group of men in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)?

And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples [*he begins his diagnosis*], he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized. And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

Just as Paul's questions show the importance of a proper foundation, so we should check our foundation. Works of the flesh can never be dealt with until we have "come up to ground level." Here is pictured three stones which should be firmly laid in the life of every believer.



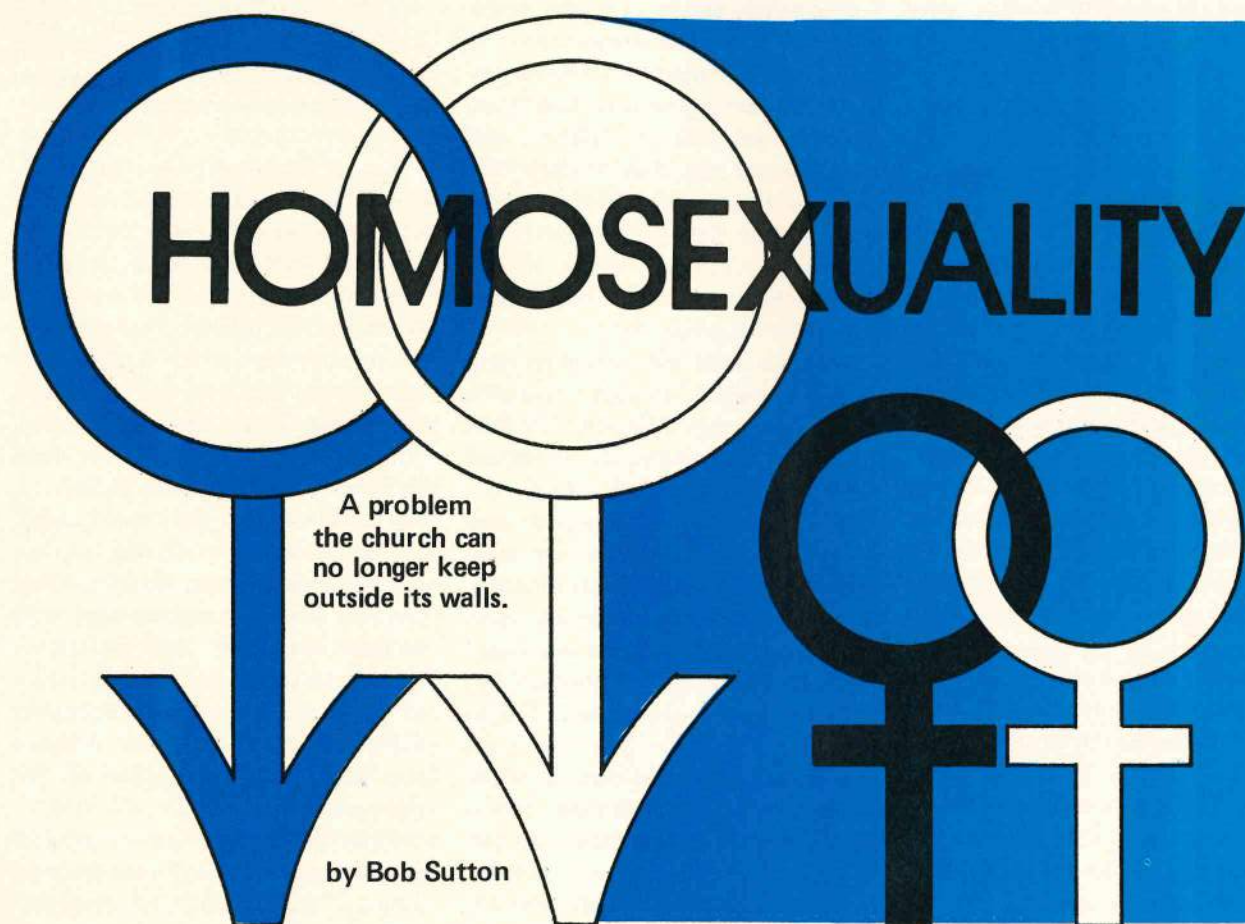
*First* is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Acceptance of the finished work of Jesus opens the doorway into the kingdom (John 8:24).

*Second* is valid New Testament water baptism. This step puts a grave between the old life and the new life in Christ (Romans 6:4).

*Third* is baptism in the Holy Spirit. An up-to-date, flowing experience in

(Continued on page 19)





In a major denominational magazine the pastor of a homosexual congregation in San Francisco states, "I'm a gay man, and a minister. I expect to go home tonight to my gay lover with whom I have lived for thirteen years. Tomorrow I expect to preach to my congregation and to administer communion to them. And I thank God that I feel quite good about it all."

The Gay Liberation Movement is demanding that homosexuals have the legal right to marry and adopt children. Homosexual movies and slick pornographic magazines are available on newsstands showing homosexual acts between both men and women. Why the seeming explosion of open



homosexual activity in our society?

Over the past few decades society's view of homosexuality has changed radically. Until recently homosexuality was generally viewed as a perversion and a sin of the grossest sort against God and nature.

After the Enlightenment and the beginning of modern science, man began to try to find explanations for himself and the world around him through scientific investigation apart from the Word of God. From this intellectual climate came psychology — the study of behavior. Unwilling to accept a biblical concept of man's nature, psychologists sought to ascribe unusual or deviant behavior to a cause and effect pattern.

Carried to a logical conclusion, homosexuality was no longer a sin, but a behavioral pattern which was merely *different* from the norm. It was caused by a set of circumstances in the life of the individual — parental problems or a traumatic childhood, for instance; more recently, the theory that it is caused by genetic patterns within the person.

Following the trends of modern medicine and psychology, many sections of the church have sought to open their doors to practicing homosexuals, not just as members, but as part of the clergy.

On June 25, 1973, the United Church of Christ ordained William Johnson, a practicing homosexual, to the ministry in their denomination. Johnson says, "I am gay and I make that affirmation with joy and pride." He is now the executive director of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual for his denomination; and he states firmly that his position "... is rooted in the gospel of Christ."

The July/August 1973 issue of *Trends Magazine*, a publication of the United Presbyterian Church for older youth and adults, dealt extensively with the issue of homosexuality and featured the story of William Johnson. What was the magazine trying to get across to young Presbyterians? Homosexuals should be accepted as individuals with a variant life style. It is neither sick, sinful nor unnatural. On

the contrary, homosexuality is practiced by wholesome, normal people. What should be the Christian's view of homosexuality among both men and women?

### A BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING

Our society has become the victim of subjective moral standards — or doing what is "right" for you as you see it. The crying need is for a clear, objective, impartial standard — and who better qualifies to set that standard than man's Creator. God's word in the Scripture offers us an objective standard which is not affected by time, current philosophy, or popular opinions.

To understand the biblical position of homosexuality, we need to examine God's design and purpose for sex. Essentially there are three biblical purposes for sex:

*First:* Sexual relationships were designed by God to bring a man and a woman into a physical/spiritual union. God said of man, "He shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be *one flesh*" (Genesis 2:24). Paul identified this with the sex act in 1 Corinthians 6:16 where he says, "The one who joins himself to [has sexual relations with] a harlot is *one body with her*. For he says [quoting Genesis 2:24] 'the two will become one flesh.' " (NASV). Sexual relationships cause the man and the woman to enter into a union of body and soul called "becoming one flesh."

The sexual union is only part of "becoming one flesh," but it is the essence of the nature of man and woman in that they were not created complete without the other. After God had made all creation and pronounced it "good," He looked at man and said, "It is *not good* for man to be alone." Man, God's own creation was incomplete! So God made woman to complete man. The Scripture says, "*male and female* created he them." These two words speak of the sexual identities of man and woman which is more than just physical organs; it is a part of the total emotional and mental make-up of the person. It speaks of

*maleness and femaleness.*

Bob Mumford expresses it this way in *Living Happily Ever After*:

God designed marriage to bring to man and woman the ultimate in blessings. In order for this to be accomplished, God says in effect, "When I made man, I only made a half. Then when he meets his mate, he meets the other half." That which is inadequate in itself must have these "missing parts" supplied if happiness is to result. (p. 18)

Sexual relationships are an expression of God's design for the union and mutual fulfillment of male and female.

*Second:* Sex and marriage is to be a physical picture of the union between Christ and the believer. Paul compares the relationship of the husband and wife to that of Christ and the church in Ephesians, chapter 5. He says, "Husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies . . . just as Christ also does the church." He concludes by referring to our original passage from Genesis, "And the two [the man and woman] shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to *Christ and the church*" (Ephesians 5:31-32 NASV). God designed marriage to be a picture of His relationship with us.

*Third:* God made sex for procreation. To the man and woman God said simply, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:28).

Anyone ministering to homosexuals to any degree has realized that it is a bondage practically unequalled in the spiritual world. The degree of bondage will vary, usually depending on the intensity and duration of homosexual activity. In any case, the man or woman who engages in homosexual activity to *any degree* opens himself, either actually or potentially, to one of the deepest bondages in Satan's arsenal. History and Scripture give us clues as to the seriousness and depth of this bondage.

First, in God's eyes homosexuality is flatly called an abomination. It was an act that the Mosaic Law considered punishable by death (Leviticus 20:13). So closely does God guard proper



sexual identities that even the switching of articles of men's and women's clothing was called "an abomination" (Deuteronomy 22:5). Homosexuality amounts to a mingling of God ordained sexual identities innate in male and female and is considered a perversion or a twisting of divine order.

Secondly, history has shown that a national acceptance of homosexuality is a point at which divine judgment usually falls upon a civilization. This can be seen in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18 & 19); the perversion of the nations which inhabited Canaan when Israel was ordered to drive them out completely (Leviticus 18:19-24 & Numbers 33:51-53); and from the historical records of Rome, Greece, Egypt and other great civilizations which have fallen under divine judgment.

Thirdly, there is a quality in the very nature of homosexuality that links it with the perverted rebellion of Satan and the demonic spirits. History and experience show that demonic forces, by their very nature, when left to run unchecked will eventually lead to perversion. Romans 1:18-32 pictures vividly the nature of this rebellion which ends in a perversion of divine order. So strong does this power become that those committing these acts receive, "in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (Romans 1:27 NASV). This is the personality change that occurs when one completely opens himself and gives himself over to a life of homosexual activity. The spiritual forces behind homosexuality are of such magnitude that they can completely change the God-given sexual identities of men and women. This personality change is recognized in 1 Corinthians 6:9 where Paul says that homosexuals and those effeminate (or masculine) will not inherit the kingdom of God. He speaks, of course, of personality changes because of sexual perversion.

### SOME CURRENT THOUGHTS

Within the church there have risen various lines of thought concerning

homosexuality; mostly from the influence of modern psychology and the Gay Liberation Movement, that could use some examination in light of what we have just discussed from the Scripture.

One of the most common statements that is heard is: *Homosexuality is not wrong; it is only a different or variant life style*. Scripture only recognizes one normal, healthy sexual relationship — a heterosexual relationship within the marriage context. Homosexuality, it says very plainly, is *against nature* (Romans 1:26-27); there is nothing natural about it. Also, if we apply this logic to homosexuality, then we must also say that adultery, fornication, incest, and a host of other sins listed with homosexuality are only "variant life styles" and drop the offensive label of "sin."

Another statement often heard is:

*Homosexuality is a sickness or a genetic deviation for which we must have compassion and understanding.*

First of all, Scripture never remotely suggests that homosexuality is an emotional sickness. If it were, then the Scripture would have commanded that we visit and comfort the homosexual as we are to do for the sick, afflicted and feeble-minded. Rather the Scripture flatly calls it sin and states that the homosexual is responsible for his actions. As far as a genetic defect goes, the only genetic defect God recognizes in regard to homosexuality is the genetic defect within all of us that we inherited from our father Adam, and that is a nature that wants to sin.

Without question, Christians are to be compassionate and understanding when dealing with people's problems. There is a danger, however, in allowing compassion to be shaped by humanism rather than by the Holy Spirit. It is possible to become more humane than God! Critics of the Christian stand on homosexuality have pointed out that Jesus said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you." They forget that He added, "... go and *sin no more*." A Spirit-filled Christian who lived for years in bondage to homosexuality commented to a Christian friend who had led him

to Christ, "What I needed most was a shoulder to cry on; but I also needed someone who would not tolerate my ways and would tell me so."

The charge is often leveled at Christians that they *discriminate against homosexuals* who desire to be a part of their churches or fellowships. To make this statement is to totally misunderstand the nature of the church. God has given us no right to discriminate against the unregenerate; they are all the same in His sight. Yet, in the body of the church the command is plain that we are to discriminate and deal with those in the church who will not live according to the Word of God. Paul told the Corinthian church that he had never commanded them to stop associating with the people of the world no matter how bad they were, but he did say:

I wrote to you not to associate with a so-called brother if he should be an immoral person... For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves (1 Corinthians 5:11-13 NASV).

The church should have open arms for all who desire to repent and be changed by the gospel. But the church has the obligation to not allow those in their midst who stubbornly refuse to admit their sin and adhere to the commands of God.

### MINISTERING TO THE PROBLEM

What do you do if a homosexual comes to your group and asks for help? If you are a practicing homosexual — or someone who has stopped practicing but is still bound by the desires — how can you be set free? For too many years Christians have pasted religious bandages over the mortal wounds of homosexuals with glib little phrases like, "Jesus can set you free," and "Just trust the Lord." Then they leave the homosexual to struggle alone to find victory. If a homosexual is our brother in Christ and desires to be free



from his sin then we have an obligation to stand with him in his struggle.

There are no quick and easy cures to the homosexual problem. The problem is deeply ingrained and the roots are often hidden and complicated. To promise quick deliverance or instant freedom is to build up false hopes that can lead to failure and discouragement. Though there are no easy answers, there are several factors which *must* be considered and dealt with if eventual freedom is to be obtained.

### FACING SIN

One of the first and most important bridges to be crossed is understanding homosexual desires and practices as sin. When we speak of sicknesses, genetic patterns, parental failures, early influences, and so on, as the reason for the problem, we are not dealing with the root problem, *which is sin*. The cruelest thing anyone can do to a homosexual is tell him he is a homosexual because of his parents, of genes, etc. If it is the parents' fault, then there is no hope. If, however, it can be seen as a *sin* problem, then there is hope. Christ died to release us from the penalty *and* power of sin.

When a homosexual can come to the place that he can admit honestly, "I am a homosexual . . . I am responsible for my life and actions . . . I know it is a sin and I want help," then — because of his honesty and humility, the Holy Spirit is free to begin to minister new life and strength to him.

Even in this area the watch word is "tread lightly." There are those who, because of experiences over which they had no control, e.g., a homosexual rape or seduction before they were morally or physically capable of resisting, will have been trapped in this type of life. In these areas we must ever so gently allow the Holy Spirit to minister the conviction of sin and the need for repentance. Our legalism and Pharisaism can easily compound an already massive feeling of rejection by the "straight" world.

At the point where a homosexual wants to turn from his old life or repent, there may be a need for the ministry of deliverance from evil

spirits, especially if the bondage is long-standing and deeply rooted. Here the help of other Christians is important. After the repentance and denunciation of the sin of homosexuality, the demonic spirit associated with it may be commanded to leave the person's life in the name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of demonic possession, however, can never be allowed to foster a devil-made-me-do-it attitude. The homosexual must realize that *he* is responsible for the presence of the demonic spirit for two reasons: (1) because the spirit was *invited* to enter by participation in homosexual lust or activity; and (2) because in Christ we have the authority to command the demonic spirit to leave. To allow it to stay is disobedience to God for which we are responsible. Deliverance, however, should be *preceded* by true repentance and a commitment of our lives to the Lordship of Christ.

### PATTERN FOR FREEDOM

Paul gives us a pattern of freedom for those who have been in bondage to sin. In 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, he lists several types of people who, because of sinful lives will not have an inheritance in the kingdom of God — among these are homosexuals. But along with the fearful thought of having no inheritance in the kingdom of God, there is a wonderful statement of hope. To those in the Corinthian church who had been in bondage he says, "And such *were* some of you. *But* you were *washed*, but you were *sanctified*, but you were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the *Spirit* of our God." Five words speak to us from this passage.

First, *washing*: The word speaks of a cleansing of sin by the blood of Jesus that cleanses our conscience and hearts of the guilt of sin (1 John 1:7 and Hebrews 10:19–22). This occurs initially at salvation and must be applied daily.

A second washing is in water baptism. See Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:1–11. Water baptism, properly understood, deals with the power of sin in our lives and should be part of

the foundational experience of every Christian.

The word *justified* speaks of our legal standing before God on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross. Condemnation from himself and from others is one of the greatest battles for the homosexual. Once he has repented he must stand in the belief that God is standing with him and for him, even if he fails again and again (Romans 8:1; and 31–39).

The word *sanctified* is one of the most important. Sanctification means to consecrate or to set apart to God. Sanctification is both a separating *from* and a separating *to*. If the deliverance of a homosexual is ever to become complete, there must first be a complete separation from all the habits and associations that filled his life. Often a homosexual will continue to associate with old friends under the genuine concern of witnessing to them. Even this should not be allowed. The break must be *complete*! Friends and places associated with the life . . . clothes, literature, speech, expressive habits, etc. . . . every vehicle of temptation must be removed. Without this step, there will always be an avenue of temptation open.

The separation *to* involves a consecration to Christ and His will whatever the cost and whatever the sacrifice. Watchman Nee's book, *The Normal Christian Life*, (Chapter 6) deals with being set apart and consecrated to God and should be read. As a matter of fact, the entire book should be read and reread as an aid in understanding the battle with the flesh.

The next area this passage opens up is the *Lordship of Christ*. As Christians we sometimes tend to say, "Just follow Jesus" while we forget that many people not only do not know what we mean when we say that, they would not be capable of doing it if they did know. If we ever expect a new or immature Christian to experience the fullness of the Lordship of Christ, then we must be willing to be the pastors and fathers to bring them to that relationship.

One of the root problems of the homosexual is often a life source that



was tragically deficient in true authority. A domineering, pushy mother and a receding passive father — or in some cases a seemingly opposite pattern in an over-protective, coddling mother and a harsh hyper-critical father — will confuse the divine authority which was established in the home. The loss of the authority will not only produce sexual role identity problems, but leave a child spiritually uncovered and vulnerable to malicious attack.

Establishing a healthy relationship under the authority of a pastor or elder through the leading of the Holy Spirit will do a great deal to re-establish the needed divine authority. Because of the commitment involved in such a relationship there will be someone to whom a homosexual must be responsible for his actions and at the same time he will have someone to stand with him when the going gets rough. In this type of relationship under a qualified mature leader he will be able to learn the principle of serving within a relationship which will help break the pride and rebellion that fosters this type of

**FLESH OR DEMONS** (Cont. from pg. 14) the power and renewal of the Holy Spirit, with resulting joy and edification through praying in tongues, forms our third foundation (Acts 1:4,5).

This brings the believer to "ground level" for daily operational warfare in the Spirit. After the proper foundation is laid, we build the walls of moral integrity. These walls require perpetual maintenance. Imperfect knowledge and understanding about these basics, may hamper our ability to diagnose between works of the flesh and demon activity.

**PRESCRIPTION:** Watch carefully for any sign of a *handle* forming with which Satan can get hold and maneuver you into indulgences of the flesh.

A right knowledge and understanding of the three foundational stones provides solid ground for battle tactics against the works of the flesh. They will disappear as you take out the root system and not allow for new enemy plantings. The normal Christian life is

sin, and it will turn his eyes from a life style of self-gratification to serving others.

*The Holy Spirit* is mentioned as part of the instrument by which divine grace is ministered and as with every new Christian there should be a flowing baptism in the Holy Spirit from which strength and edification may be derived.

In spite of the depth of this bondage, there is hope. Many whom we know personally testify of many instances of full and complete freedom for those who have desired to walk free from this life style.

### WHERE THE NEED IS

Through ignorance and lack of compassion, the church, which was to have been the bearer of salvation to the sinner, has often done more to frustrate and drive the homosexual from Christ than to help him. For this we have only ourselves to blame.

First we must understand the depth of the problem. Homosexuality, by virtue of its very spiritual nature, is tied up in a total life style that often

not getting delivered every few days and then falling back into enemy territory. It is coming into a personal victory by learning the principle of the "yields."

Speaking of the principle of "yielding," I would recommend you read and re-read the first six chapters of the book, *The Normal Christian Life*, by Watchman Nee. When you understand what he is saying, you will learn to recognize danger signals and deal with them daily. This is clearly within the realm of workability.

With strong city walls, free of breakdown, you can be certain that should there be any demon activity, you will soon hear a cry of distress, "Let me out of here. I can't stand it!" You see, one thing a sex spirit must have is unclean atmosphere to exist. One thing a spirit of envy cannot stand is satisfaction and contentment. A spirit of anger is forced to the point of starvation by maintaining calmness, quietness and joy in the Lord.

Do you see that a demon of any

involves medical problems, failures and inadequacies in social and family relationships, self-pity, financial pressures, marital problems, shortcomings in work or school and a host of others. We must be prepared to minister to and deal in each of these areas.

Before we may stand as a minister of Christ we must be willing to do as He did: *identify* with the sinner. When Ezekiel went to minister to a nation in captivity he was required to sit "where they sat" (Ezekiel 3:15). We, like Jesus, must be willing to bear the sin and burden of the homosexual. Suppose the Lord were to say to us, "Would you be willing to so commit yourself to the deliverance of a homosexual that you would ask him to live in *your* home and partake of a healthy family atmosphere? Are you dead enough to your own self-pride to walk unashamed with him in the love of Christ?" What would we answer? ☞

<sup>1</sup> Recommended reading: *Expelling Demons* by Derek Prince; *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare* by Don Basham.

type will *want to leave* if you don't feed him anything? The only reason he stays around is because you feed him what he wants. If you deal with the works of the flesh, get things cleaned up, the demon will do one of two things: (1) reveal himself and then he can be cast out; (2) leave on his own accord. Matthew 13:43 uses these words: "... When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man . . ." You see, demons do not always need to be cast out. They will leave if you cut off the supply of that which they have been feeding on. Most demon activity will just pick up and get out and go somewhere else where they can conduct themselves as they want to when you put up the "Private Property — No Trespassing" sign.

God has provided ways and means to diagnose (Dx.) the difference between these two enemies — works of the flesh and demon activity. He has, as well, provided a clear biblical prescription (Rx.) for dealing with both! ☞





MORALS  
AND  
ETHICS



Going the "second mile" is only possible after we have gone . . .

# THE

By  
Derek Prince

# FIRST MILE

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain (Matthew 5:41).

Jesus here depicts a situation in which law, or social custom, gives a man the right to compel another to walk a mile together with him. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus says in effect: "If this should happen to you, do not merely walk one mile with such a man, walk two miles with him. Go twice as far as he has a right to demand of you." We may say that the first mile represents *duty*, the second mile represents *love*. Love freely does twice as much as duty can demand.

These words of Jesus have given rise to the expression "going the second mile." However, they carry with them a simple, logical implication which is often overlooked. Many Christians speak and act as though the exercise of love automatically releases them from normal personal and social duties. But the truth is just the opposite. You can only go the *second* mile *after* you have gone the *first*. The expression of love can only begin after the demands of duty have first been met.

The same principle is expressed by Paul in Romans 13:8, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another." Here again the order is important. The negative requirement comes first: "Owe no man anything." This covers all our legal and ethical obligations. We must first fulfill all these, then we can move on to the positive requirement "to love one another." Christian love

is inconsistent with the failure to fulfill our legal and ethical duties. We might paraphrase this by saying: *Genuine love first makes sure that all its debts are paid.*

## SLOPPY AGAPE

Many Christians have a wrong concept of biblical love. Love of this kind is not a sentimental attitude expressed in religious cliches or honey-sweet phrases. Someone has characterized this unscriptural counterfeit of love as "sloppy agape." The Apostle John warns us against this: "Let us not love in word, neither tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). True, biblical love is expressed primarily in acts, not in words.

In the book of Ruth we find a pointed contrast in the behavior of Naomi's two daughters-in-law: "And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her" (Ruth 1:14). Orpah exhibited the outward expression of love — a kiss; but Ruth loved in deed — she stood by her mother-in-law in her need. In my hour of crisis I am not so much interested in who will kiss me. I want to know who will stand by me.

The book of Proverbs also has a warning concerning this: "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are

deceitful" (Proverbs 27:5-6). Counterfeit love will flatter us with sweet words when things are going well, but betray us in the hour of need. Genuine love will tell us the truth and, if necessary, rebuke us, although at the time it may actually wound us. But love of this kind will not betray us later.

It is not without significance that Judas actually betrayed Jesus to his enemies by a kiss. Jesus Himself commented on this: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). The outward expression of love, without the corresponding actions, is betrayal.

In Ephesians 4:15 Paul describes the only way that we can grow to Christian maturity: "But speaking the truth in love [we] may grow up into him [Christ] in all things." Any love that does not speak the truth is a counterfeit. Any fellowship of lasting value must be based on mutual honesty.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another . . ." (1 John 1:7). True fellowship is possible only in the light. We cannot have fellowship in the dark. The Apostle John makes two simple, but profound statements about the nature of God: "God is light" (1 John 1:5); and "God is love" (1 John 4:8,16). God's love can never be separated from God's light. God's love does not operate in the dark.



## LOVE "COVERS," NOT "COVERS UP"

The Apostle Peter tells us that "charity (love) shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Peter 4:8). Here again, there is much misunderstanding among Christians. Peter says "cover," but he does not say "cover up." Peter is not talking about the custom prevalent in many Christian groups of sweeping sin under the rug, and then pretending that it never happened and everything is all right. Christian love covers sin in the same way that God covers sin. First, sin must be brought out into the light. It must be acknowledged, confessed, repented of. If necessary, restitution must be made. Only after that can sin be *covered* with true, biblical forgiveness.

From time to time we are brought into contact with Christian groups who have only one theme — "love." Experience has convinced me that in such groups there is either doctrinal error or unconfessed sin — or both. "Love" is used as a "cover-up." If sin is the problem, it is usually found in the lives of the leaders of the group. If we begin to get below the surface and lay bare the problem, we are immediately headed off with the accusation, "Now, brother, you're not being loving!" Let it be emphasized once again: *True, biblical love is expressed primarily in acts, not in words.*

Let us return to the parable of the first and second mile — the relationship between love and duty. We have seen that true love begins only after we have fulfilled our legal and ethical obligations. Conversely, love that does not fulfill these obligations is a counterfeit. There are innumerable ways in which this principle applies to daily Christian living. In what follows I will briefly point out some of the most common inconsistencies that I myself have observed among Christians.

### THE FOREIGN MISSIONS IDOL

At one time I was associated with a church that was extremely proud of its "foreign missions program." The

congregation was fairly small, but it had a disproportionately large commitment for foreign missions. A preacher who specialized in the promotion of missions was invited to conduct a two-week's campaign with the understanding that his honorarium would be ten percent of all offerings that were pledged for missions. In the course of two weeks, over \$50,000 was pledged. Some of these pledges came in very tardily; others never came in at all. However, the preacher had no reason to complain about his honorarium of over \$5,000 for two weeks' ministry!

At the time that these pledges were being paid to foreign missions, the church was grievously in arrears with its own local obligations — its telephone bill, fuel bill, etc. Eventually I challenged the congregation about this way of doing things. "If we say that we are offering all this money to missions, we are deceiving ourselves," I told them. "The people from whom this money really comes are our creditors. We are taking the money due our creditors to support missions. But that is dishonest and unfair. Our creditors may be Catholics and the missions we are supporting are Protestant. We have no right to take money belonging to our creditors to support something they themselves may not even approve of."

In reality, in that particular situation, "foreign missions" was the church "idol." The members sacrificed to their idol, while blatantly failing to fulfill their own obligations at home. Sometimes it is much easier to be occupied with a "foreign field" than to demonstrate the validity of our faith among our neighbors. "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth" (Proverbs 17:24).

### ALCOHOLICS OR CHARISMATICS?

At one time I found myself in the position of being landlord over a number of houses adjacent to each other. In one of these houses I had as tenants a couple who made no profession of being Christians and who were,

in fact, alcoholics. They paid their rent regularly and kept the property in good condition. During their tenancy a lady in one of the adjacent houses was suddenly bereaved of her husband. The first person to show practical sympathy was the alcoholic lady. She came over the next morning with a check for \$200.

In due course this alcoholic couple moved out and new tenants moved in — a family who was active in charismatic circles. This family made quite extensive purchases for themselves, but rarely paid their rent on time. They so failed to care for their children and the property that some of the neighbors complained to me and threatened to take the matter to the city authorities.

One day I found myself reflecting over this situation. Suppose I myself were not a Christian, and someone were to ask me: *Which kind of tenants do you prefer, alcoholics or charismatics?* There would be no doubt about my answer: *Give me alcoholics any day!*

### "JUST TO GET THE WORD OUT, BROTHER"

At one period in my ministry some fellow Christians duplicated and sold large numbers of tapes of messages that I had preached. This was done without information being given to me, or permission requested from me. After a while I realized that there must be a very substantial margin of profit involved. I began to request some kind of accounting and to suggest that some royalty could reasonably be offered to me. I was met with protestations of love and the assurance that the whole thing was being done "just to get the Word out, Brother!" But I received no accounts and no royalty.

Later, the very people who were profiting from my ministry accused me of being "mercenary" in my motives. Worse still, they did not make this accusation to my face, but circulated it behind my back. I ask myself: *Can God really be satisfied that His Word is distributed on this basis?*



## EFFICIENCY IS CHRISTIAN

In 2 Peter 1:5-7 we are given a list of seven stages of spiritual development that should follow our initial faith in Christ. To "faith" we are exhorted to *add* the following: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity (love). This brings us back to the parable of the first and second mile. "Love" must be built on a foundation of orderly spiritual development. Where this foundation is not laid, true Christian love can never come into operation.

The first thing we must add to "faith" is "virtue." This latter word could be translated "excellence" or "efficiency." How few Christians seem to realize that efficiency is a necessary Christian virtue! On the other hand, the Bible has not one good word to say about laziness or foolishness. In fact, both are more severely condemned, and more deadly in their consequences than drunkenness.

For five years in East Africa I was in charge of a college for training teachers for African schools. During their training many of our students came to know Christ, and were also baptized in the Holy Spirit. I discovered that once they had become Christians, they expected me to show them special favor — to be less exacting in my judgment of their written tests or their practical teaching. I had to explain to them that it was just the other way round.

"Now that you are a Christian," I would say, "you have all sorts of resources that you did not have before. You have God's peace in your heart, and the power of prayer and of the Holy Spirit to call upon. If you could pass your tests or succeed in your teaching without these resources, you should be twice as successful now that you are a Christian. I do not expect less of you, but more. And God does the same!"

The same principle applies in every field of activity in which a Christian serves and earns his living. A Christian may serve as a teacher, a doctor, a nurse, a waitress, a technician, a

janitor. No matter what the field, a Christian should always excel in his service. He should be more faithful, more reliable, more efficient than the non-Christian.

I have observed that the Lord never calls a person out of failure in a secular job or profession into "full time" spiritual ministry. A person must always prove himself in his secular employment before God will ever commit enlarged spiritual responsibility to him. Faithfulness begins in the small and the secular; then it is more fully worked out in the great and the spiritual. Jesus very firmly establishes this principle in Luke 16:10-11:

He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye *[religious people]* have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon *[your secular and material obligations]*, who will commit to your trust the true riches *[enlarged spiritual ministry]*?

## FAMILY OBLIGATIONS COME FIRST

In 1 Timothy chapter 5 Paul deals systematically with the obligations of Christians toward the members of their own families. In this connection he says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel [unbeliever]" (1 Timothy 5:8).

In each family the primary obligation for provision normally rests upon the father. This includes much more than the mere provisions of food, clothing and money. In Ephesians 5:25-28 Paul compares the relationship between Christ and the church to that between husband and wife. As Christ sanctifies the church with the pure water of the Word, so the husband is responsible to minister the cleansing, sanctifying truth of God's Word to his wife and children. The father should be the source of spiritual truth to his family.

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul places the

responsibility for the spiritual education of the children directly upon the fathers: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition [education] of the Lord."

We may sum this up by saying that in every home the father has two God-given ministries from which he cannot abdicate: he is both prophet and priest to his family. As prophet, he represents God to his family; as priest, he represents his family to God. The faithful discharge of these duties demands a certain minimum amount of time devoted to the family.

Among the many men who fail to devote sufficient time to these family obligations, professional ministers are probably the most common offenders. This applies both to resident and to itinerant ministries. The resident pastor is frequently so taken up with board meetings, committees and church-centered functions that he hardly has any time at home with his family. The itinerant minister traverses the world like a knight errant for Christ, but leaves behind him at home a wife and children torn apart by frustration, bitterness and rebellion — caused primarily by his neglect of them. I always remember a comment once made by a young person whose parents had served many years as missionaries in Africa: "Our parents sure loved the Africans, but they didn't love us!"

The verdict of Scripture on a parent who fails in these primary obligations is that "he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." *Does a man who is "worse than an unbeliever" have any business preaching the Gospel?*

Writing to (charismatic) Christians at Corinth, Paul says: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Many of us need to heed this warning today. Before we use religious clichés about "going the second mile," let us make sure that we have really "gone the first mile." Before we make a large display of love, let us make sure that all our debts *have been paid*. ☞



# IT MATTERS WHERE YOU GET IT

by Charles Simpson



Seeking guidance apart from God has always been expensive beyond calculation

**E**ither man is the chance happening of incidental and accidental forces, or he is the premeditated product of God's eternal purpose. If we believe that man is created, it is foolish to neglect the Creator's counsel. It is also foolish to seek counsel from other sources than those designated by Him.

"Advice is cheap"; so is guidance. But the cost of following cheap advice or guidance may be expensive beyond calculation. Correct counsel will lead to righteousness, joy and peace. Psalm 1 plainly declares, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked . . . But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does he prospers . . ."

## **GUIDANCE: YOUR MOTIVE MATTERS**

Isn't it enough just to ask God for guidance or are there some conditions that must be met before He will guide?

One day I was praying (me, a sound, orthodox, fundamental Baptist preacher of the Gospel truth), "Lord I want to preach the *truth* . . . You know I don't want to be in error. Help me to preach the truth — *the whole truth!*"

Slowly, this question began to form in my mind, "*Why* do you want to preach the truth? Do you want to preach the truth because you want the people to know the truth? Or, do you want to preach the truth so that people will think, 'HE really knows the truth!'" I began to realize that my motive mattered to God. My motive would determine what I did with the truth and how I communicated it.

"Lord," I prayed on one occasion, "send revival to our land. We *need* revival."

"Do you really want revival?" the question came.

"Lord, I want revival more than anything!"

"Then, Charles, you wouldn't mind if I use some other group as the instrument to bring it."

"Oh, Lord . . . you wouldn't!"

Our motive matters. Do we want revival no matter who is used or do we want to be known as the ones who brought it.

There are basically two motives for seeking guidance. One is self-preservation, the other is self-sacrifice. Self-preservation involves trying to get God to bless *your* plan, help *you* out of a jam, or imposing *your* will on a situation (in Jesus' name, of course). This is a common motive for prayer because self-preservation is a basic human instinct. The error and danger of this motive is subtle. God does help

us in a time of trouble and He does promise prosperity, but don't overlook the fine print: "And we know that all things work together for good *to them that love God and who are called according to his purpose*" (Romans 8:28). Real prosperity must be linked to the will of God. The most dangerous thing that could happen would be for God to prosper one who is moving out of His will toward destruction. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Real repentance is not just turning from our bad habits; it is turning from the practice of running our own lives. We do not merely *have* a problem. We *are* the problem. Repentance is turning self over to God — future and all.

In ancient days, kings ruled by "divine right." It was commonly believed that God established them and he who resisted the king resisted God. Therefore, kings were the legislative, executive and judicial power. They made and enforced the law. There was no voting on the matter. Later, parliaments or legal assemblies were formed to balance sovereign authority. In governments where kings still remain, they are usually "constitutional monarchs." That is, the parliament makes the laws and the king gives his approval. Modern kings are usually mere "figureheads."



Many of us want Jesus to be that kind of king, a constitutional monarch. We make the rules and He blesses our decisions — a figurehead king. Naturally, all of our decisions will preserve and prosper ourselves since “the Kingdom” exists for our benefit. This is dangerous thinking because it is a delusion. We cannot relate to God on that basis. In fact, God is sovereign in His kingdom. He still “works all things after the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:11 NAS). There is no voting and the kingdom exists for His honor and glory. His subjects are convinced, by experience, that He knows best. They know that given the opportunity His purpose will ultimately be more fulfilling than their own.

There is, however, a basic requirement to knowing the will of God and being led in it: One must be willing to sacrifice himself . . . and what may *seem* to be best in his own eyes (Luke 14:25–35). This is what the apostle is saying when he says, “I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to *present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice*, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [or rational] service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may *prove what the will of God is*. . . .” (Romans 12:1,2 NAS). Before knowing the will of God one must eliminate the clamor of self-preservation; that spells “self-sacrifice.” Lay it down. Then, God can be heard without prejudiced motive.

The big question now is, why do we want to know the guidance of God? Is it to further our own ends, or decorate our own plans with a religious facade? Is it to fulfill our success drive, or is it to find our place in God’s eternal purpose? Your motive will make all the difference as you approach Him who searches the heart.

Isaiah 58 is a vital chapter to every child of God. In it we see a very religious people who were not heard when they prayed — though they did all the right things (vs. 1–5). I discovered in this chapter, that one could do the right things (i.e. study,

pray, give, fast, etc.) for the wrong reasons. Religion can be a means to feed one’s ego, “to win points with God” or “to out debate those of other persuasions.” When one does all these things but continues to oppress his family, neglect the needy, or fails to be compassionate, he reveals a motive of self-preservation. If, on the other hand, his motive is selfless, God guarantees, “I will guide you continually” (Isaiah 58:11). In other words, God says, “If you are burdened for others, I’ll take care of your burdens.”

The key to receiving guidance from the Lord is not a superabundance of religious activity, knowledge or vocabulary, but a willingness to lose one’s life in Christ’s purpose — redemption. “In all your ways acknowledge His Lordship and He will direct your path” (Proverbs 3:6).

#### GUIDANCE: WHY WE NEED IT

Briefly, two solid reasons can be cited for seeking God’s guidance: *We do not know ourselves; God does.* “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick [or wicked]; Who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart” (Jeremiah 17:9,10 NAS). It is naive to be self-reliant in the face of this fact. We only discover ourselves in the eternal purpose of God. God says to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (1:4 NAS). David declares, “For thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother’s womb . . . My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret . . . Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written” (Psalm 139:13–16 NAS). God knows best where we fit in His eternal plan. Only He can lead us into that place of purposefulness.

There is another vital reason for seeking God’s guidance: *We do not know the future; God does.* Jesus said, “When the Spirit is come . . . He will show you what is to come” (John 16:13). If the Spirit can show us, then He must know.

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning . . .” (Acts 16:18 KJV). “Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? . . .” (Isaiah 41:4 KJV). “Ask me about the things to come concerning my sons . . .” (Isaiah 45:11 NAS). In order to endure, present investment must consider the future.

We are in the midst of international realignment. Monetary and political systems are in a state of fluctuation. More new nations have emerged in our generation than any other. Enemies have become friends and vice versa. Fortunes have been caught in the crunch. False investment of one’s resources, abilities or ambitions means disaster. The Scriptures speak of an international, political and economical collapse at some future date. But one cannot back away from the swirling sociological streams and simply play it safe. We have a commission out there. We need guidance!

#### GUIDANCE: THE SIGNIFICANCE IN ASKING FOR IT

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church” (Ephesians 5:23 NAS).

One of the chief functions of the head is to guide the body. With its senses, intelligence and nerve control the *head directs the body*. Christ is the head of the church. This statement declares Christ’s ministry of guiding and directing the church. *Wherever one receives his guidance, there is also his (or her) headship*. This is a most significant principle. The right to guide belongs to the head. A sincere request for guidance is an admission of headship.

Then God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship



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them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing loving-kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:1-6 NAS).

"I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." Jealous of what? Jealous of Israel. Israel was His purchased possession, brought out of slavery. God had established His eternal covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. Israel was to Him as a wife (Jeremiah 3, Hosea 2). They were His people. He had the right to guide. His warning was in essence, "idolatry gives way to adultery" (relating to another head). Generations later, Israel ignored the warning of God and erected idols in the groves and on the hills (Jeremiah 3:6-10).

Guidance by any spirit other than the Holy Spirit is a relationship that God calls spiritual harlotry. God views it as a husband would view his wife having an affair with another man. Israel drew near to God with their lips . . . but their hearts were elsewhere. For this cause, God divorced Israel (the northern ten tribes).

When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and

because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 18:9-13 NAS).

When Israel was facing the new land, God took time to soberly remind them that He was their head. They were not to be seduced by diviners, astrologers, communers with the dead, witches, etc. He took pains to catalogue the sort of things He meant. He spelled out His hatred for such practices. Not only did such activity steal His beloved's affection and detour from His glorious eternal purpose, but these delusions led back into slavery from which they had so recently been delivered. One has but to visit countries where these spiritual adulteries are practiced to see the bondage brought about by them.

#### FALSE GUIDANCE: THE FALL OF A NATION

Can God give territories to whom-ever He wills? Is the earth the Lord's and the fullness thereof? Yes, indeed! Did God give Israel the land or *did they steal it*? If He did not give them the land, then they did steal it. One or the other is true. The Scriptures declare that God, the rightful owner, *gave the land to Israel* (Genesis 17): Was God unjust in driving out the former inhabitants or was there a valid reason?

"For those nations which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you to do so" (Deuteronomy 18:14 NAS). God's reason for dispossessing the nations was witchcraft, divination and false guidance. They were spiritual harlots involved with seducing spirits. Such guidance had led them into permissiveness and immorality, even to the literal practice of adultery in worship. Does the principle still prevail or did God only so deal with that generation? "But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in

the things which you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them" (2 Timothy 3:13,14 NAS).

"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming, and the end of the age? . . . And Jesus answered and said unto them, '*See to it that no one misleads you . . .*'" (Matthew 24:3,4 NAS).

The Spanish came to these shores for gold but the land was not given to them; the French came for trade, but the land was not given to them; the pilgrims came seeking freedom to worship the Lord God, and they inherited the land.

"Brother Charles," a school teacher was looking at me through tears, "it was not long ago that the Bible was read each morning over our school intercom. Now the astrology chart is read each day."

"We are transferring our daughter to another school," a mother said to me recently.

"Why?" I asked.

"The first grade teacher is a witch!"

"A witch? You mean you don't like her?"

"No, I mean, she is an avowed, practicing witch. She has said so publicly." I caught my breath.

Most major newspapers carry "astro guides," etc. It is safe to say that *more professing Christians read the astrological projections for guidance than read the Word of God.*

If God doesn't deal with America, He will have to apologize to the American Indians, the Amorites, Amalakites, Jebusites and others who have been dispossessed according to Deuteronomy 18:14. *America's most serious problem is spiritual adultery.* The blessings of proper guidance, and cursings of false guidance are catalogued in Deuteronomy 28. The pronouncements of the Lord have been sustained repeatedly by history.

When men are guided by other gods, here are some of the results: (1) Cities and countryside will be cursed; (2) National confusion — the inability to accomplish objectives; (3) Pestilence and disease; (4) Long droughts followed by torrential eroding rains;



(5) Inability to defeat enemies; (6) Hemorrhoids and skin diseases become prevalent; (7) Increase of insanity and mental disorders; (8) Criminal oppression and "shake down" rackets from which there is no judicial reprieve; (9) Unfaithfulness of wives. Women become vulnerable to seduction as men turn from God; (10) A foreign people will eat agricultural products (results are scarcity and high prices).

### **GUIDANCE: HOW GOD SPEAKS TO HIS PEOPLE**

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, "Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire any more, lest I die." And the Lord said to me, "They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19 NAS).

While the Lord had explicably forbade certain means of seeking guidance, He reiterated His chosen way of guiding His people. "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen." The subsequent history of the Old Testament is a parade of men of God, chosen from among Israel to deliver the word of God to His people. When Israel harkened, she prospered. When Israel rejected, she declined.

John the Baptist was accepted as a prophet in Israel; so was Jesus (Matthew 21:11,26,46). John was called "more than a prophet" by Jesus. Jesus, Himself, was "The Prophet." A prophet essentially is one who speaks for God. "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3). He is God's spokesman.

Jesus endorsed the ministry of

prophets and exhorted his disciples to receive true prophets (Matthew 10:41). The ministry of prophets continued in the New Testament church. Agabus was called a prophet (Acts 11:27,28) as was Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32). The church at Antioch had prophets as did the church at Corinth (Acts 13; 1 Corinthians 14:29) and probably all the other New Testament churches. The ministry of prophet was one of the five given to the church for its maturation (Ephesians 4:11). The context indicates that the ministry of prophet, like the others, will be with the church until it has come to full stature.

It should be stated that the office of prophet and the ministry of those in the assembly who from time to time prophesy, is not synonymous. The office is a man raised up by God from among the people. In Ephesians 4:11, the man is a gift of Christ to His body (as are Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers). These are the gifts of *Christ's ministry to His body*. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 another word for gift is used. These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit *in the body*. One of these gifts is prophecy. Every believer is exhorted to covet that gift and at the proper time may exercise it. The exercising of that gift is to be judged by the prophets and the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:20,21). So there is the office of prophet. He is raised up by the Lord and given *to the church* to speak for the Lord. Then there is the Holy Spirit gift of prophecy that is set *in the church* and is available to the whole body. These ministries tend to bring a balance to each other. Both are designed to operate in the context of the assembly — the church. They are not private possessions (1 Corinthians 12:18).

While Israel had one tribe set aside as priests (Levi), the church is a *kingdom of priests* (1 Peter 2:9). This means that we all have access to the throne through the redemptive work of Christ Jesus (Hebrews 4:16). The Holy Spirit indwells us all (Romans 8:9). The possibility that we may all

prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:31,39) is not only exciting but enlightening. We can all receive *direct* guidance as well as *indirect* guidance through the office ministries of Apostle, Prophet, Shepherd and Teacher. It is when both means of guidance agree, that we are assured of our leading. Neither the subjective leading of the Spirit, nor the office ministries were designed to stand alone in guiding the New Testament saint. There is plenty of scripture exhorting us to seek both.

### **GUIDANCE: THE SERIOUSNESS OF MISREPRESENTATION**

In Deuteronomy 18 the Lord has warned Israel not to refuse the ministry of a prophet. A solemn responsibility has been placed upon Israel. Our enemy, Satan, would like nothing better than to use the sincerity of God's people to his advantage.

Satan might well have said, "If they will not go after spiritism to be beguiled, I'll raise up false prophets. The false prophet will either lead them astray or cause them to be disgusted with the office of a prophet so that they reject all prophets."

His plan has worked too often. Then there is often the sincere but misdirected person who has a carnal zeal to prophesy. His words are often true, but of no effect. There is no "amen" in the inner man when his message is delivered. He ran to bring a message but wasn't sent by the Lord.

God, foreseeing that the office of prophet would have lots of "job applications" and would be popular with some wrongly inspired, said, "But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die" (Deuteronomy 18:20 NAS). This is a solemn warning. It was fulfilled in Jeremiah 28. Why is God so severe with false prophecy? Because the prophet is a link between God and His people. God Himself has ordained the office and God has declared His readi-



ness to protect that ministry. We can all be grateful for the mercy of God and His willingness to forbear our ignorance. He is gracious to take into account our motives. The further we develop, the more seriously we will treat means of guidance.

False prophecy generally (not always) has three common traits. It flatters the hearer; it exhorts the giver, or serves to establish him as an oracle; and it fails to come to pass as stated.

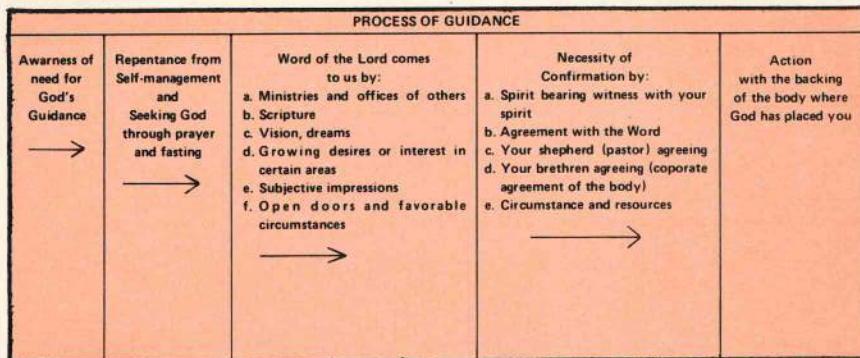
### GUIDANCE: HOW SHALL WE KNOW?

And you may say in your heart, "How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?" When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of

from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, because the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:16-21 NAS).

Samuel was known to be a prophet because his word came to pass. He was known by the people *where he ministered*. This is a good pattern.

Jeremiah 23 is one of the best chapters on true and false prophets. One of the outstanding attributes of a man *sent from God* is his message will bring repentance and holiness to God's people (vs. 22). God's word is like a hammer (authority), like fire (purifying), and comes to pass. According to 1 John 4, the Holy Spirit exalts Jesus, agrees with the written Word, ministers God's love, and will bear witness with the anointing within us (1 John 2:20,27).



him (Deuteronomy 18:21,22 NAS)

In this passage the Lord gives a sure way to judge a prophet. Does it happen the way he said it would? This implies that before you accept this ministry you should have had opportunity to judge it.

Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." And he said, "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you." So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him." Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail. And all Israel

My family and I have often thanked God for His guidance and lamented when we missed. Many instances come to mind. In 1964, Ken Sumrall received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and shared with Ralph Branham (a minister friend) and myself. We too, received and the three of us would often pray together.

One late night, Ken, Ralph and I were at Ralph's church in prayer. As we prayed, we paced the floor seeking after the Lord. Ken and I were walking side by side, heads bowed, worshipping, when we heard Ralph say, "Thus saith the Lord, as you are now walking together in prayer, so shall you walk around the world together and preach the gospel . . ."

At that time I had scarcely preached

out of the county. My first reaction was private. "Lord, you'll have to forgive Ralph. He gets carried away when he gets in prayer. He exaggerates." We praised the Lord and continued in prayer. Years passed and we forgot the prophecy. Ken's church grew and so did ours. Four years later in 1968, Derek Prince and I were in a meeting together. He suggested that I go to New Zealand. Already the Lord had been speaking to me about Southeast Asia and that area of the world. Just after Derek spoke to me in August 1968, the phone rang: "Praise the Lord, Brother Charles!"

"Is that you, Costa?" It was Costa Deir, a close friend and man of God. He was visiting the city. "Can you come to see us while you are here?"

"No, I'm just passing through. I called to tell you that I believe you should go to New Zealand. If it is of God, He'll confirm it!"

In the next few days, an invitation from New Zealand came. Then came finances. Confirm it — the Lord did!

I planned not only to go to New Zealand, but Israel, India and Indonesia as well. Not wanting to go alone, I wondered whom the Lord would have to go with me.

"Why, I'll invite Ken Sumrall," I thought. "We would enjoy ministry together." After prayer with his people, he replied that he would go.

Soon the day came. We met in Birmingham, Alabama to fly on to New York. As we sat on the plane awaiting the exciting journey, Ken said, "Charles, do you remember that night we were praying in Ralph's church . . ." In a flash, I remembered that prophecy four years earlier that I had forgotten: "You shall walk around the world together and preach the gospel . . ."

God performs His own word. True guidance is a piece of God's eternal purpose placed in the human heart; it is not given in vain. False guidance may seem to bring momentary dividends, but it does not take into account the eternal plan of God. It's a bad investment. Guidance is vital. It matters where you get it.

Saviour, like a shepherd lead us... ♡



# How Can I Be Sure It's God?



by Don Basham

To answer the question, "How can I be sure it's God?" let's examine a portion of Scripture in Acts chapters 15 and 16 which records one of the missionary journeys of Paul. In the process we will be illustrating three major principles involved in receiving and following guidance. Here they are:

- (1) All progress in the Christian life is by faith.
- (2) Guidance comes when we move in faith, not while we sit in doubt.
- (3) God has a goal for every endeavor we undertake for Him.

**1. All Progress In The Christian Life Is By Faith.** The question, "How can I be sure it's God?" often reveals a lack of understanding of how God deals with us. There is a basic contradiction between "being sure" and "having faith." Certainty requires no faith, and the Christian life is based on faith.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he who cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

**A**lthough there are millions of Spirit-baptized Christians in America today, relatively few of them seem to feel they are consistently led by the Holy Spirit. Practically everywhere I minister Christians will ask: "Reverend Basham, I love the Lord and I want to serve Him faithfully. But how can I know what He wants me to do or where He wants me to go? If I feel led to do a certain thing, how can I be sure it's God and not just my own desire or even the devil?"

Even mature Christians at times mistake their own desires for the will of God and all of us at times have been duped by Satan into foolish decisions and hasty actions. But in this article it is not so much our desire to deal with the carnal nature or the wiles of Satan as to offer valid counsel for the myriads of Christians frozen in inactivity for fear of "missing God." I believe the major cause of the problem is that we often seek a form of guidance which God does not normally provide.





This means that while God *will* guide us, normally His guidance will not be so explicit or detailed as to preclude the need for exercising faith in following it. So God guides by impressions, by thoughts dropped into the midst of our own thoughts, by nudges and by circumstances, not by thundering in our ears or striking us with heavenly lightning. As I understand the Spirit-led life, it basically consists of receiving impressions from God, then in *faith* acting on those impressions as if they are from God; trusting that as we move, God moves with us. I believe the scripture passage we will examine clearly illustrates this truth.

But before we get into the scripture let's recognize we often have difficulty relating properly to biblical events since we tend to regard biblical characters as "larger than life." We view them through two thousand years of stained-glass history. We call them "saint" John and "saint" Paul. We've named our cities, our churches and our children after them. We've gazed in awe at the works of master artists who portrayed them with haloes over their heads and inwardly we've thought, "God's dealings with those men must have been unique."

But if we are to understand God's guidance, we must correct that distorted view. The apostles were ordinary people like us. They endured the same temptations and struggled against the same rebellious natures. They were saved by the grace of Jesus Christ just as we are, and were empowered and led by the same Holy Spirit who wants to empower and lead us. Perhaps the first verses in our scripture passage may help us get rid of those haloes.

*Acts 15:36-41*: Chapter 15 of Acts begins with the Jerusalem conference which met to decide whether Gentile Christians were required to keep the law. When the apostles and elders agreed on certain restrictions Gentiles should observe so as not to offend Jewish Christians, Paul proposed a return visit to the churches he and Barnabas had established to deliver the

decision of the council and see how the churches were getting along. Barnabas wanted to take along John Mark who had deserted them on a previous journey but Paul refused. A bitter, angry dispute was the result. "And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other" (15:39).

The Antioch Missionary Society promptly blew apart! Church fights are not a twentieth-century invention. Paul and Barnabas, spiritual giants of their own time, practically came to blows! So much for haloes.

After the explosion with Barnabas, Paul chose Silas, another apostle, and Timothy to accompany him and they started out. Note that up to this point there's nothing "superspiritual" about their trip. No voice of God thundering, no vast revelation of God's master plan. Paul simply said, "Let's go visit the churches," and he, Silas and Timothy moved out. Now comes the second principle.

**2. Guidance Comes When We Move In Faith, Not When We Sit In Doubt.**  
*Acts 16:4-9*: Almost as soon as the journey got underway, the men ran into trouble with their itinerary. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. . . ."

What's this? Apparently the men had headed in the wrong direction and the Holy Ghost slammed the door in their faces. Dare we say it? They made a mistake: *they missed their guidance!*

How God revealed their mistake doesn't matter. Maybe they missed a boat or perhaps someone sprained an ankle. The facts are, they tried to go where the Lord didn't want them to go and God stopped them. So they tried again. "After they were come down to Mysia, they assayed (attempted) to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not. . . ."

Dare we say it again? *They missed their guidance again!* A second door was slammed in their faces. Again, it doesn't matter how God stopped them, but stop them He did!

Now a most intriguing and hum-

bling picture begins to emerge. Saint Paul, renowned missionary and apostle extraordinaire, who had met Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus and later received revelations from the third heaven too sacred to share; this Spirit-filled, gift-endowed number one leader of the early church we find, on this occasion, reduced to getting his guidance by ricocheting off closed doors slammed in his face by the Holy Ghost!

Not very spiritual, you say? Not very supernatural? Right! But *it is nevertheless a valid form of guidance.* Actually, this should encourage rather than disturb us. It's as if God is saying, "Don't be afraid to move out. Don't be afraid of closed doors!" I believe this story is in the Bible to comfort and encourage people like you and me. Paul and Silas weren't daunted by the closed doors, they just sought God more earnestly.

It is precisely the fear of failure, the fear of closed doors, which chains so many modern Christians to their own front doorstep when they ought to be moving in faith. Guidance comes when we move in faith, not when we sit in doubt.

The kind of guidance we are describing is like the rudder on a ship. The rudder functions only when the ship is moving. Just after we moved to Florida some years ago, the *Queen Elizabeth* was retired by the Cunard Lines and berthed at Port Everglades in Ft. Lauderdale. Driving by the ship as she rested high in the water we could see at her stern the huge rudder which had steered that great vessel safely across the Atlantic on hundreds of voyages. But as long as the *Queen Elizabeth* rested in that harbor, the rudder never did a thing. It

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was useless because the ship wasn't moving.

So the specific guidance we seek from God may never come until we learn to trust Him enough to begin to move in faith. Then His guidance can come — like a course correction, when necessary. God may close some doors which beckon attractively. If he does, it's because the door He wants us to enter is open further down the line. Don't be afraid of closed doors!

Years ago while still in seminary in Oklahoma, I felt the urge to change universities. I applied for admission and was accepted by a fine seminary in the state of Maryland. My wife and I had once lived in Maryland and loved that beautiful state. Besides, I thought it would be "theologically broadening" to have training from more than one seminary. But as the semester grew to a close and we tried to prepare for our move, nothing seemed to go right. Even routine preparations seemed vastly complicated. And the nearer the time came, the gloomier we felt. Finally, we decided God was telling us not to move. With a mixture of relief and disappointment I re-registered for my next semester's courses. Months later I discovered that by making a slight adjustment in my schedule, I could complete the requirements for my degree a whole semester earlier than I had anticipated, something which would have been impossible if we had changed schools. My wife and I ended up praising God for a door He had closed in our faces.

Christians often hammer away at doors God closes, not realizing they always lead to costly delays, dead-end streets and blind alleys. Still others, when they bump against a closed door, sit down on that doorsill wondering where they went wrong. Remember, closed doors are an inevitable part of every Christian's life; they are signposts pointing toward other open doors.

In the case of our scripture story, the doors God closed led to an open door to Macedonia, for on their third attempt to find God's direction God gave Paul a vision of a man from

Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us." (Isn't it interesting that God didn't give Paul that vision before he began the trip!) But notice: even when God gave a vision, *He gave only enough information to get them headed in the right direction.* Which brings us to our third principle.

**3. God Has A Goal For Every Endeavor We Undertake For Him.** As we examine the rest of the story a significant fact becomes apparent: the missionary team was moving in faith toward what *they* believed their goal to be, *but God had another goal in mind!* And He works in us the same way! God may send you some place letting you think you're to do one thing, only when you get there you find out He had something altogether different in mind. Like it or not, that's often God's way. Besides, if you knew ahead of time what was going to happen, you might not have had the courage to go. I believe that is the reason God is so sparing with long-range guidance. Moving in faith means walking one step at a time.

The Psalmist says, "Thy words are a lamp unto my feet . . ." but most of us would prefer a searchlight shining two miles down the road. We want to know before we start how things will work out, but that's contrary to principle. We're to walk in faith, not certainty.

**Acts 16:9-15:** Paul, Silas and Timothy, now joined by Luke the author of Acts (note how the pronoun "they" in verse 8 becomes "we" in verse 10) boarded a ship to Philippi, a major city in Macedonia. On arrival they discovered a woman's prayer meeting where Paul began to preach with some success. One of his converts, Lydia, opened her home to the missionary team.

So at last, things seemed to be working out. After a couple of false starts the tour began to produce results. Not only did the team visit some of their established churches but they began a new one. They had a congregation to preach to, a parsonage which provided them with room and board, and people were being saved.

How much more success could they want? But God had a different goal in mind.

**Acts 16:16-24:** Suddenly the team's successful ministry turned into a nightmare. Paul cast the demon out of a fortune-telling slave girl whose enraged owners had him and Silas arrested. Angered by the deliverance, Satan whipped the courtroom into a frenzied mob so that the magistrates treated Paul and Silas like public enemies number one and two. They were beaten and thrown into the inner prison, where their hands and feet were fastened in stocks to make sure they could not escape.

What a reversal of circumstances! Successful missionaries that morning, by midnight they had been arrested, beaten and cast into prison. Where did they go wrong? How did they miss their guidance?

Suppose you were arrested for witnessing to your faith. How would you take it? I'm afraid most Christians today would immediately assume they were out of God's will. We live in such sheltered, comfortable circumstances that if our faith really begins to cost us something we assume we have missed our guidance. Yet, scripturally, we've no right to expect such favored treatment. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12).

We American Christians are so success-oriented it often blinds us to God's will. But remember this: *God has not called us to be successful, He has called us to be faithful.*

**Acts 16:25-34:** Fortunately, the drastic change in circumstances did not bring Paul and Silas to despair. Indeed, they still had the victory, even in prison. Hands and feet may have been fastened in stocks, but their spirits were still free! They began to sing and praise God and to preach to the other prisoners.

God honored their faithfulness and sent an earthquake to punctuate Paul's sermon. Talk about signs and wonders attesting to the gospel, how's that for a sign? The earthquake opened the prison doors, Paul and Silas' stocks fell off and all the lights went out. The



jailor came rushing in from the next room and, seeing the cell doors open, assumed everyone had escaped; but the same Holy Ghost who had opened the doors and stocks held all the prisoners in place.

Astounded by the double miracle of the earthquake and the prisoners still sitting quietly in their cells, the jailor fell on his face before Paul and asked to be saved. After he and his household accepted Christ and were baptized he served Paul and Silas a banquet. Next morning the magistrates let Paul and Silas go, and our story has a happy ending.

Now, about the goal God had in mind. We said Paul and Silas were ministering with one purpose in mind while God was sovereignly working toward another. As Paul and Silas moved in obedience to the first two principles (all progress in the Christian life is by faith; and guidance comes when we move in faith, not when we sit in doubt) God was working his deeper plan in accordance with the third principle: God has a goal for every endeavor we undertake for Him.

Looking back we see God's basic purpose for this missionary journey was the conversion of that jailor and his household. Yet this purpose was not made known to Paul and Silas until after it had been fulfilled.

Remember the journey began by Paul wanting to revisit the churches and deliver the decrees of the Jerusalem council. But God, although He would allow some of those churches to be visited, had a more specific goal in mind, the conversion of the jailor's household. Space does not permit a full discussion of why the jailor was so important to the Lord. It is sufficient to note that in spiritual warfare as in physical warfare, certain objectives are considered to be vitally strategic in the overall conduct of the war. I believe the jailor was such a strategic objective. At any rate, he was God's objective for *this* trip. When Paul and Barnabas split up and went their separate ways, he was still God's objective. And when Paul and Silas started out, God was with them to make the neces-

sary changes in their itinerary to accomplish His purpose.

When they started into Asia, God slammed the door shut. Why? Because the jailor wasn't in Asia, he was in Philippi. When they started into Bithynia, God slammed the door shut again. Why? Because the jailor wasn't in Bithynia, he was in Philippi.

Then God gave Paul a vision to get the team headed in the right direction. They arrived in Philippi in Macedonia and began a successful ministry, the congregation by the riverside, the parsonage with room and board, and converts. But as nice as those blessings were, they did not fulfill God's *basic* purpose; He was out to win that jailor. And the jailor wasn't attending the prayer meetings by the riverside, he was in jail. Therefore, in order to get the gospel to the jailor, God had to get the preachers in jail.

So after God had Paul deliver the slave girl, He stepped back and allowed Satan to stir up a riot in the city court so Paul and Silas would be considered dangerous and thrown into the *inner* prison (next to the jailor's office) so the jailor could hear the gospel.

At this point, God's strategy and God's goal are still unknown to Paul and Silas. They are simply enduring hardship for Christ's sake as they continue to walk in faith. Even in prison they continue to minister, not to the jailor, but to the prisoners. The jailor obviously overheard, but was unimpressed.

But when God punctuated Paul's sermon with an earthquake, the jailor had a change of heart. "These men must be of God," he must have said to himself, and then fell before Paul and said, "Sirs what must I do to be saved?" Where had he heard the message of salvation? Listening to Paul preach to the prisoners. But isn't it strange to note that not a single prisoner was converted, only the jailor, who wasn't even a part of the audience? This is a graphic illustration of how God often uses our walk in faith to accomplish not what we want to accomplish, but what *He* wants to accomplish. That's why we are not to

be afraid to move out in faith, why we are not to be downcast over closed doors or adverse circumstances. What may seem difficult or humiliating is often later revealed as God working out His great purposes!

I believe at some point, probably about the time the jailor was baptized, Paul must have taken a closer look at him and said, "Haven't I seen you some place before?" I believe the jailor was the man in Paul's vision.

At any rate, Paul and Silas finally recognized the sovereign working of God in their situation and knew that with the conversion of the jailor, God's purpose for their stay in Philippi had been accomplished. For when they were released from prison next morning, (why do you suppose the same magistrates who considered Paul and Silas public enemies number one and two at midnight, decided by daylight they were harmless? Could God have had a hand in that?) they made no attempt to continue their ministry. They simply bade the brethren at Lydia's house goodbye and sailed away.

### Now It's Our Turn

I believe it's clear to some of you by now that God wants you to take some fresh step of faith. And some of you already know what He would have you do but you're a little shaky and frightened when you contemplate doing it. Perhaps a new job in a different city, or opening your home for a prayer meeting. Perhaps making some sacrificial gift to some work the Lord has told you to support or even leaving secular employment to go "full-time with the Lord."

The thought may have been with you for weeks, months or maybe even years, but you've hesitated saying, "How can I be sure it's God?" Can you see now there's only one way you will ever be sure? That's to try it and see, remembering that as you begin to walk in faith, the Lord who loves you goes with you to close the wrong doors and open the right ones in order that His divine purpose may be accomplished in and through you. ♣



# THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT

JUAN CARLOS ORTIZ

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*This article was taken from a pamphlet entitled, "The Socio-Economic Definitions of the Church for the Latin American Problem." Though it was written within the Latin American spiritual, social, political and economic context, the message is for the whole body of Christ.*

## RECONSIDERING THE MESSAGE

In the last four years, a growing group of evangelical leaders in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has begun to re-read the gospels under the renovating light of the Holy Spirit. We have sought to take off the colored glasses of our group, or system, and to measure our lives, our ministry, and the lives of those of our congregation against what Jesus Christ and the apostles really taught.

To do this with sincerity, we had to come together in prayer, asking God to give us strength and courage to begin, in a measured and wise way, to change the structure of our lives and our communion, as such a re-reading demanded of us. Everything was shaken in our lives, and in our ministries; it was scrutinized meticulously without any fear before God. Among the many things we found, was a problem of the social ethics of the Church. The Scriptures do not divide the social from the spiritual; it's one package! In the past we divided these aspects of the gospel, and caused conflict in many sincere Christians concerning whether the Church should become involved in social ethics or not.

Even though it may seem impossible, whether conscious of it or not, we have not moved into all the teachings of Jesus Christ. We have taken verses that formed the structure of our Christian philosophy, or way of belief, leaving to one side, (perhaps because of its apparent inadaptability to our way of life) the other clear passages of the same gospel that have to do with the social, as we differentiate it from the spiritual.

In many of our evangelical circles, being spiritual, almost has the same meaning as supporting the individualistic or capitalistic system of life. When some Christian had a feeling of social concern, he was accused of preaching "The Social Gospel." In reality, there is no such thing as a social gospel and a spiritual one.

In the church of which I am a part, we have been guided by all of the scriptures which have to do with the glorious apostolic epic, and the glorious future to come in heaven. We have, however, evaded the responsibility of a solution to the problems here and now. We have rarely identified ourselves with the present. Sermons, hymns and choruses speak to us of the beautiful thing that heaven will be, no sorrow there, no misery, no sin, etc. Nevertheless, in the Scriptures there is no such gospel. The eschatological truth of heaven with all its glory is a tremendous reality, but this is interlaced with the truth, now, at the present time on earth. Jesus Christ told us that we were and had to be the light of the *world*, not of heaven; the salt of the *earth*, not of the "sweet-by-and-by." We were to be as a city set upon a hill, this is to say, we had to be a community type, an example of what God desires upon this earth for all humanity. For this reason, He taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven."

## ANOTHER GOSPEL

I believe there is another gospel apart from Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John. It is a gospel according to "Saint Evangelicals." This gospel is composed of all we have picked out of the others, everything which refers to eternal life and heaven; leaving to one side all scriptures which refer to our

Juan Carlos Ortiz is a pastor from Buenos Aires, Argentina, who has recently been traveling and sharing in the United States.

social and community responsibility, even though they were written under the same anointing as the ones we accepted. The gospel according to "Saint Evangelicals" is the gospel which has systematically grouped together all the passages which have to do with the offers of God, and has concealed, and at times ignored very plainly, certain demands of Jesus Christ, especially those that have to do with one's neighbor.

The gospel according to "Saint Evangelicals," is an individualistic gospel, whose cross has only the vertical beam toward heaven, a gospel of only God and myself. We say "my *personal* Savior," "*personal* evangelism," "*personal* devotion," and even though we say "*Our* Father," the attitude is "*My* Father." The plan of God for salvation as we present it to the unsaved, the four things God wants you to know, the four steps to salvation, is completely backwards, and deprives the gospel of much of its riches. We leave out the demand of Jesus in His first contact with those He evangelized. I call the gospel, "a Gospel of Offers." It is individualistic, personal, vertical, eschatological and partial, and omits much of what Jesus demanded, as a "step towards salvation," of the rich young ruler and Zaccheus. In the first case, Jesus Himself demanded that he give his goods to the poor, as a condition for him to obtain eternal life. In the second case, Zaccheus said he would use his goods to repay those whom he had defrauded, and give to the poor. Jesus then said that salvation had come to the house of Zaccheus.

Jesus Christ makes His demands not only of Zaccheus and the rich young ruler, but of everyone. But seeing the multitudes, He said, "Whosoever of you that does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:33) How is it that we have forgotten to include this in the four steps to salvation? Jesus Christ taught us this way. Jesus Christ also said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms;



provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where you treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:32-34).

How is it that we preach much regarding the first part of this declaration of Jesus and never touch on the second part? Is it not all an integral part of the gospel? Is not one part as much gospel as the other? To renounce everything one possesses, according to apostolic interpretation, was to put all at the disposition of the community of believers. The parable of the good Samaritan is not to be spiritualized, but is given for an example. Our Master said, "Give to him that asketh thee." Can we ignore the thousands that are asking for work, for bread, for education? Jesus said to give to them. Paul also tells us that the purpose of working is not only to maintain ourselves individually but also that we might be able to share with him who suffers need (Ephesians 4:28).

If we make a sincere study in the New Testament of the purpose of all of the offerings and collections taken, we will be very surprised that they were never used for the purpose for which they are used today. They were not pro-temple, pro-organ, pro-carpet, etc. In almost every case they were for the necessities of the community. On some occasions the faithful believers of far-away communities sent their offering to maintain a whole community of another locality suffering because of famine or other causes.

The way in which we use our offering today is not biblical. To raise the poor from his misery by means of personal sacrifice by those who possess goods is pure gospel. If we look into scriptures regarding the social responsibility of the church we shall be very surprised. But neither is it sound to seek out all the scriptures that speak about only our social responsibilities, and then in a systematic and practical way declare it without presenting the rest of the gospel, for this leads to a "Social Gospel." For the true disciple

of Jesus Christ, the gospel is one — complete and integral. The epistles are not divided into two parts: an important theological part and then a second part as a practical approach. The epistles present one gospel. A theology that is not put into practice is not the theology of Jesus and His apostles.

#### "SAINT LEFTISTS"

An exaggerated and opposing view of the "Gospel of Offers" (which we are calling here the gospel of the "Saint Evangelicals") has appeared in these times, which we shall call the gospel according to "Saint Leftists." It emphasizes all that is social as presented in the gospel and, like the "Saint Evangelicals" gospel, has a biblical base, but is equally partial.

I am afraid the sector called the "Third World" falls into this error. Someone has made a study of certain aspects of the life of Jesus and falsely concluded that Jesus was a mere "guerrilla." But, of course, he failed to mention that this "guerrilla" passed nights in interceding prayer, days of fasting, spoke continually of His Father God, and did not move a finger if God the Father did not authorize Him to do so. He was a very unique "guerrilla." Jesus Christ was intensely horizontal and intensely vertical. He loved God the Father intensely and He loved His neighbor intensely. He was troubled over both spiritual and social problems.

We cannot say that the gospel of Jesus Christ is social or spiritual. It is the gospel of the Kingdom of God, or of the Government of God. Where God governs, His laws include in one package the spiritual, social, economic, agrarian (distribution of lands), sanitation, etc., everything. It is impossible to say that an evangelical propagates only the *spiritual* and the other side emphasizes only the *social*. Can we have spirituality without moving into the social realm? And can one live an ideal social program without being spiritual? We ought to forego the use of the words "spiritual" and "social" when we are referring to the gospel.

The gospel of the Kingdom of God is sufficient, if we re-read the gospels paying attention to the verses we have *not* underlined; that is, that which we have lost, then we have a complete, integrated gospel. Then we leave the preaching of the gospel according to "Saint Evangelicals" and we begin to live the gospel of Jesus Christ, that is, offers *and* demands. Jesus wishes to say to us in His complete message: Everything that is Mine becomes yours; everything of yours becomes Mine.

#### THE SALT—THE LIGHT—THE CITY

When Jesus said His disciples were to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, and an example of the way of life to the rest of humanity, He meant to say that His disciples were to be *totally committed*. When I speak of commitment I mean that the light, upon being lit, lights *everything*. Nothing remains that the light does not overtake. Light of the World!! "Tremendous!" we say. Are we going to deny part of the world this light, because we, according to our traditions, cannot concern ourselves with certain aspects of human life?

In order that the salt preserve human society, can there be any place it does not reach with its preserving and purifying effect? Shall we let any part of human life become decomposed depraved or rotten because we should not be involved in that which we mistakenly believe is not "spiritual"? Imagine it, we the "Salt of the Earth!" Where should we *not* be functioning as salt!

When we say that the people of God are like a city upon a hill, as an example, ought we not also to be an example as a community to the whole world? We ought to be as that city upon a hill that cannot be hidden; a community of love, justice and peace. Instead of this, we are like a group of timid persons in a large hall, some here, some there, with a life identical to the rest of the world, so that we can neither be light, salt, city nor example.

A committed Church has the



responsibility of the spiritual, social and economic needs of the world. The Church should be involved in *all* human relations, in *every* channel of communication and existence. The Church ought to be the structural steel of the great human edifice. We cannot be spectators. The light is not fashioned to be a spectator, nor is salt, much less is the city set upon a hill — it is fashioned to be the leader from which the rest learn.

Abraham, Moses, Daniel, David, Nathan, Solomon, Elijah, Nehemiah, Ezra, Jesus Christ, and the apostles, were totally committed to everything having to do with the people. All of the political, spiritual, social, economic, sanitary, interior and exterior needs, etc., of God's people, had the seal of God and His presence. Not only in Israel, was this true, but in all of the governments and pagan countries where the prophets of God lived. The prophetic spirit of the Church has to be awakened.

There is no dividing line between the spiritual and the social-economic structure. The obligation is general with regard to man whom God has created. We cannot save a soul of a person and leave him in his "cast" of misery, or his "cast" of abundance just because the governing world system wants it this way. Neither can we permit men to become slaves to an atheistic system — stained with blood, having eliminated the liberties of men and being an enemy of faith in God — as the only alternative for a change of structure. To permit this would be like washing our hands, as we have always done, and becoming accomplices.

### FOLDED ARMS

The Latin American church should not defend the actual system, but neither should it fold its arms thus giving its approval to the avalanche of materialistic ideas which are completely opposed to faith in God. By folding our arms yesterday we helped the unjust system, for which we are greatly suffering today. To fold our arms today, signifies that we are helping the unjust system of atheistic

materialism which would deprive our sons of the faith of their fathers. This is the great error of the Church: To remain with folded arms permitting the spirit of darkness to do what it pleases in this world in which we are supposed to be vigilant. We are supposed to be "vigilantes," police, salt, light, and example! Every time the Church folds its arms, the results will be the same — error and injustice — be it from the left or the right. To stand with folded arms is to be the salt that has lost its savor, being good for nothing in this world. Folded arms allow the light of the world to become so dim that the powers of darkness have a fiesta. When arms are folded, the city set upon a hill is moved to the dark caves of their temples of thick walls and strange appearance. Edifices closed during the week, with a system of religious services, which, without meaning to, says to the world: "Do not enter here, this is for us, only, the honorable members of the Church!"

Where is the salt? We have folded arms, and we are without *savor*, without *power*, without *influence*. Where is the light? Standing with folded arms, now opaque, not showing men the way nor the communion of love. Where is the city set upon a hill? Where is this exemplary community, pattern for the world, that community that should show the world how to live — a true community of justice, love and peace? It just does not exist.

But when I say that the Church should be a committed Church, I am not just speaking of being present when it is time to denounce the social evils of the governments or systems. I am not speaking about commitments with activists who cause disturbances, violence and discontent to undermine and deteriorate the existing system more rapidly. No! The activist says, "We are in favor of dialogues for change, but if nothing is gained by dialogues or if progress is too slow, then there is no other remedy, or means, but strong action — and violence." This is not what I mean by commitment, because many times the medicine is far worse than the illness. Our commitment as salt, light and

example should be according to the therapy that God gave us for this world.

### HORIZONTALISM

The Scriptures and the apostolic example are extremely clear in the way to intervene in the problems of this earth as light, salt and example. We should not separate ourselves from the instructions and example of Jesus Christ and His apostles because we will run the risk of falling — whether we wish to or not — into equal or worse error than the one we wish to combat. The *horizontalism* of many sectors of the Catholic and Protestant churches is very dangerous for it prepares and cultivates the ground among Christians so that atheistic materialism can gain power. Atheistic materialism (Marxism) is very well organized — much better organized than any other disquieting movement of social concern in the Church. The great materialistic boiling pot with its organization, intellect and passion will devour and augment every other horizontal ecclesiastical group that wants to flirt with it while it fails to accentuate an emphasis that is vertical and charismatic.

To have horizontalism without danger, you must have a clear vision of verticality at the same time. This is perfection — the cross. Horizontalism — the horizontalism of love for your neighbor, and social commitment — accompanied by the vertical relationship of faith in God, the charismas of the Holy Spirit, fervent worship, and continuous prayer to God. These are the only signs of salt, light and example that Jesus Christ wanted. Atheistic materialism is not the alternative for the Church, nor is unjust Capitalism. Both are materialistic, even though Marxism may achieve a seeming more just distribution of its goods by way of executions, kidnaping, hatred and other types of violence — the Holy Spirit has told us very clearly that "even though I give all my goods to feed the poor and have not love (agape), it profits me nothing."



# THE PURPOSE OF THE SECOND COMING

by Bob Mumford

The second coming is more than a divine rescue mission.

**A**s a serious and eager seminary student, I was assigned the research topic of *The Second Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. I was taken aback when reading in one of the massive reference volumes I was using, "Every serious student of prophecy would do well to remember that no one yet has ever accurately interpreted scriptures which pertain to future events!"

The experiences of the following years have proven that admonition to be exceedingly accurate. As a result, I have spoken *little* about prophetic events; and, above all, felt the necessity not to be dogmatic.

I should, however, make it clear from the beginning that I hold to a *literal, visible return of Jesus Christ* in glory (Acts 1:9-11). I also believe that

the usual dispensational and popular teachings concerning the rapture, marriage supper, tribulation, etc. have been grossly misunderstood and soulishly interpreted. As we approach the end of the age, pre-, post-, and mid-tribulation positions, along with the interpretations that accompany them, will undergo major adjustment. There will be many facts, events and texts that we *should* have seen, but in reality, did not. These new ingredients will modify much of our understanding concerning prophetic events. As the prophet Hosea explained, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3).

A simple illustration of the prophecies and events of Christ's first advent will serve to illustrate what I mean. It was written about the origin of the Messiah, "Out of Egypt I have called my Son" (Matthew 2:15) . . .

that He was to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) . . . yet He was to be from Nazareth (Matthew 2:23). Can you see the impossibility of accurately interpreting all the biblical facts in proper perspective until the circumstances of His birth were known?

How could the readers of the prophecies possibly have understood that His parents were from Nazareth and that was to be His home? And that due to a decree for taxation, Mary was taken by Joseph to Bethlehem where Jesus was born? Also, that being warned in a dream not to return to Nazareth, the family of Jesus fled into Egypt from where they were later led to return? How clear it seems to us now; but how confusing to the prophets and prophetic interpreters prior to the unfolding of the events.

Anyone browsing casually in a religious bookstore will quickly be



overwhelmed by the overabundance of printed material of different theories and interpretations about the second coming. Even the general attitude and approach of the Scriptures can seem confusing!

The *time* of Christ's return is unknown (Matthew 24:36-42); but the concept of imminence (that He may come today) has always been a truth held dear to the heart of the church (James 5:8).

On the other hand, examination of many scriptures tend to give us another view: that certain events, such as spiritual maturity in the church, world evangelism, establishment of His government and kingdom, etc. must be accomplished *prior* to His coming. This seems to exclude any possibility of immediate return.

Bible truths are often set in opposition to each other — like parallel lines — which act as balancing factors in the life of the church. "Behold, I come quickly" is balanced by the command, "Occupy 'till I come." These parallel lines can only meet in the infinite Creator.

### PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

It will not be my purpose to examine the reality or circumstances of His coming, but to try to shed some light on the *purpose* of His coming. We cannot dwell on the *entire* purpose of the second coming, but rather examine what I feel to be *one* major purpose of His coming.

Unfortunately much of the popular teaching that centers on events in the world that will precede the coming of Christ (i.e. wars, famines, natural disasters, rise of the antichrist and satanic activity) has tended to make us believe that Christ is coming back to snatch the church out of the world just before it self-destructs! For the cataclysmic-minded believers it has become a divine rescue mission to save the persecuted church in its last gasp.

If we examine the second coming in light of the purpose of the church, the bride of Christ, and her mission on earth, it takes on a very different meaning. The coming of the Lord

Jesus is the *consummation* or completion of God's plan for the church through the ages. It is a victory celebration rather than a rescue mission!

As the Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord's coming in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, he writes of a fiery judgment that will come upon the world. Then, in verse 10, he speaks of Christ's coming as it will relate to the church. He says, "... He shall come to be glorified *in His saints*." The concept of a spiritual coming *in* the saints prior to His physical coming *for* His saints is overlooked by most people. Paul clearly teaches that Jesus is coming for a bride that is "glorious . . . not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27). This is Christ revealed *in* the saints.

This same theme is carried on elsewhere in Scripture. *Galatians 4:19* reads: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." *Acts 3:21* states: "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." And *James 5:8* admonishes us: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman [God] waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until He receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Many of us have been given the idea that Christ's coming is what defeats the foes and establishes His kingdom. Jesus said, however, that all power (authority) had been given Him in heaven and *in earth*; and because of that we were to go into all nations and disciple them. Rather than thinking of Christ's coming as an event that *accomplishes* His purpose in the earth, let us consider His coming as God's *consummating* His eternal purpose by that very event.

Concerning the purpose of His coming, *Baker's Theological Dictionary* says, "So Jesus' *parousia* [coming] is not the decisive event of the gospel; it is rather the *inevitable*

*sequel* [italics mine] of the decisive event which took place with His death and resurrection. The time of its occurrence does not matter so much as the fact that its occurrence is assured!"

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

It is this inevitable sequence of events which begins with His death and resurrection and sees Him establish a kingdom on the earth (His revelation in the saints) that is consummated by His visible return for the saints.

At this present time He is in the process of establishing that spiritual kingdom in the earth.

Psalm 110:1 is one of the verses most quoted by New Testament writers.\* It speaks, even to the casual reader, that there is a purpose to be accomplished by Christ being seated at the right hand of God the Father — He (Christ) will sit there *until* . . . "I make your enemies your footstool . . ." A similar theme is carried throughout the New Testament . . . Until . . . the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14) . . . the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6) . . . the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:14) . . . the harvest of tares and wheat (Matthew 13:30) . . . we all come in the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:13).

The same Psalm is quoted in Acts 2:35: "Until I make thy foes thy footstool." This expresses Peter's understanding of Psalm 110:1. Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father would continue *until* something that approximated Christ's victory in the human situation had been accomplished here on the earth.

There is a *present* kingdom; just as surely as there is a future one. But the kingdom of God must be proclaimed, received and established in some degree prior to the coming of the King of that kingdom to rule. Matthew 24:14 teaches us this much. Does it seem incongruous to believe that the body, which is His church and bride, be won, sanctified and prepared *before* He



comes for her? Is it not logical to assume that the kingdom, in spiritual form be established — literally established — on earth in the saints before God reveals His King and His kingdom? (Revelation 5:10).

New Testament grammar teaches us that His coming (*parousia*) is to be a *revelation* (unveiling) of Jesus Christ. Somehow, and in His own spectacular way, God will reveal Jesus, His kingdom, His church and bride, by the events of His *parousia*.

### THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

Whatever God has yet to do in the earth, He purposes to do it through and by means of a militant church, an advancing kingdom, a united body which is rising to the challenge! "Thy people will be willing in the day of thy power," says the Psalmist in 110:3. The years of spiritual warfare, evangelism, missionary endeavor, combined with the present global outpouring of the Holy Spirit, cause me to know that God is setting the stage to consummate His purpose in the earth by the revelation and return of His King — which has been delayed . . . *until!*

Let's turn to the book of Revelation for a glimpse of what I am trying to express.

Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him (Rev. 1:7).

This is the literal return of the One who was taken in the cloud (Acts 1:9-11). What an unveiling of God's eternal purpose in Christ, His Son! What a sudden consternation and embarrassment to the world which has rejected God's Son and abused His church! What joy and triumph for those who belong to Him — for those called according to His purpose! As the writer of Hebrews says, ". . . and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (9:28).

Whatever the unique turn of prophetic events or unexpected developments in the church or in the na-

tions, those who have come to see the *purpose* of His coming will not be preoccupied with dates, signs or dispensational charts, or attempting to place the label of antichrist on each world figure. In Revelation 22:17 we find these words:

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

As one who longs for His coming, but also sees the *purpose* of His delay, the Lord began to say something to me from this verse.

When the Spirit and the bride say, "Come . . . Come Lord Jesus," it will be then that those who are sensitive to that which the Holy Spirit is saying will know that His coming is, in fact, very near.

The Spirit and the bride are now saying, "Unity . . . plurality . . . submission . . . obedience." The Spirit is seeking to draw us — each of us — into a *belonging* — a kind of spiritual community, if you will.

All of these words, plus the quickening pace of the pain and peril of the day in which we live, cause me to listen carefully to hear a cry — not just teaching — but a cry in the Spirit among the beloved that groans and sighs. This cry, when heard and interpreted, will say, "Come . . . Oh, come, Lord Jesus. The Spirit and the bride are ready. Come Lord Jesus!"

When we hear this, sense it, perceive it among the beloved, it is then that we can know that His *purpose* for delay is nearly completed. The bride has made herself ready (Revelation 19:7). The Holy Spirit, who was given to present her faultless before Him in her wedding garment, agrees . . . "Yes, she is ready! Come, Lord Jesus!"

He which testifieth those things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus! (Revelation 22:20)! ♥

\*cf. Matthew 26:64; Acts 2:34; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 12:2.

### GOD'S GOVERNMENT

(Cont. from pg. 36)

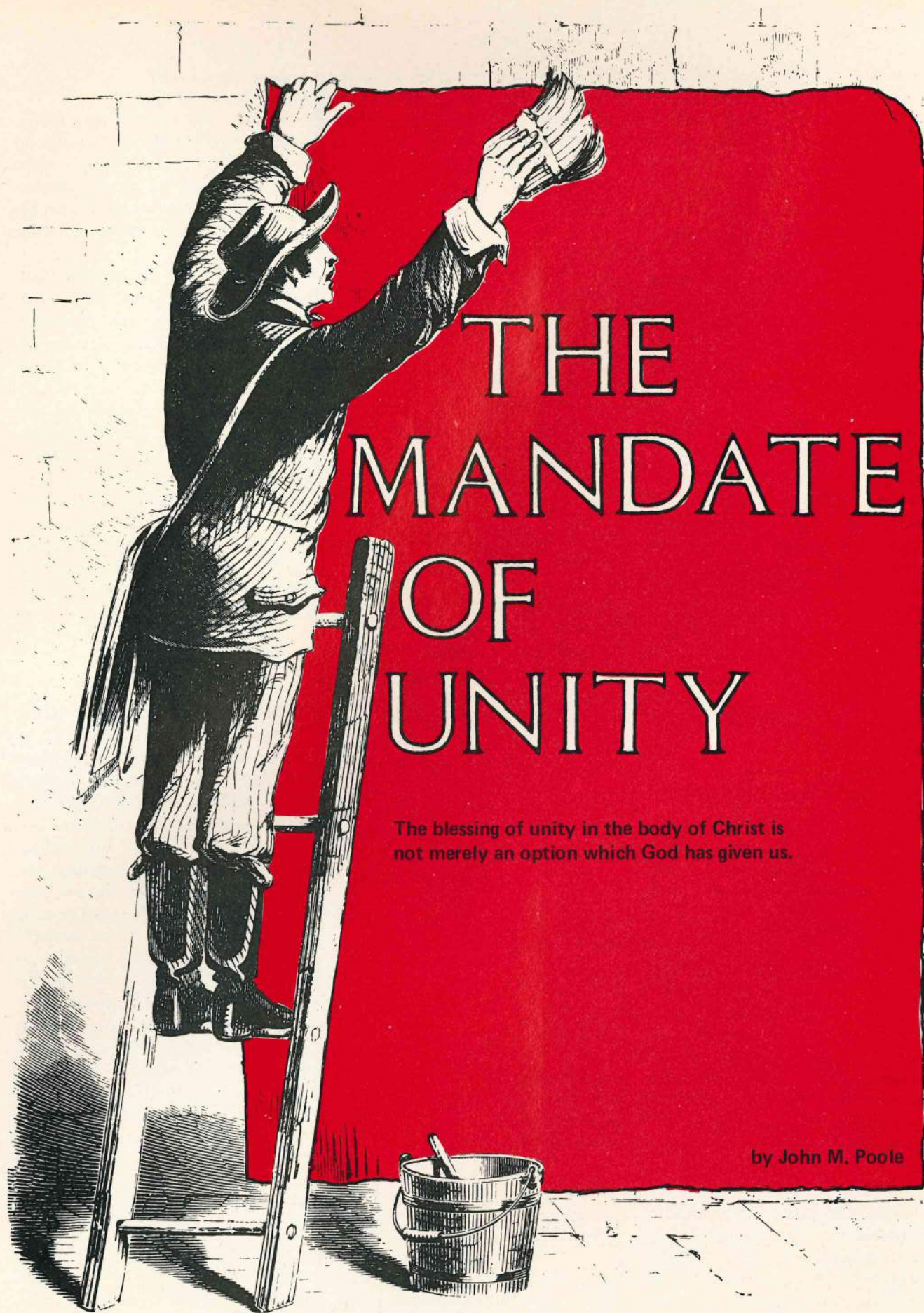
We must not only be pure in the motives which inspire us, but also in the way we use them. This is what Jesus Christ and the apostles taught. What atheistic Marxism uses cannot be carried out in the name of Jesus Christ.

Many are of the opinion that because the Church has flirted and committed adultery with capitalism and its injustices, that it now has no moral authority toward its children when it forbids them to flirt with Marxism. But my question is this: Because we made a mistake yesterday must we make the same mistake today? We have learned a very hard lesson, allowing ourselves to be taken over by established norms and adapting our ecclesiastical institutions to that which has been decided by lovers of the social differences. Let us not do the same thing now.

### "LET US DO IT!"

Someone has said "the revolution will be made with us, without us, or against us. Let us allow it to be made with us." My response to this has been, "Rather let us (the Church) do it." Do we suffer with complexes? Do we not have clear and precise scriptural instructions regarding the system of justice? Do we not pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *here on earth* even as it is in heaven?" When will we dedicate ourselves to allowing the *Kingdom to come* and His will to be done here on this earth? The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a kingdom of peace, of social justice and the love of God for our neighbor. The gospel He was sent to preach to all nations is the gospel of the Government of God. This was well understood by the first Christians. Then, do we not have faith, that in the gospel of the Kingdom of God is *the* philosophy and *the* principles, and that in the Holy Spirit is the power, in the form of light, salt and an example, needed to transform the whole world? ♥





# THE MANDATE OF UNITY

The blessing of unity in the body of Christ is not merely an option which God has given us.

by John M. Poole



**W**ith a great deal of embarrassment, I admit that it is only within the last few years that I have taken the subject of the unity of the body of Christ seriously. During the early years of my Christian life it posed no problem to me. The Christians among whom I grew up conveyed to me the distinct impression that WE WERE the body of Christ. The unity that Christ prayed for so fervently would come about when those from the "other folds" would see the light and join our fellowship. The question of, "what will eventually happen to other apparent believers?" was usually answered by some vague reference to the "differences of rewards in heaven."

No one can ever convince me of the fact that spiritual barrenness is not used of God to accomplish His purposes. It was during such a time of dryness that my parents began to pray earnestly that God would reveal Himself to them in a new way. As is so often the case, the answer came in a manner that was totally unexpected. The Lord had begun to move "outside the camp." People with whom we had previously had no fellowship were experiencing a refreshing from the Lord, and the cry of thirsty hearts was being answered. During a time of deep heart-searching, the Holy Spirit began to deal with my father regarding the differences between the position that he held regarding the body of Christ, and the truth of the Bible. The matter of the unity of the Spirit had been up until that time a doctrine to defend — now it started to become a blessing to experience.

The blessing brought with it accompanying problems. I have since learned that this is always the case. We had to face such questions (very weighty ones for us) as:

Is it possible for people who go to movies to be truly born again?

Can God fill with the Holy Spirit women who wear make-up?

Is it true that there are charismatic Episcopalians who drink? All of these things boggled our pentecostal minds, but we continued firmly on. We had a

deep conviction that if we exercised tolerance with these people, we could bring them around and help them see the light.

In the fall of 1963 my father died and full pastoral responsibility became mine. With great zeal and high hopes I endeavored to make new contacts with ministers in our area and enjoy a fuller fellowship with them. My attempts failed miserably. Everyone was busy with the programs of their own denominations; the needs of their churches demanding so much of their time that it seemed impossible to get together. Disappointed and very insecure I retreated more deeply into our own local fellowship, certain that we were the only real hope that Philadelphia had for renewal.

### FELLOWSHIP OF THE DOCTRINES

I became convinced that the only true path to revival led from the foundation of pure doctrine; and so, we began to lay again the foundation, insisting that unless you had been obedient to the gospel as interpreted by us, your position in the body of Christ was suspect. I was still open to outside groups, and accepted freely speaking invitations, always looking for an opportunity to impart to them the way of God more perfectly. If it had not been for His intervention, I should soon have found myself back where we had begun, stating again like Elijah, "Only we are left . . . We are God's true remnant."

But oh, how faithful God is! The voice of the Lord began to come to me with great clarity. He declared to me that the most important thing to do was to find out what He was doing, and to start to flow with it. I was to stop trying to get Him to bless my ideas, and learn to co-operate with Him. By the inner voice of the Spirit, by the preaching of the Word, through contacts with other of God's people, I gradually came to see — *the most important thing that God is doing in the church today is the bringing together of His people.*

He made it clear to me that the day

of division was going to come to an end. No longer was I to speak in a disparaging manner about other Christians. No longer would He tolerate my pride and feelings of spiritual superiority. My jokes and stories about other groups did not amuse Him. He called for repentance and public apology. I was brought face to face with the fact that the highest truth revealed to us in the Word of God regarding the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is that IT IS ONE! Everything else must be subservient to that fact.

What a difference in life and ministry my response to God in that area has made! I could not, nor would I, go back to my former attitudes. The freedom that is now mine, the openness that I have to all of God's people, the enrichment that I have received from people of differing backgrounds and traditions, have all contributed toward the growth and development of my life as an individual and the ministry that the Lord has given to me. Out of the things that I learned since that time, let me share what I believe God is saying regarding the unity of the Spirit.

### REAL UNITY

In John 17:20–23 Jesus is praying for the disciples that were with Him and for those that would believe on Him through their witness. Jesus' prayer is: "that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, are in me, and I in Thee, they also may be in Us . . . that they may be one, just as We are one . . ." It was at this crucial point that I used to lapse into thoughts about the mystical unity of the body of Christ. Recognizing that, one day when we all get to heaven, this would be true, I was relieved of any burden to see it fulfilled here in time. It all seemed very unreal — all believers were somehow one, but that unity seemed to have little bearing on our present relationship to one another.

Slowly, my eyes began to be opened. What kind of unity exists in the Godhead? It is not unreal,



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mystical. It is authentic, genuine, and powerful. It is a unity based on *life, light, and love*.

## LIFE

The Scripture reveals that God is Life. All life that ever has been, now is, or ever will be; has found, is now finding, and will yet find its source in Him. He is the creator and sustainer of all things. Those of us who are believers are now called to share this life and manifest it to the world.

"He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12).

"We know that we have passed out of death into life" (1 John 3:14).

"God has given unto us eternal life (1 John 5:11).

Praise the Lord, we share a common life. All who are in Christ, regardless of other points of difference share this testimony, "I have found Him who is the resurrection and the life, and through faith in His Name, I too now live."

The unity that we possess in Christ is not organizational, I was comfortable with that; it is not creedal, although creeds are important; it is not based on similarity of modes of worship; it is based on sharing a common life. We are those who present ourselves to Him as alive from the dead. We have laid aside the grave clothes and come out of the tomb in response to the call of Him who said, "Come forth!"

## LIGHT AND LOVE

Secondly, God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. This speaks to us of the new kingdom in which we now live. We have come out of the kingdom of darkness with its tyranny and fear, and have been placed into the kingdom of light. We are those who are endeavoring to learn to walk in the light. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty and have

responded to the call to bring to the light all the things that we formerly would not expose to anyone. All who have come to the light are our fellow-citizens in this kingdom.

God is Love. The unity that there is between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is indissoluble because of love, self-giving, self-sacrificing love. Are we not commanded by Jesus to live with all fellow Christians in that environment? I used to read the scripture this way: "This is my *suggestion* that you love one another." At least, my style of living bore witness to that kind of interpretation. But, we have no choice in the matter. It is the clear declaration of the Head, "*Love one another.*"

"The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

"And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7).

"If someone says I love God and hates his brother, he is a liar . . . and this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also" (1 John 4:20). God is not appealing to my emotions but to my will. The love of God is shed abroad in hearts of those who are His; now let that love flow, unreservedly, fully, without hindrance.

Love must be manifested. Love means action. The body of Christ in the area where I live must be reached out to with open arms. I must make contact with them, pray with them, rejoice with them, weep with them.

This unity then is not just heavenly, mystical, other-worldly; but real, authentic, genuine, powerful, and strong. I must face the question of a divided church. I cannot ignore Christ's commands. The cry of the heart of Jesus must become mine.

In Ephesians 4:3 we are called by Paul "to preserve the unity of the Spirit." Several things become evident by studying this imperative. First of all, we become aware of the fact that the unity of the Spirit is not something that we are called upon to *produce*. It is already in existence. We must *recognize* it!

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and *in all* (Eph. 4:4-6).

Just as truly as it was impossible for any man to produce the physical body of Jesus, the body in which He first manifested Himself, so it is impossible for any man, or group of men, to produce the spiritual body of Christ. The Holy Spirit alone was sufficient in both cases. He has brought the church into existence. The unity of the Spirit *exists*; there is only one body; this great fact we are called upon to *recognize*. Recognition, not production is the question we must face.

## PRESERVE THE UNITY

There is however, something that we *are* called upon to do. The Apostle tells us that we must *keep* or *preserve* this unity. Look at some other scriptures where this same word is used.

"I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

"Keep yourself free from sin" (1 Tim. 5:22).

"Keep yourself unstained by the world" (James 1:27).

The Holy Spirit charges us that we are to be as concerned about the unity of the Spirit as we are in regard to keeping the faith, and our personal sanctification. Paul adds that we are to be diligent in this matter. This is not something that is to provoke our interest now and again. It is something that we must be doing continually. We are to make every effort, do our utmost, to see to it that the unity of the Spirit is maintained.

The enemy knows the power of a united church and has sought from the beginning to bring division. As long as we allow our present attitude to exist, we will never see in this generation the glory that God has promised. A quick review of some of the events recorded



in the Book of Acts will bring to light some of the areas where Satan makes war.

It is interesting to note that one of the first problems that the infant church faced arose over a dispute regarding *material things*. Certain widows felt that they were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. Nationalistic overtones soon became apparent as the neglected ones were Hellenistic as opposed to the native Hebrews who were being cared for. This carnal situation could very easily have developed into a spiritual problem had not the Lord given to the leadership the wisdom to know how to deal with it. We would do well to take note of the care that the leading brethren took to see that this issue did not become a point of needless division, but rather was handled immediately with prayer and corporate counsel.

Over and over again, the body of Christ has seen division come over the color of the choir robes, the type of carpet to be used in the sanctuary, the plans for the new building, and countless other similar things. We cannot allow this to continue. Paul teaches through the Holy Spirit that it is better to be wronged than to insist on having one's own way. The Spirit-filled life must lead to something more than the ability to speak in tongues or prophesy. It must lead us to the cross of Christ, where we lay down our lives, and our insistence on having things done our way.

Later we are brought face to face with the possibility of division that existed in the church over the matter of *tradition*. After Peter's visit to the house of Cornelius he returned to Jerusalem to find that certain of the brethren wanted to have a word with him. They began to take issue with him, finding fault with what had happened in Caesarea. The fact that the needs of the Gentiles had been met; the fact that God had sovereignly moved in a way that had never before been experienced; the fact that the prophecies of the Old Testament were now being fulfilled, seemed for a while

to mean nothing. Tradition had been broken.

It has not been until recently that I have taken notice of the action of impetuous Peter during this time. Note his wisdom as he patiently begins to give them a detailed, first-hand report of what God had done. Rehearsing for them the way in which the Holy Spirit had moved, he put to flight their doubts, and quieted their fears. He did not react to their agitated spirits. He did not, as I surely would have done, denounce them for their blindness and hardheartedness, but lovingly shared with them until understanding came. It is evident that in the moving of the Spirit today we are being faced with this issue again. Men and women of differing traditions are being brought together by the Holy Spirit. Our resolve is being put to the test. Can we continue in patience to share with one another until He brings us to the unity of the Faith? Will we make the mistake of past generations and begin to separate ourselves from those who do not agree with our position?

The question of *doctrine* also threatened the harmony of God's people. The issue of the necessity of circumcision as essential to salvation had to be faced. The possibility of a Jewish-Gentile split was in the offing. The lines were drawn, the outcome crucial. But note again the fact that with prayer and the word of wisdom the problem is resolved. Doctrinal issues were not allowed to separate the saints of God. The unity of the church was preserved. Note too that the leadership of the church carries tremendous responsibility in settling these matters. This cannot be overlooked. As in the case of tradition, so in the area of doctrine the move of the Holy Spirit is being tested. We have to deal with the fact that many of us disagree in major areas such as water baptism, the Lord's table, the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Can we wait on the Lord, speaking the truth in love, committed to one another, and fellowship around Jesus, until He brings to pass that which He has promised? Will we repeat the mis-

takes of those who have gone before and go our separate ways, because we lack the patience of the Holy Spirit? We may have the gifts of the Spirit; do we have the endurance of the Spirit?

We could not speak of these things without recognizing the difficulties that were brought to the church as the result of gathering around personalities. Human nature being what it is, this problem has never left us, and is something that must be faced if the unity of the Spirit is to be maintained. Some were saying that they were of Peter, Paul, or Apollos. Only the names have changed, the issue is still the same. The truth is this. All ministries are yours, and no one man is able to meet all the needs that you have. Your soul will *never* be fully fed by one man's ministry. The Lord has placed in the body a variety of gifts and we are in danger of great imbalance when we center our lives around one man, or on men who all have the same emphasis. A richer life is waiting for those who will open their hearts to the eloquence of Apollos, the practicality of Peter, and the revelation of Paul.

The early church faced these attacks upon her unity. Through the ability of the Holy Spirit she dealt with each one of them. May we, in this new day of the Spirit's working, follow this example.

In Psalm 133 a glorious promise is given to us. If we learn to dwell together in unity (and oh how good and pleasant this is) God promises a fresh anointing of His Spirit, and a commanded blessing. It is foolish for us to go on speaking about a new anointing, and days of the greatest revival that the world has ever known, as long as the question of "dwelling together in unity" is ignored. The price for full blessing has not changed. God does not have discount days. If we are to experience all that the first-century believers did, we must travel the same road — "and they were all of one heart and one mind."

#### PRACTICALS

Let me conclude with some very practical suggestions. First of all, if the



unity of the Spirit is going to have any relevance on this earth it must have a local manifestation. The believers in a local area must be brought into some visible display of love and fellowship. Francis Schaeffer speaks of "The Church Before the Watching World." According to Jesus' own words, the world will never truly deal with the issue of His being the Sent One of God until it sees the church united. The question is how can this unity be obtained?

It is at this point that I believe God has given great responsibility to His shepherds. Perhaps more than we care to admit, division on a local level is of our making. Our petty jealousies, our fear of losing members, our deep-seated prejudices, have created walls that keep our sheep in and theirs out. This situation can be changed in the following way:

**One:** If there is in your area a fellowship of concerned pastors who are willing to give top priority to the matter of praying together for the expression in the locality of the body of Christ, then join yourself to them. Let other things go. Change your schedule around, but get involved in that meeting. God is at work, this has top priority with Him. You will be amazed at what He will do. (If no such fellowship exists, contact one or two others and begin to pray together.)

**Two:** In the beginning set no goals other than prayer for the unity of the body of Christ in your area. Let the Spirit do the rest. Learn to wait upon Him, be sensitive to Him, follow His leading. To set up long-range goals too far in advance will scare away pastors before the Spirit has a chance to deal with them.

**Three:** Keep the group open. We will make a big mistake if we limit our prayer fellowship to those who are charismatic. This openness must be not only in word but in deed. There are many men who see the need for renewal within the church who differ with us in regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Invite them, welcome them, most important, listen to them. These men cannot be ignored. They

must not be rejected, but rather entreated to come to the place of prevailing prayer.

**Four:** Do not attempt to follow the pattern of other cities or groups. Again, I emphasize, let the Spirit lead. He is building the church.

**Five:** Face differences of opinion honestly, but always with love and patience. Do not pretend that differences do not exist. But always remember, the truth must be spoken in love. Men may not always agree with what you say, but they can sense a loving spirit.

**Six:** Don't be concerned about numbers. It is better to see a small group of men knit together in the Lord, forming the core of a larger group that will surely come, than to try and complete the job in one month. Don't forget that Jesus started with twelve.

## RESULTS!

Here are some things that you can expect to see happen:

**One:** A new love for the brethren. When you begin to move in obedience to Christ's command, you will find the love that he has placed within your heart flowing in a richer way. He will honor the obedience that you have demonstrated.

**Two:** A growing appreciation for men of different traditions. Meeting with men face to face will change many of your attitudes. Men that you have mistrusted because of hearsay evidence will turn out to be very different from what you have been led to believe. It will soon become apparent that each tradition has a heritage from which the whole body can draw strength and wisdom.

**Three:** A recognition of other ministries as gifts to the body of Christ. Instead of seeing other pastors as competitors, you will soon begin to view them as complementary ministers, given by the ascended Lord to His church. You will view a living demonstration of the variety of gifts He has given.

**Four:** A new power in prayer. When men of God come together in prayer,

there is an influence exerted that goes far beyond what any one of them can effect individually.

**Five:** A resultant effect on the sheep under your charge. As God works in your heart, it will mark your ministry. The openness that God will produce in you, the desire for unity will begin to be felt in your local congregation. They will begin to come out of their ghetto mentality and begin to see the body of Christ.

**Six:** A greater and more effective work of the Spirit in the whole area. God will honor the steps that have been taken and the Spirit will move in the whole area in a new way. Cities that have been strongholds of the powers of darkness must break under the power of united prayer. The moving of the Spirit will be diverse, in keeping with the revelation of the Word. Do not try to regiment Him, but rather enjoy the variety of His gifts.

**Seven:** Times of testing and sifting. It is impossible to mature and grow in any relationship without this. The enemy will attack. He will try to open old wounds and hurts. Personality conflicts, denominational differences, new ideas versus old, will be used by him to try and frustrate what God is doing. Resist Him! He is defeated! Christ is Lord and King! He must reign until His enemies be made His footstool! He has promised that He will build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul as he writes to the Philippians concerning this subject:

If then our common life in Christ yields anything to stir the heart, any loving consolation, any sharing of the Spirit, any warmth of affection or compassion, fill up my cup of happiness by thinking and feeling alike, with the same love for one another, the same turn of mind, and a *common care for unity*. Rivalry and personal vanity should have no place among you, but you should humbly reckon others better than yourselves. You must look to each other's interest and not merely to your own (Philippians 2:1-4, NEB).☞



# MAKING DISCIPLES



How has the Church understood the commission to "make disciples"?

by Charles Simpson

## WHAT DID HE MEAN?

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20, N.A.S.).

"Go make disciples!" This last recorded command of our Lord is still ringing in our ears from across the centuries. Christians have responded with a variety of interpretations. In our generation discipleship is getting a fresh look and will become more defined. My own definition of discipleship has been constantly refined and will no doubt continue to be. So, this



article is by no means an attempt to cover the subject, but to *explore* it. Neither is this article an attempt to promote one man's view of discipleship. Because the commitment involved is total, deception or synthetic approaches can be disastrous. Any application of the following principles should be done only after serious prayer and Bible study. Christian discipleship can only function under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

Having said the above, I will work within the following definition: a disciple is one who is under the discipline of another, for instruction to produce maturity. Generally speaking, any follower or adherent could be called a disciple.

"Disciple" is not a modern, or Western term. It was used to describe the followers of teachers many centuries ago who literally followed the teacher around. They *adhered* to Him because they believed that he could best teach them the ways of life. Many others before and after Jesus had disciples (See Acts 5:36-37). When Jesus came, He revealed the true way of life (John 14:6). For us to obey Jesus' command, we must disciple others in *His ways*. Of course this means we must know His ways . . . and then know His ways regarding the making of disciples.

A disciple is similar to a "journeyman" or an "apprentice." But discipleship is not a matter of learning certain activities or skills, so much as learning how to live. So discipleship is a matter of one who is living in *the way of the Lord*, showing someone else how to live in *the way of the Lord* (Acts 9:2; 18:25,26; 19:9,23). It has been said many times that discipleship is *formation of life*, not mere *information* about life. To say it another way, "It's better caught than taught."

We may make many converts and not make any disciples. Discipleship is vastly more than making converts. In fact, we may do many religious things and yet miss His commandment to make disciples. Be sure that though discipleship is Jesus' own method of

reproducing and maturing, it has been abused and will be abused by less noble causes such as communism and numerous false religions. But the method has brought success to them, erroneous as they are. Discipleship works. The more disciplined the approach, the better it works. But as a method it is like a pipe: what goes in will come out.



Discipleship is not a matter of passing information from one mind to another — that is education, and there is a vast difference. An "educated Christian" may never have been very disciplined by Lordship of Christ. There were two trees in the garden of Eden: the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan promised maturity through knowledge of good and evil. It proved false. Knowledge alone will not bring maturity, it only "puffs up" or "makes arrogant" (1 Corinthians 8:1). A true love relationship is needed to bring a child to maturity. Love and relationship demand *discipline*. This forgotten word must find its way back into our vocabulary, and be realized in an environment of love (See Hebrews 12:1-11; Proverbs 13:24).

#### WHAT QUALIFIES ONE TO MAKE DISCIPLES?

To produce disciples who will walk in Jesus' ways one must himself be an *example* of Christian maturity and stability. Jesus is not only the pattern for *making* disciples, He is the pattern disciple. Isaiah refers to Jesus as the Father's disciple and a servant (Isaiah 50:4-11), and Paul reminds us that Jesus emptied Himself and became a humble servant.

The first quality that is necessary for making disciples is a life that is an example of Christ's ways. This is the very basis of our authority (1 Peter 5:3). When one ceases to be an example, he forfeits his right to

instruct. Since life, not information, is being imparted, a man will only produce the measure of *life* that he has. Words are conductors which convey our *spirit* to people. A nervous man may teach on peace, but his very words will make people nervous. Weakness as well as strength may be imparted by example.

A second necessary quality is being under authority. This is where Lordship becomes a practical reality. An entire article could be given to discuss the necessity of this attribute. A rebel will begat rebels. One can only transmit the authority to which he submits (See Matthew 8:5-13). Nothing more personifies the way of Jesus than the Spirit of submission (Philippians 2:5-15). Submission is never coerced. It must be done for the same reason Jesus did it, *as unto the Father* . . . we submit *as unto Jesus*. We do it at home, at work, in church relationships, in government; it comes "naturally" because we've learned "His ways" — and we trust Him. Those who have learned His ways will be under authority — even if it kills them (Matthew 27:43). Jesus' attitude toward His Father's authority is revealed in John 5:19,30; 8:28,29. It is never our business to coerce people to submit to us, but it is our business to submit to the authority where God leads us — then receive as a trust those whom He gives us to disciple.

This leads us to a third qualification for making disciples. One who makes disciples must learn to *depend upon the Holy Spirit*. In John 17 Jesus spoke thirteen times of the disciples and the authority which the Father *gave* Him. Spiritual authority is never taken, it is *given*. One who is eager to dominate others should never get the chance. John the Baptist acknowledged that a man could receive nothing except the Father gives it (John 3:26,27).

The Holy Spirit must cause others to recognize one's maturity. One labors not for recognition, but as unto the Lord. All disciples of Jesus belong to Jesus. *They are His, not ours* (1 Peter 5:3,4; Acts 20:28), but He "allots" or assigns them to mature



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brethren for overseeing and maturing. These brethren will give an account to Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, for each disciple. In John 17, (Jesus' prayer) Jesus accounts to the Father for those entrusted Him. In Jesus' life, one sees a dependency upon the Holy Spirit in both the calling and training of those disciples. He was not aggressive or domineering. The authority He exercised was in cooperation with their willingness. They were free to leave. If the Lord does not "give" the disciple to be taught, he will be unteachable.

In order to make disciples one must have a love like Jesus had for the flock. Truth and discipline must work by love. Jesus' kind of love is one which lays down its very life for the sheep (John 10:11; 12:25; 15:13). In order to make disciples one will necessarily lay down other pursuits, ambitions, etc. The time and resources required to make disciples must be as total as the commitment required to be a disciple. Do not take on too many!

The one who sets out to obey the Lord's command is volunteering to be a servant. Jesus served the disciples literally in many ways. That is how they learned what it was to be a servant. Making disciples is not the way to become a "big wheel." Only the love of God will cause a mature Christian to humble himself before the immature, and serve a servant. The life and lessons they get will be at your expense. But after all, whatever you have received came at the expense of someone else.

Treat these newborn babes as Jesus' little brothers and sisters left with you for nourishing. When He returns He will bring His reward with Him. But woe to the steward who is abusing them when the Lord of the house returns (Matthew 24:45-51).

No doubt there are other qualifications, and these we have given are not

necessarily in order of importance. But we believe these all to be necessary.

### HOW CAN I BE A DISCIPLE?

Generally speaking, all true Christians are disciples of the Lord Jesus. However, the practical process of being disciplined by someone has not been part of this experience, even though many of us have been "discipled" by several mature Christians in the course of our spiritual development. In the event that being discipled "by man" may trouble some of the readers, 1 Corinthians 4:14-17 may serve as an example. In Acts 9:1 (NAS), the disciples were called "disciples of the Lord." But in Acts 19:9-10, Paul drew away disciples and taught them daily. So again we say, disciples belong to the Lord, but they are shaped by stewards of His ministry.

Practical discipleship begins with a commitment. We must face the fact that everyone will not want to be discipled. Some will want to be discipled, but will be unwilling to pay the high price required. God does not exclude anyone from the Kingdom. People exclude themselves by spending their lives on that which they believe is more important.

Others will draw back because they are willing to "submit to God," but they are not willing to "submit to man." The Scripture teaches us that man is a rebel. When the Lordship of Jesus truly conquers a man's self-management, the Lordship of Jesus is manifest by his now submissive and meek spirit (1 Corinthians 11:1-3; Ephesians 5:22-32; 6:1-3; Philippians 2:5-15; Colossians 3:18-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14; 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12; Hebrews 13:7,17). A submissive or meek person is not weak, but bridled. It is interesting that in 1 Peter 5:5-6 humbling oneself under elders is equated with humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God.

The question is not *whether* to submit, it is *where* to submit. That should be the subject of much prayer and fasting. Possibly it can be answered by recognizing those whom

God has already used to bring us to the new birth or into greater spiritual awareness. Your leader will not be a perfect person. The Apostles never became perfect, and never claimed to. Wherever and whenever, submission must be done with the conviction that God has led you in it, and therefore you are relating to your leader as unto the Lord. The decision should bring peace and joy. The relationship as a disciple is not contrived or strained. His yoke is easy and His burden is light — but His yoke is a yoke.

It should be pointed out, that the one doing the discipling must be just as convinced that it is in the will of God as the one who is being discipled. One who submits to a leader for training is not doing him a favor any more than one discipling is doing God a favor. A disciple becomes the recipient of the favor and love given him, therefore, he must be desirous of being a servant worthy of that favor. Both parties must be involved by mutual understanding as unto God. Discipleship, in Jesus' experience, was not vague.

Suppose I ask you, "Are you married?"

And you answered, "I *think* so."

If you are married, you have a *covenant* and therefore answer to God for the other party. So it is with being a disciple (Hebrews 13:17). It should be a definite relationship.

Members of my physical body are not joined to my body in *general*, but they are joined to other members in *particular*. So it is with Christ's body. We know we are joined to the Head because we are joined to a member. The life flows through relationships (1 John 1:1-7). The spirit of independence is not the Spirit of Christ. My counsel is not to join a body, but find a shepherd, then he will place you into his flock. But many seek to join a fellowship without being willing to come under the shepherd. The door to any flock is the shepherd (John 10:7). Desiring the fellowship of a body without a commitment to its leadership is spiritual thievery. . . "Something for nothing" (John 10:1).



Again let me suggest that you are very certain what you are doing before you vow a vow or make a pledge. It is one thing to "join"; it's another to "be joined," by the Lord. Be sure God has ordained your relationship.

If discipleship begins with commitment, it functions by self-denial. In Matthew 16:24-25, Jesus lays down the price tag of discipleship — self-denial. In Luke 14:27-35 Jesus confronts the multitudes with the cost and warned them correctly to count it. History proved that He did not overprice it.

The denial of self is more than denying one's possessions. Possessions are only the extension of self. Self-denial includes the *practical* death of ego, self-reliance and a lot of things we thought we already knew. We have no modern term which could convey the idea of taking up one's *cross*. The cross was not just death — it was a curse. Jewish historians make no mention of crucifixions. The victim of a crucifixion was never spoken of. He was erased from the public mind with unmentionable contempt.

If discipleship is to be a cross, then it is not a means to exaltation. It is a means of death. That's where the will of God led Jesus and where He went, there His *disciples* will go also (John 12:23-27). Exaltation is the Father's prerogative (Psalm 75:4-7). When we trust God, it is not a means to get our will done . . . it is a means of death to our will, so that His will and His life shall be resurrected. Discipleship, commitment and self-denial should not be viewed as the means by which we will receive a "great ministry." They are the altar on which we lay "our" ministry. If we truly trust God, then we can trust those to whom He entrusts us.

When one truly denies himself he confesses, "I cannot run my own life . . . will you help me to bring it under the government of Jesus Christ the Lord. I want to be His servant."

One who is unwilling to serve should never be allowed to rule.

Self-denial will cause one to be *teachable*. Teachableness is a necessary

quality for maturing. Jesus Himself was teachable. The Father taught Him. In John 8:28, Jesus declared that He spoke as the Father had *taught* Him (Isaiah 50:4). He also stated that if those who *believed* in Him would continue in His Word (teaching), then they would be His disciples. Note that discipleship is a further commitment than simply *believing* in Him. It is coming under His discipline for instruction. Further truth would be dependent upon discipleship. Developing in the truth would lead to freedom. John 8:32 must not be taken out of context. *Believing* leads to *discipleship*. Discipleship leads to *maturity*. Maturity makes one capable of *freedom*. To grant undue freedom to the immature is to destroy. Our baby is not free to play in the street. If he continues in our discipline he will become mature and know the truth about the street. Then upon maturing he will be free to use it.

The more teachable one is the more discipleship is possible and productive.

Teachableness must lead to obedience. God's purpose is not theory but practice. "Why call ye me Lord, and *do* not the things that I say" (Luke 6:46).

Jesus gave His disciples practical tests of obedience. He challenged their trust in Him: "Peter, go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for you and Me" (Matthew 17:27, N.A.S.).

Do you suppose Peter had a problem with that? How often do you suppose he had found money in a fish's mouth?

"Would you say that again, Lord?" he must have thought.

As Peter walked toward the sea, wondering to himself as a "professional fisherman," a friend may have approached him with, "Where are you going, Peter?"

"Uh . . . for a walk . . ."

"Can I go along with you?"

"Well, I'd rather be alone if you do not mind . . ."

Even if Peter had no trouble looking

for tax money in a fish's mouth . . . what about you and me?

Remember when Jesus told the disciples to get the donkey not knowing whose it was, or when He told the disciples to feed the five thousand, or when He told them to follow a man bearing a pitcher of water and ask to borrow his house? Jesus could have done it Himself, or done it a more simple way, but He chose to involve them in obedience.

Often a disciple is told to do something of no seeming value, other than its contribution to obedience training.

You pick up the stick and look at your playful dog. Showing the stick to the dog you throw it away.

"Go get it, Pal!"

Poor Pal probably thinks, "If he wanted the stick why did he throw it away?"

Why did you throw it? You did it to teach him obedience. One day obedience might save his life.

The purpose of a true disciple is to carry out the will of Jesus Christ. To do that, his own will must be broken. I believe it is accurate to say that our "cross" is where His will and our wills cross. Obedience puts our will to death, and reveals the will of God.

The disciple who has committed himself, denied himself, received teaching and obeyed the orders will one day hear, "No longer do I call you slaves; for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15, N.A.S.). There's a time to obey as a slave — not knowing the "why" of it. Then comes the day of *recognition*, when his leader says, "Now you are ready!" A true disciple cannot minister, or be promoted, beyond the recognition of his leader.

There is no more rewarding experience than to fellowship with Jesus as friend. Only He can draw us into that relationship. I believe He calls us into that fellowship through discipline.

Often, when we have obeyed and had some success, such as the disciples did in Matthew 10, we then feel



mature and ready to launch our own ministry. Only the master knows when the student is ready. Chances are the student will feel ready before he is. Wait for the recognition of your leader. Let him promote you. When he feels you are ready, he, as Jesus did, will begin to take you into his confidence.

Shortly after Jesus called the disciples His friends, He prepared to *release* the responsibility onto their shoulders.

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you . . . But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:7,13 N.A.S.).

Jesus also was releasing them to the Father and the subsequent ministry of the Spirit. During this transition there was the normal uncertainty and fear. But the time of their preparation now was fulfilled. Suddenly, responsibility began to take on a new look. When one begins to prepare, the ministry looks glamorous. In the shadow of the cross it looked ominous and foreboding. This was a new kind of discipleship graduation exercise. "Except a grain of wheat fall in the ground and die!" Strange words for one whose short earthly ministry was just "catching on." They were just about to go international! The Greeks were inquiring. No doubt "crusades" would have opened up there.

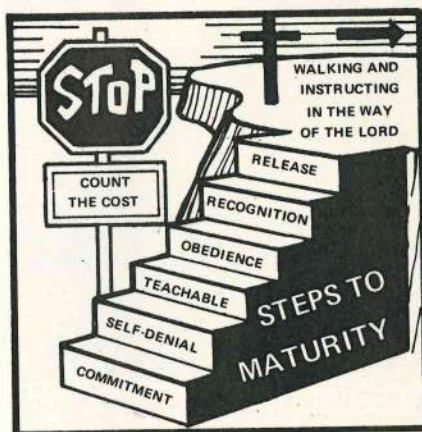
But in a few short days the sky was dark and Jesus was laying down His body, palms outstretched — with no defense. To His Father He said, "I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; . . . I have set my face like a flint" (Isaiah 50:5-7 N.A.S.). Jesus *willfully* and *voluntarily* laid down His earthly ministry and His life in order that His life and ministry might be released to His disciples. That is *true*

*release*. But if true discipline to the will of God has not been previously established, then it will all be in vain at the place of release.

I can see Paul talking to those whom he had disciplined in Ephesus: "You won't see me anymore . . . I taught to you all that I knew . . . Guard yourselves and the flock . . . Jesus purchased it with His own blood. Watch out for wolves . . . be alert! Remember how I taught you day and night for three years and admonished each one of you with tears . . . And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace . . ."

Then they all knelt and prayed together and began to weep out loud, embracing and kissing Paul.

The whole process of being a disciple is designed for the day of release. One day the responsibility will come to the disciple. One can afford to sleep in church or listen casually to a teacher, if he never expects to have to do what the teacher is describing. But the one whose motive is to do the will of God, will later treasure each moment.



#### RESULTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The cross of Jesus was the supreme test of His disciples. At first, the results seemed less than plausible. However, all but one, the betrayer, were stabilized. As they were later empowered, they went on to reshape world history.

Discipleship does not merely get men into "something"; it gets something into them. Discipline *establishes* life and principles into a person's very

nature. Then, one can no more flee from those things than he can flee from himself. One cannot deny what he has become. Though a crisis causes him to want to turn aside, he is trained to function correctly in that hour.

Discipleship had *matured* those eleven men. They were more than just three-and-a-half years older since beginning to follow Jesus. Obscure, inept fishermen had been transformed into pillars of truth surrounded by international controversy and chaos. The unimaginable pressures of Judaism and Roman rule and the fires of violent persecution only polished the gold, silver and precious stones.

Discipleship had not only reproduced Jesus' ministry, but had *multiplied* it. Now instead of one who had to be dealt with there were 120 . . . and how many more? Then suddenly thousands.

By discipleship Jesus *distributed His ministry and success*. Instead of keeping the ministry to Himself, He taught ordinary men how to enter the extraordinary purpose and power of God. Jesus acknowledged in John 17 that He had given them the glory which the Father had given Him. Discipleship is a giving experience. Nothing more testifies to the motive of a ministry than its willingness to be shared under someone else's name.

Discipleship had left the disciples in a community or fellowship. That *community* had as its cornerstone their common Lordship. Without a willingness to be governed, we cannot know true discipleship, fellowship and community. *Protection* and sustenance were found in community. That community was referred to as "The Way" (See Acts 9:2, N.A.S.). They were different from those who went "their own way." These were a "peculiar people," chosen of God to manifest and walk in His ways. They were heaven's embassy on earth.

I believe if Christianity is to return to these principles, and I believe it will, it will come about through a rediscovery and practice of New Testament discipleship. Then we may fulfill our commission: *Go make disciples.*



Isaiah says our ways are not God's ways. Perhaps nowhere is this truth more apparent today than in Christian leadership. For the sincere Christian to discover that certain respected ministries and lines of authority are contrary to Scripture is disconcerting to say the least. But the current clear emphasis of the Holy Spirit to restore a New Testament pattern of church life and government demands our response, painful as responding may be. In this article we wish to discuss seven characteristics of *biblical* leadership which seem often ignored or obscured. Understanding them may help facilitate the adjustments many Christians are being required to make.

**I. Biblical leadership is recruited by God, not man.** The priests in Israel were so numerous in Jesus' day they had to wait their turn for temple duty; yet not one of them was numbered among the Lord's disciples. Was it divine oversight or divine choice? Actually, none of the twelve disciples volunteered for his job; every one was conscripted.

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain (John 15:16).

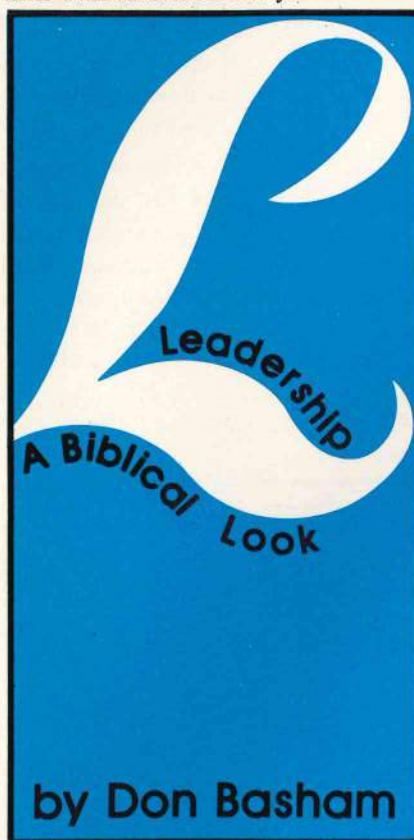
Much of Christianity today still attempts to get the Lord's work done by recruiting talent and leadership from secular ranks, assuming natural talents are indispensable for church efficiency. The corporation executive makes the best board chairman and the certified public accountant the best church treasurer. Many times the pressure of need prompts choices which later prove unwise.

Even the New Testament records an account of one such impulsive action. After the death of Judas Iscariot the disciples felt constrained to replace him. They selected two additional followers of Jesus, Joseph Justus and Matthias. Casting lots between them they chose Matthias and "he was numbered with the twelve apostles" (Acts 1:26).

Strangely, we never hear of Matthias again and shortly thereafter the Lord Himself recruits a young man named Saul who became Paul. Although steadfastly refusing to put himself on a par with the original twelve (see 1 Corinthians 15:9) Paul more than filled the gap in apostolic ranks.

We will state it again: biblical leadership is recruited by God, not man.

Acknowledging this principle can help enthusiastic Christians today from mistakenly seeking to advance their own causes. Recently I received a



letter from a young minister stating the circulated letter describing his talents for nationwide ministry had met with practically no response. He suggested I might help by passing on to him the invitations I was unable to accept.

While it is commendable to desire an effective ministry, we should note that Paul, who said, "If a man desire the office of a bishop [elder] he desireth a good work" (1 Timothy 3:1) immediately added that it was not an office open to the young new Christian: "... not a novice, lest

being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6).

In the same vein Paul cautioned the Corinthians, "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Corinthians 10:18). Paul is reminding us that while youthful zeal, talent and self-confidence look good in man's eyes, they are not necessarily God's prerequisites for leadership.

Does man, then, have any part in the selection? To this extent: God selects leadership, man recognizes and confirms that leadership by the act of ordination. Paul and Silas followed this procedure.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed (Acts 14:23).

But theirs were not arbitrary choices; rather they were confirming men in the leadership God had already given. Paul makes this plain in his farewell to the Ephesian elders.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. . . . (Acts 20:28).

**II. Biblical leadership is selected more on potential than achievement.** The principle of growth pervades the entire New Testament. Jesus said growth in the kingdom of God is like growth in nature. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). God's choice of leadership is not determined by a maturity already achieved but by potential.

In fact, God often calls men the world considers unqualified and proceeds to pour some of His most powerful ministries through them. Their ministries are not based on *their* ability, but His, and it is important that those chosen for leadership know the choice was not made on the basis of their own talents. The minister will *grow* into the fulfillment of his ministry provided he remains humble and



faithful. Paul described Abraham in these terms.

He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He [God] had promised, He [God] was also able to perform (Romans 4:20-21).

The principle holds true whether God chooses a simple, uneducated man or a highly trained, brilliant one. A minister of true intellectual skill confessed, "Frankly, I thought God had caught quite a prize when He won me, but I soon learned better. I came to see there was nothing whatever in me to commend me to God." And the powerful ministry of this man today is not the result of his intellectual prowess, but of his unreserved commitment to Jesus Christ which made possible his growth into mature ministry.

This seems to have been the pattern of Paul's own life. Writing to the Corinthians, he totally discounted all his own brilliance and intellectual ability.

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. For my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:3-5).

**III. Biblical leadership is endorsed leadership.** A study of the New Testament church clearly indicates its leaders practiced the principle of endorsement. In Acts, chapter 15, the dispute between Paul and Barnabas and the Judaizers over the question of the Gentile Christians keeping the law is referred to a council of apostles and elders in Jerusalem. From the letters sent announcing the decision of that council it is clear the Judaizers were acting without endorsement.

For as much as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, ye

must be circumcized and keep the law; *to whom we gave no such commandment. . . (Acts 15:24).*

Endorsement is the recognition of responsible leadership by other responsible leadership. The importance of the principle cannot be over-emphasized today since there are literally thousands of congregations and fellowships which, unlike traditional churches with pastors, depend largely on charismatic, traveling ministries which God has raised up for their spiritual instruction. While the majority of these mobile ministries are known to be fruitful and effective, there are some false prophets among them. Therefore it becomes imperative that those groups utilizing such ministries make sure they are endorsed by other responsible leadership. Grave difficulties could be avoided by adopting this practice. Even though it is not a particularly tasteful task since outwardly it seems based on suspicion, such checking of "credentials" can spare a congregation from harmful contact with unsound or even immoral ministries. The apostle Paul was not hesitant both to recommend responsible ministries and to denounce false ones. (See Philippians 2:19-20, 24-25 and 2 Timothy 1:15, 2:16-18).

I recently had communication from a group of fine Christians who had been forced to renounce the ministry of their own pastor because of repeated acts of immorality. All attempts to bring him to repentance and retire him from the active ministry until he could be restored had ended in failure. His decision to disregard the counsel of his elders and to continue his ministry necessitated their warning the body of Christ. The decision was a painful one, but their motive was clear and Christlike: to protect the body of Christ from further harm and to pressure their fallen brother into coming to grips with his problem.

Before we leave this point we should note that there are many presently unendorsed ministries which are sound and fruitful. In such cases lack of endorsement does not stem from rebellious intent so much as from

ignorance of the principle. Regretfully, such independent ministries are exposed to unnecessary spiritual danger, and by perpetuating an unscriptural approach to ministry, make it easier for false prophets to prey upon the body of Christ. Ideally, every ministry should not only be endorsed, but should actually be under the oversight of other responsible leadership. This brings us to our next principle.

**IV. Biblical leadership is submitted to other leadership.** Even more crucial than the need for ministries to be endorsed, is the need for them to be submitted to other leadership. Every man God raises up in leadership has the responsibility of recognizing and submitting to those whom God has placed over him.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, *and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you*, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Like the principle of endorsement, the principle of submission is not yet fully accepted by the body of Christ, especially by many of its ministers. We must frankly admit that there are unsubmitted, even rebellious ministries which are blessing God's people. The blessings are God's gracious response to the needs of His people; they do not necessarily indicate His approval of the ministry. God blesses many things He does not approve. We live in a day in which divine blessings are falling like abundant rain from heaven, and "God sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). Sometimes His blessings are given not because we *are* obedient but to *lead us into* obedience. God doesn't bless rebellion, but He often blesses in spite of rebellion.

To avoid being in rebellion, every ministry in the body of Christ should be in submission to other ministries and every minister in the body of Christ should be able to identify those God has placed in authority over him. To say, "I serve God only, and no man



can tell me what to do!" is not only rebellion but sheer folly. Unfortunately, some ministers still make such a boast. But, as one wise minister commented, "If you are too big to be led, you are too little to lead!"

**V. Biblical leadership exalts the Lord and not the leader.** Leaders in the church today occupy positions of unique privilege and peril. These are days of multiplied miracles. But the God who performs them is invisible while His ministers are not. Often the praise and thanksgiving meant for God falls on the minister. This can be pretty heady stuff!

It is probably unrealistic to expect Christians to refrain completely from all "You-must-be-a-wonderful-man-of-God-to-be-able-to-do-that!" excesses, but every effort in that direction is surely to be commended. Ministers, like others with the opportunity for influencing large numbers of people, are strongly tempted to accept the flattery of their admirers as deserved. You can help by treating them with quiet respect while directing the praise and thanksgiving for their powerful ministries to God.

Fortunately, for those of us in ministry, God Himself has a bountiful supply of situations tailor-made to help keep us humble. I say this with confidence born of painful experience. Periodically, He allows me to get caught in public with all my own carnal stubbornness showing, or allows my ministry to prove miserably inadequate on the very occasion I had hoped to impress certain people. As Paul reminds us,

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Yet in spite of God's loving chastisement some of us manage to retain an overly-exalted opinion of ourselves, becoming superspiritual. I recall falling into the clutches of such a couple — a minister and his wife — during a three-day seminar in a distant city. Since I was a guest in their home there was no escape from their superspirituality. Personal testimony, ever-deeper revela-

tions and lofty scripture texts were served up with every meal. Their lives, it seemed, consisted of an unbroken string of spiritual victories and marvelous miracles. It was impossible to conduct an ordinary conversation in their presence. Simple comments about the trees and traffic were seized as the opening for some additional spiritual discourse. By the end of the three days I was convinced that even their cat walked with a holier-than-thou gait!

Granted, the example is an exaggerated one. Nevertheless, far too many Christians have developed a warped viewpoint of what constitutes mature Christian leadership. I have observed that the more mature a Christian is, the more natural he is. He shares the truth God has entrusted to him in a way which accurately reflects his own personality. He gives credit for his ministry to God where it belongs, but displays no false humility. He is secure but not complacent in the task of performing his ministry. He has also learned not to take himself too seriously.

I have the privilege of being in close association with a few men of God who fit fairly closely the description just given. Each is unique in his ministry and each is the same genuine person away from the pulpit as behind it. It is a joy and privilege to serve with such men.

**VI. Biblical leadership is masculine, not feminine.** Perhaps it would have been safer to complete this list of characteristics without touching this point. It continues to generate considerable tension among believers. Nevertheless, in the New Testament, leadership, authority and government are distinctly male responsibilities. This is not in any way a designation of superior and inferior roles, it is a revelation of divine purpose. Both Paul and Peter make it plain that Christian men and women are of equal worth in the kingdom of God (Galatians 3:28 and 1 Peter 3:7). However, *equal worth does not imply equal function*. And it is on the basis of divine distinction of function that Paul says,

But I suffer not a woman to teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:12-14).

That women are excluded from positions of leadership and authority is not divine discrimination but divine protection. Woman's role, according to Scripture, is a highly favored, blessed and *protected* role.

By New Testament standards, then, it is obvious some women are in positions of spiritual leadership which would be better filled by men. But let us quickly point out that in many cases, men are to blame. For many years there has been widespread abdication of leadership responsibility on the part of Christian men, creating vacancies in leadership. Christian women have moved to occupy more out of desperation than desire. Leadership has fallen on their shoulders by simple default. Surely, God holds Christian men more responsible for the unhappy results than He holds the women.

Let us also observe that while leadership is primarily a man's responsibility, under proper male covering and headship, women can conduct powerful, effective ministries. They can (1) Receive and minister spiritual gifts (Acts 21:8-9), (2) Teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5), (3) Minister hospitality to ministers (Romans 16:1-2). (4) Share in an almost unlimited ministry under the covering and in the company of their husbands (Acts 18:1-3, 18, 26).

**VII. Biblical leadership is not imposed; it is recognized and submitted to.** The Bible speaks of leadership in two distinct ways: *recognizing* it and *exercising* it. For example, the Scriptures clearly state that the husband is to be *recognized* as the leader of the wife.

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man (1 Corinthians 11:3).



Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22).

While the wife is told to *recognize* the leadership of her husband and submit to it, the husbands are told the proper way to *exercise* the leadership that has been *recognized* in them.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

The leadership given the husband must not be used to force his wife to do his bidding; it is leadership to be demonstrated by loving sacrifice which puts her well-being before his own, even as Christ loved and gave himself for the church.

On the other hand, the wife must *recognize* her husband's leadership, *irrespective of how inadequately he may exercise it!* The authority vested in her husband is God's authority, and she's to submit to that authority not because he's the right kind of husband, but simply because he's the husband God has placed over her. Unfortunately, some men attempt to impose leadership because it is God-given just as some women refuse to submit to leadership because it is imperfect. Both actions represent a tragic misunderstanding of how leadership is to be recognized and exercised.

This double principle of recognizing and exercising leadership applies not just to the Christian home but to the whole body of Christ. Concerning recognizing leadership, Paul says,

And we beseech you brethren, to know them who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The whole church must understand that recognition and submission to spiritual leadership is not based on the worthiness of the person God has placed in leadership, (there are no perfect leaders!) but on the fact that

God has made him a leader. Leadership is recognized and submitted to because it is God-given, not because it is properly administered.

Concerning *exercising* leadership Peter says,

The elders which are among you I exhort . . . to feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof . . . neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3).

As in the case of husbands, elders are to *exercise* their leadership in humble, Christlike service, not *imposing* their authority but *demonstrating* it.

**Some final suggestions:** It is one thing to see scriptural principles; quite another to apply them. There is an inevitable gap between revelation and realization. By the standards of these seven principles, many of us may find ourselves in unscriptural situations trying to fill unscriptural roles. But rather than coming under condemnation, let us simply resolve to make the

necessary adjustments. Here are a few suggestions:

(1) Begin to do *something*, even if it is only a small something. God blesses small endeavors as well as great ones.

(2) Know that with God's help, some things will change for the better, both in you and your situation. God is faithful.

(3) Be patient. Some unscriptural situations have taken years to develop and cannot be radically changed overnight.

(4) Pray earnestly for wisdom to make *proper* application of the principles. Some eager Christians are so zealous, their cures prove worse than the disease.

(5) Don't pamper yourself by pretending yours is a special case. There are always exceptions but they do not justify your mess as being a special mess.

(6) Concentrate on your own disobedience, not that of your wife or husband.

(7) Don't strive to be successful; just strive to be faithful and leave your success in the hand of God. ♣

## RESISTING GOD, AN EFFECTUAL BAR TO GRACE

by Fenelon

You perceive, by the light of God, in the depth of your conscience, what grace demands of you, but you resist Him. Hence your distress. You begin to say within, it is impossible for me to undertake to do what is required of me; this is a temptation to despair. Despair as much as you please of self, but never of God; He is all good and all powerful, and will grant you according to your faith. If you will believe all things, all things shall be yours, and you shall remove mountains. If you believe nothing, you shall have nothing, but you alone will be to blame. Look at Abraham, who hoped against every rational hope! Look at Mary, who, when the most incredible thing in the world was proposed to her, did not hesitate, but exclaimed, "*be it unto me according to thy word*" (Luke 1:38).

Open, then, your heart. It is now so shut up, that you not only have not the power to do what is required of you, but you do not even desire to have it; you have no wish that your heart should be enlarged, and you fear that it will be. How can grace find room in so straitened a heart? All that I ask of you is, that you will rest in a teachable spirit of faith, and that you will not listen to self. Simply acquiesce in everything with lowliness of mind, and receive peace through recollection, and everything will be gradually accomplished for you; those things which, in your hour of temptation, seemed the greatest difficulties will be insensibly smoothed away.



# These Two Shall Become One Flesh

by Dick & Lydia Key

Dick Key comes from a Christian Church background. He received his education at Pacific Christian College in Long Beach, California, and at Cincinnati

Bible Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was ordained at Melody Land Christian Center in California. In 1967 God called him to begin a ministry to the hippies in Haight-Asbury in San Francisco. There he met and married Lydia, a New England girl, who had met Christ at Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland. Dick's ministry, Clayton House, dissolved in June of 1971 and in August of that year with Lydia and their three children, he moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. He became administrator of Christian Growth Ministries in February of 1972 and a few months later took over the duties as editor of NEW WINE. Dick and Lydia have four children, ages one through five.





"The key word in learning how to love my wife as Christ loved the Church has been sensitivity."



"Once you taste real submission, you're hooked!"

## A husband and wife dialogue on the problems of building a Christian home.

**W**hen my house ministry in the Haight-Asbury district of San Francisco dissolved, it was probably one of the most critical points of my entire life! To see four years and all the people to whom I had given myself suddenly vanish was an emotionally devastating experience. Rather than the usual confident self, I was questioning everything in my life — including God's calling. On top of this, to hear that my wife was leaving me when I needed her most was nearly more than I could bear. You could never have convinced me of it then, but this was to be the turning point in our marriage.

### PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION

**DICK:** Our marriage began in a somewhat unorthodox fashion in that we were married three weeks after we first met. At that time I was the pastor of a commune called Clayton House. God had sent me there in 1967 to share Christ with the hippies. Since there were 35 to 50 kids living at Clayton House, my time was pretty well taken up with ministry and counseling. In fact, I was so involved with the ministry that sometimes Lydia (my wife) had to make an appointment to see me! Since we had so little time for communication there was no chance for a real relationship to develop. All I knew was that we didn't think alike!

At the time we were married I was doing the cooking for the whole

house. Lydia would try to help me in the kitchen, but it was a frustrating experience for both of us. I would go to the drawer for a spatula, and she would have put it somewhere else. I would measure the sugar and she would have already measured it. This type of frustration typified our efforts to work together.

Not knowing how to communicate with each other affected our entire relationship. Our personalities were so different — I would blurt out my feelings while she would keep everything inside. I remember going to bed at night knowing something was wrong between us, trying to get her to talk it out, only to have her lie silently, holding everything in. I could not understand why she had such a difficult time.

**LYDIA:** I entered marriage with some rather selfish motives. I had just completed training in Europe to begin a ministry of smuggling Bibles into Russia when I ended up at Clayton House. (To me, ministry, or being an evangelistic heroine, was the most important thing in my life).

Shortly before coming to the House, I had received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and God had begun to open my eyes to the selfishness of my goals. By the time I met Dick I was scared to death of what might happen to me in Russia and I wanted someone to protect me.

I saw Dick as a means whereby I could achieve my goals. His political convictions and experience in moving with God were just what I needed to help bring my visions to fruition. I never bothered to take into account all that would be required of me in marriage. I just saw all the benefits — love and security — which my husband could afford.

We had not been married long before I began to suffer some disillusionment. The glamour of living in Haight-Asbury began to wear off. The hours Dick spent with those close to him — his secretaries and the kids in the commune — became a jealous sore spot which continually festered. Soon I found myself hating the House and everyone in it. I gradually became suspicious of his actions and motives. I criticized him continually and excluded from my mind the wonderful qualities that made me fall in love with him in the first place.

The worst part was never being able to tell anyone — and especially my husband — how I felt. It bottled up inside until I found I was thinking of myself as a prisoner held captive by a petty tyrant who was concerned with no one but himself. I was sure he wanted me for a bed partner and nothing more. Many times I prayed for an end to this ministry. I wanted to pack my bags and run home to Mama!



## THE BIRTH PAINS OF SUBMISSION

DICK: About the time we were married there was an overemphasis on submission in our particular ministry. In my zeal to serve God and have a godly home, I took the Scriptures somewhat one-sidedly. I had certain concepts and convictions about marriage, and Lydia suffered for them. Though I would not have admitted it at the time, I thought a wife was for her husband's benefit — to serve him, love him, keep his home, have his children, and submit in everything. Women did womanly things, and men attended to "the things of God."

Being a strong, super-organized person, I tended to view my wife and her efforts to relate to me as rather dumb. I felt that most of her ideas didn't make sense and her conclusions and viewpoints were absurd. I had a way of cutting her off when she tried to express herself or share an opinion that opposed mine.

Not too long before our second child was due, our first daughter, Elizabeth, got very sick. The doctor diagnosed it as pneumonia and prescribed various kinds of medication. As the days went by and she did not respond to treatment, it became obvious that God was dealing in the situation and that He was expecting us to trust Him for the healing.

During this illness Lydia had devoted herself almost continuously to Elizabeth and I began to see the effects of her staying in the house for so long a time. At that time I was holding evangelistic meetings in Oakland, and one evening a strong impression from the Lord came to me that Lydia should get away from the House for a while. When I mentioned it to Lydia I was not prepared for her reaction:

"I don't want to go."

"Well, I really feel you should go. You need to get out of the house and I believe God will heal Elizabeth."

"God can heal her here just as well as He can at that meeting!"

"But God can heal here at the meeting, too," I said.

"I don't care. I am not going. I will not take my child out of this house."

Even though she was becoming quite agitated, a calm in my spirit enabled me to stand in what I felt God had said without becoming angry or belligerent. Then I insisted, "You *are* going to go to that meeting."

"This child will go out of this house *over my dead body*."

I knew her threat was her final word and there was nothing more I could do. Forgetting that the Scripture commands the husbands to love their wives, to cherish and nourish and help them — even when they are having a struggle and they don't want to have anything to do with their husbands — I retreated to my office where I spent the next two days and nights.

LYDIA: During this time all I could see was that Dick was threatening my life and worse than that, the life of my child. I had stood a lot, but there I was prepared to draw the line against him. I was not prepared, however, for what happened next.

That night I felt as if all the forces in hell were turned loose on me. The presence of God which had comforted me through my life was withdrawn and I felt utterly lost, alone, and without God. To complicate matters, Elizabeth began to get worse. When Dick had stood his ground without arguing or getting upset himself, he had "stayed out of God's way," allowing God to deal with me as He saw fit. A husband's displeasure cannot compare to what God does if a husband stands aside! After two terrible days, during which I came to the end of myself, God began to open my eyes. He showed me that Dick was my husband, and right or wrong, God expected me to obey and honor him — even if it cost me my life and the life of my child. My problem was quite clear — it was *rebellion* against my husband.

With some reluctance I went to him and confessed. The weight of a hundred lifetimes was taken from me and the presence of God returned to my life. God honored my obedience

and from that moment Elizabeth began to improve. In a few days she was completely well. Though I was far from seeing the entirety of God's workings, at least I was becoming aware of the fact that everything going on in my life was not *all* Dick's fault, but that God might have a work to do in me as well.

Even though we learned a great deal from the incident with Elizabeth, we were still a long way from where God wanted us. As my frustrations with Dick and Clayton House continued, I sought relief by counseling with an older woman who was staying at the House. Deep inside I felt like this was wrong, but knew of no other way to handle it.

While my personal problems had been building, problems had also begun to develop in the ministry at Clayton House and the only solution seemed to dissolve the ministry. I remember quite vividly the night the House broke up. A second woman in whom I had confided mistook my intentions in talking with her to mean that I wanted to leave Dick. Through this misunderstanding word got back to Dick that I was going to leave him.

Dick, of course, was crushed and felt that now, at the lowest point in his life, even his wife had turned against him. I begged him to trust me, just to trust me one more time. He said he was sorry, but he just could not. We were at a desperate impasse. I cannot explain exactly what happened, but God sovereignly came to our rescue, and somehow we found ourselves stumbling on — taking a second chance.

## THE "LOVE RELATIONSHIP" OF SUBMISSION

DICK: After four years of intense community living with no family privacy, Lydia and I found ourselves strangers — alone with our three little girls after leaving Clayton House. It was during this period that God began to remove the scales from my eyes and show me the marriage relationship in an entirely new light. My mate had



been given to me by God to help me see myself as I really was. Many times she would try to help me, only to be rejected. Now I know that if I had embraced my mate as God's way of speaking to me, there would have been less pain, and God's discipline would not have been so severe.

We began to realize that we were "one flesh" — that means we are on the same team — on the same side. I saw that my wife was not a "thing" — an object to do what I wanted done; but rather, she was an individual who had God-given abilities and gifts that needed to be unlocked and exercised.

LYDIA: Submission has become a dirty word among many Christian women today. It has been over-emphasized as an end in itself without seeing that it is a part of our growth, with steps leading to it and steps that go beyond it. One day I saw that I had been striving for submission by self-will without doing what the Scripture tells us to do first. Ephesians 5:22 and Colossians 3:18 give us the command to be subject to our husbands, but the verses just prior to these tell us *how* to prepare our hearts for an *attitude* of submission. These verses tell us to (1) be filled with the Spirit; (2) praise; and (3) be thankful. I had been missing the first three steps!

Realizing that Dick was the Lord's representative to me, I began to take the same attitude toward my husband that I was taking toward the the Lord. I began to compliment my husband. At first I was so bound by my negative attitude that I couldn't see much of the positive! As I admired him for the good things I saw, however small they might have seemed, the wonderful qualities that he had began to come into focus again.

I began to thank him . . . for working every day to put food on the table, for his heart for God, for the concern he showed for me, and all the little things I had seen as his "duties." How Dick "changed" into the most wonderful, loving, thoughtful husband in the world! Honestly, I feel there is no one quite like him. When I began

to see him like this, submission started to come naturally.

God used submission to show me that I was not really the spiritual giant I had thought. My spiritual maturity had been measured in terms of revelations, spiritual disciplines, moving in the spiritual gifts, and so on. As I continued to submit to my husband, God began to show me that *real* maturity is a condition of the heart. Through my husband, I began to realize I was moody, self-centered, critical, suspicious, sometimes revengeful, childish, and a host of other negative qualities which rocked my self-image as a great woman of God. I did not know *how* to love my husband, or be a godly wife and mother. I guess you could say that this is the *negative* aspect of submission. God had to bring me to the place where I was broken and miserable with myself. There were times when I felt I was losing my identity as well as my sanity.

Now I understand what it means to lay down my life. If ever I was to be anything, Dick was going to have to make me into that — surely I couldn't do it alone! Yielding myself to him, I said, "Make me into what you want." I suddenly realized what the Scripture meant when it said, ". . . the woman is the glory of man" and ". . . man was not created for the woman's sake, but the woman for the man's sake" (1 Corinthians 11:7,8).

Now I had a way to truly love my husband; I could respond to his initiative to make me into what he wanted me to be as his wife. How true this was to the picture of Christ and the believer when Jesus said, "If you *love* Me you will keep My commandments." This has brought a peace and security in my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as my husband, I never dreamed possible. I have advised many people since that time, "Once you taste *real* submission, you're hooked!"

DICK: A great many of God's dealings in our lives have been to get us to communicate and love each

other. Every time we have a "situation" (as we call them) we know that God is trying to point out something in one or both of us that needs to be adjusted. Upon finding ourselves in a situation, we keep working through the problem until we reach the "hugging point" — that is, the place where we are free enough to hug each other and mean it! We have begun to feel we have had so many situations that occasionally in jest we will refer to an incident as "Situation number 4869!"

Around the time of the birth of our fourth child, Ricky, God gave us a tremendous lesson in submission and communication. Lydia, in her desire to have as rich an experience in motherhood as possible, wanted to nurse the new baby. In discussing it, however, we came to the conclusion that it would be better if she did not, since we were leading extremely active lives at that time and desperately needed to spend as much time together as possible. Nursing a baby was not the real issue — it was our need to be together.

The night Ricky was born, I went back to the hospital and she shared with me that she was having a very hard time because she was not going to be able to nurse the baby. I faced a dilemma: I loved her so much that I wanted her to be able to do what she wanted; yet, I still felt very strongly that she was not to nurse the baby. As I was thinking about this, the thought was quickened to me of Jesus kneeling in the Garden of Gethsemane and saying, "If possible, let this cup pass from me. But not *my* will but thine be done." Suddenly I saw that in real submission there is *freedom to express exactly how one feels*. I had always thought that Lydia had an easy time submitting because she never expressed her inner feelings about what she was submitting to. This is exactly the opposite of the submission that was expressed in the love relationship of Jesus with the Father. So often I had labeled someone's desire to express themselves as "rebellion" simply because I did not understand.



## CREATIVE HEADSHIP

DICK: As our communication began to deepen and my sensitivity to Lydia's needs began to grow, the Lord showed me that my wife was like a garden and I was her gardener. My responsibility was more than just "keeping her in line." I had to plant seeds, till the soil, water the plants and keep out the weeds. As I looked at my garden, I realized that I didn't like what I saw — it was my fault!

When the weeds of criticism, moodiness, irritability, and lack of enthusiasm grew, it was an indication of my own neglect of my God-given duties. I was now reaping what I had sown.

I had planted criticism. She would serve me a wonderful dinner and I would criticize the over-cooked beans and never compliment the rest of the meal or give recognition for all the effort that went into its preparation. No wonder I reaped discouragement and irritability.

I sowed neglect. If the work load around the house got heavy or the children got out of hand, she was to blame. When the sink leaked or a light burned out, I let it go rather than taking care of it, forcing her to live with it. For this I reaped moodiness and criticism. My wife was never created to bear the emotional burdens forced upon her, and unless I shouldered the responsibility she would begin to go under.

It took me a long time to understand the necessity of planting the seeds of encouragement, praise and love. Now when she gets dressed up I tell her how wonderful she looks. When she does something I like, or excels in a certain area, I compliment her and tell her what a wonderful wife she really is.

The key word in learning how to love my wife as Christ loved the Church has been *sensitivity*. My wife does not always know *why* she is having the struggles she does, or *why* she acts the way she does, but I have found that by listening carefully to the cry of her heart that God will help me to love her into a woman that reflects

His desire as well as mine in His creation.

Of course there are still times when I find it necessary to lay the law down and take a stand in my home. But as we grow together and I become more sensitive to her needs, I find these times are fewer and farther between.

Since I have begun to understand my role and Lydia has responded to it we don't "go at" each other like we used to. When a situation comes we discuss it and try to find where the problem really is. When she is confident that I am genuinely trying to help, she finds it much easier to open herself and tell me how she really feels.

## EFFECTS OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIP ON OUR CHILDREN

LYDIA: As God has changed us, the work that has been done in our children is just as amazing. Before the relationship between Dick and myself was right, I was so possessive and protective of the children that it actually caused them frustration and rebellion. I demanded from them the love and affection which should have come from my husband. As I began to focus my attention on pleasing Dick, and our love began to flow, the children were less demanding, more satisfied and peaceful. One Saturday morning shortly after Ricky was born, Dick and I were lounging around the house. We were snuggled up together, still basking in our new-found love when Elizabeth, our three-year-old, came by. Instead of demanding our attention, as she usually would, she simply stood and watched us. After a few moments she was evidently satisfied that all was well with the world and she left. A new security she had never experienced was coming into her life.

DICK: Very recently God has dealt with me about relating to my children (ages one to five) on *their own level*! I had been waiting for my children to grow up so I could enjoy them, but now God was demanding that I "grow

down" in order to be a father to them. It was difficult to learn to play their games when I felt I had more "spiritual" things to do; or to listen to their stories about Stinky, the neighborhood mongrel upsetting the garbage. Gradually, however, I began to be fascinated by the intricate world of a child's mind and I began to understand how my children look at life . . . what their problems are . . . and how much wealth they really have.

Getting closer to my children I realized that I had been their teacher, not so much by what I said, but by what I did. I would scold them for their messy room; yet leave my clothes and tools out of place. I would become frustrated with them for not opening up and telling me what they were thinking and feeling; yet my wife and I had held things inside ourselves for days at a time. Was it any wonder my children fought, had problems, refused to share, and generally made life difficult for each other?

As the children began to feel that they had a relationship with their father, and as they began to feel a confidence and security in my love, some wonderful changes, for which we had longed and prayed, began to occur. They fought less, began to express love for each other, spent less time whining and crying, and generally seemed more secure and well-adjusted.

All that God has done in our family came home to me one evening recently when we had some friends over. We were in our living room fellowshiping when suddenly I felt a little hand rubbing my back. It was my youngest daughter giving her Daddy a back rub! Soon she was joined by the middle daughter. After a few minutes the youngest girl went into the bedroom and brought a blanket and pillow for the oldest (who was not feeling well) so she could be more comfortable — a rare expression of love and concern from our three-year-old! My heart overflows to see my children loving and serving one another.

Since Lydia and I are their examples, how important it is for God to really make us one flesh. ♣





# FROM CURSE TO BLESSING

by Derek Prince

**B**lessing! What a welcome word that is to our ears. The thought carries especially rich meaning when we consider it as "the blessing of God." However, the word *curse* which is so completely opposite in meaning causes us to shrink and turn away at the very suggestion. We are going to investigate these two words in the light of Scripture and apply the teaching to our own lives, particularly in the area

Walking in God's Blessings  
Should Be A Way of Living.



of financial and material provision.

Our first Scripture is Galatians 3:13-14:

(13) Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

(14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Here we have presented the two opposites — blessing and curse. They are related to the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. You may ask: Why was Jesus made a curse? The answer: That we might receive the blessing. This is based on the statement of Deuteronomy 21:23 — “. . . for he that is hanged is accursed of God.” When Jesus was placed on the cross, He was officially declared to be a curse.

This unfolds the great basic truth of the atonement. Jesus, the Son of God, on the cross by the divine will of the Father, and by His own choice, took upon Himself all of the evil that was due by justice to the fallen sons of Adam — that, in return, every son of Adam who believes in Jesus might receive all the good that was due to Jesus by divine eternal right as the Son of God. All the evil came upon Jesus that all the good might be made available to you and me.

Isaiah 53:6 tells us: “The Lord hath made to meet together upon him the iniquity of us all.” “Iniquity” I interpret as “rebellion with all of its evil consequences.” The Father made all the evil consequences of the combined rebellion of Adam and all his descendants to meet together upon Jesus on the cross. In return, all the good that was due to Jesus by divine eternal right was made available to us. What took place on the cross was a divinely ordained exchange. This is the central message of the Bible.

### PERFECTLY PERFECT

In the year 1942-43, while a soldier in the British army, I became sick in Egypt and eventually spent one

year in the hospital. During about the seventh month of that period, I had three visitors. One was a lady Brigadier in the Salvation Army. (Her husband had died and she had automatically taken his rank.) She was a Spirit-baptized Salvationist, which was a rarity in those days. Taking the journey with her from Cairo was her American co-worker, a lady from Oklahoma. They had conscripted a British soldier to drive the car and had set out on the 100-mile journey to the hospital where I was a patient.

The Salvation Army Brigadier obtained permission for me to get out of my bed and to sit with the three of them in the car. She said, “Let us pray.” As we did, the Spirit of God came down upon the lady from Oklahoma and she received a very powerful utterance in an unknown tongue. Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, she, and we, and the car began to shake. That stationary car, with the engine not running, was shaking and rattling as if it had been traveling at 50 miles an hour over a rough road. I knew that this was God!

When the interpretation of the utterance came, there was one passage in it which I have never forgotten. It is as fresh to me today as it was 30 years ago. “Consider the work of Calvary: a perfect work, perfect in every respect, perfect in every aspect.” Remember, at this time I was sick and the doctors were not being successful in healing me.

As I meditated on this interpretation, the Holy Spirit reminded me of one of the last utterances of Jesus on the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). In the original Greek this is the perfect tense of a verb which itself means to “do something perfectly.” It could be translated, “It is perfectly perfect,” or “It is completely complete.”

Yes, what Jesus did on the cross was absolutely finished. It was perfectly perfect and completely complete. No matter what particular area of need you may have, your need was met by the death of Jesus on the cross — *perfect in every respect*. No matter from what point of view you approach

it, it is all-inclusive and all-sufficient — *perfect in every aspect*.

There is not a flaw or an omission in the finished work of Christ on the cross. God showed me then that if I could understand and receive by faith what Jesus had done on the cross, my total needs — for spirit, soul and body — for time and eternity — were finally and permanently met! The same is true for you!

### GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

In Galatians 3:13 — 14 we saw that Paul refers to “the blessings of Abraham.” God’s original promises of blessing to Abraham are found in Genesis 12:1 — 3. In verse 1 God states what He first requires Abraham to do: “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.”

The first requirement for blessing is a faith step. God does not show us the land of His provision until we first step out into the unknown. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Do not attempt it, for it cannot be done. When God speaks, take the faith step in obedience and the blessing will follow.

In verses 2 and 3 God unfolds in seven successive phases the blessings which He has in store for Abraham. Verse 2 contains four blessings: (1) “I will make of thee a great nation” (2) “I will bless thee” (3) “I will make thy name great” (4) “Thou shalt be a blessing.”

In the original Hebrew the last phrase is very emphatic. It is in the imperative form: “Be thou a blessing.” God does not bless us merely that we may be blessed. His purpose in blessing us is always that we, in turn, may be made a blessing. God’s blessing is never terminal in our lives. The first phase is to receive the blessing, but the ultimate purpose is always that the blessing may be transmitted through us to others.

An excellent illustration of this truth is provided by the comparison between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. The former is sparkling,



fresh and abundant with life. The latter is absolutely dead and nothing can live in it. Yet both are fed by the same river — the River Jordan. Where is the difference? The Sea of Galilee receives and gives out. The Dead Sea likewise receives, but it does not give out. This pictures our part in the matter of blessing.

Do you sometimes cry out, "Lord, bless me . . . bless me!" Yet after praying like this you still feel so dry and barren. Could it be that you have missed the purpose of being blessed? You are blessed that you might be a blessing.

Remember, Jesus told us: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). This in no way means that it is not a blessing to receive; but the greater blessing comes from having received and *then giving*. God's word to Abraham was, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." In other words, "The purpose for which I will bless you is that you shall be a blessing."

In Genesis 12:3 God unfolds the last three phases of His promised blessings. These deal with the relationship of others to the man whom He blesses: (5) "I will bless them that bless thee" (6) "I will curse him that curseth thee" (7) "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

God's blessing will always bring both friends and enemies. There will be those that bless us and those that curse us. However, the man whom God blesses does not need to fight for himself. God says, "I will curse him that curseth thee." In other words, "Let me take care of the opposition." In Romans 12:14 Paul says, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not." It is our business to be a blessing — even to those who curse us.

God's blessings come to their climax in the seventh phase: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." When we follow the path of faith and obedience, we become the channel of a blessing which has no boundaries. It flows outward to all men, and onward from generation to generation.

In Genesis 24:1 we see the practical outworking of God's blessing in

Abraham's own life: "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham *in all things*." The phrase, "well stricken in age," is an unfortunate translation. It suggests that Abraham was hobbling about with a cane. The Hebrew says merely that he was "advanced in years."

God had blessed Abraham "*in all things*." This is the scope of God's blessing. It is all-inclusive. It takes in every area of our life: spiritual, physical, material, financial, home, business and everything else. This is the blessing purchased for us by the death of Christ on the cross, to be appropriated by our faith. Let us not settle for less!

### GOD'S BLESSINGS

In Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, we find Moses presenting two alternatives to the Israelites — God's blessings and God's curses. It is important for us, as Christians, to know the things that are considered blessings and those which come under the heading of curses. Some Christians talk about sickness and poverty as if they were blessings. But God says most emphatically that neither is a blessing, but a curse. Let me tell you that if you need either sickness or poverty to make you more holy, then you are not very holy to begin with. Also, if you feel sickness is a blessing placed upon you by God to make you holy, you are in error to go to a doctor to get rid of the "blessing."

The first 14 verses of Deuteronomy 28 describe the blessings which God places before His people. Verses 15 through 68 spell out the many curses which will follow those who "do not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments . . ." We will begin with the blessings:

(1) And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

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(2) And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee . . .

To me, this second verse paints a wonderful picture. You do not have to go out and run after blessings. Blessings will run after you and they will run faster, and they will catch up with you and overtake you! I really believe that. I have proved it in my own life. If you travel in the right direction at the permitted speed, God will exceed the speed limit and catch you up with His blessings.

(3) Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

(4) Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

(5) Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

(6) Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

(11) And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord swear unto thy fathers to give thee.

(12) The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

(13) And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail: and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath.

How vividly God pictures these blessings! Consider just the last verse: "And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail . . ." What is the difference between the head and the tail? The head makes the



decisions and the tail follows. When you are walking in the blessing of God, the initiative is with you! You are not under the pressure of circumstances or people or finances. You are the head and, as such, the decision-making end of the body. You need ask yourself only one question: What is God's will? When you have ascertained that, you decide accordingly and you act out your decision.

The last verse continues, "And thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath . . ." This reminds me of a little dialogue I once overheard between two Christians. Let us call them "Brother A" and "Brother B." The dialogue went as follows:

Brother A: "How are you doing, brother?"

Brother B: "Oh, not too badly — under the circumstances."

Brother A: "What are you doing down there, brother? You should be living *above* the circumstances, not beneath them!"

Accept the fact that all God's blessings are rightfully yours through the death of Christ. Then take the initiative over all your circumstances and appropriate your blessings by faith.

### GOD'S CURSES

The balance of Deuteronomy 28 lists the curses which will come upon God's people if they do not "hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God . . ." We all need to study this list carefully. In so doing we may discover that we are actually enduring a curse when we should be enjoying a blessing. Here, we shall just look at one or two of the curses:

(29) . . . thou shalt not prosper in thy ways . . . (*Failure to prosper is a curse.*)

(47) Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness of heart for the abundance of all things; . . .

God wants His people to serve Him with gladness and joyfulness of heart for *the abundance of all things*. This is the will of God. It is the level on

which He desires that we live — when we are obedient.

However, if His people — through disobedience and unbelief — fail to live on that level, see what God sets before them as the alternative:

(48) Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things . . .

Note that phrase, "thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee . . ." If the Lord sends your enemies against you, you have to serve them. There is no way out. You cannot escape except by repentance and obedience.

Also, note four conditions that will come upon the disobedient, every one of which is a curse: hunger . . . thirst . . . nakedness . . . and want of all things. Put them all together and you have, in my judgment, *absolute poverty*!

### EXCHANGING POVERTY FOR WEALTH

We have seen already that on the cross a divinely ordained exchange took place. Jesus became a curse for us, that we might receive the blessing. We shall now see how the New Testament applies this exchange specifically to the area of financial and material provision.

In 2 Corinthians 8:9 Paul says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

What are the opposites presented here? Poverty and riches. Ask yourself: When did Jesus become poor? Was He poor during the three-and-a-half years of His earthly ministry? I would not say so. He may not have had much money, but He had some. The group had a "bag" and they gave to the poor, (see John 13:29). They were not receiving from the poor, but giving to them. In any case, you do not need to carry a great deal of cash to be wealthy. Many wealthy men carry very little cash. A credit card

serves the purpose. Or some men only need to sign their names.

We may sum it up by saying that, during His earthly ministry, Jesus just used His Father's credit card. Would you say that a man was poor who could feed thousands of people from five loaves and two fishes? On another occasion Jesus needed money to pay taxes, and He sent Peter to the Sea of Galilee for it. Peter caught a fish, and took the tax money out of the fish's mouth. Which is easier — to go to the sea and take the money out of a fish's mouth, or go to the bank and withdraw the money from a savings account?

Let me ask again: When did Jesus become poor? On the cross, when He took the poverty curse. In Deuteronomy 28:48 curse is summed up in four expressions: hunger, thirst, nakedness, want of all things. On the cross Jesus literally endured all four. He was *hungry* — He had not eaten for nearly twenty-four hours. He was *thirsty* — one of His last utterances was "I thirst." He was *naked*. Let no pretty religious picture of the crucifixion deceive you. The soldiers had taken away all His clothes and divided them among themselves. He was in *want of all things*. Bereft of family and friends, He was wrapped in a borrowed burial linen and laid in a borrowed tomb. In this way Jesus totally exhausted the poverty curse on our behalf.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8 Paul goes on to present the other aspect of the exchange — the blessing of abundance: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work . . ."

In the Greek, "every" in the last phrase is really "all." Reading the verse this way, we see that there are five "alls" and two "abounds." How could language say more in one sentence? "God is able to make *all* grace abound toward you; that ye, *always* having *all* sufficiency in *all* things, may *abound* to *all* good work(s)."

This is confirmed by Paul's declaration in Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."



The source of supply is God's "riches in glory." The channel is "by Christ Jesus." The level of provision is not mere "sufficiency," it is abundance."

The difference between sufficiency and abundance may be illustrated by the following simple example. Suppose that you need \$15 worth of groceries and you go to the store with \$10. You are shopping out of *insufficiency*. But then suppose you go with \$15. You are shopping out of *sufficiency*. Finally, suppose that you go with \$20. You are shopping out of *abundance*.

God provides us with abundance not that we may hoard it for ourselves, but that we may use it for "every good work." We must not be like the Dead Sea, always receiving but never giving out. We must be like the Sea of Galilee, both receiving and giving out. In this way our spiritual life is kept pure and fresh. This is the true "blessing of Abraham." We are blessed that we may in turn bless others.

In both verses, 2 Corinthians 8:9 and 9:8, the key word is "grace." Where does grace come from? The answer is given in John 1:17: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Grace has only one channel — Jesus Christ, only one basis — the cross; it is appropriated by only one means — faith.

### SOWING AND REAPING

To enter into God's abundance, we must understand and apply the law of sowing and reaping. In Galatians 6:7 Paul says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This is a general law that applies in every area of life where we can speak of "sowing" or of the use of "seed." Invariably like reproduces like. A man begets a man, and a monkey begets a monkey. If we plant an apple pip, an apple tree grows. If we plant an orange pip, and orange tree grows. A monkey never begets a man (contrary to some popular theories!), and an apple pip never produces an orange tree.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 Paul applies this law to our financial dealings: "But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and

he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give . . ." The context leaves no room to doubt that Paul is speaking here about giving to the Lord's work and to the needs of others. He calls giving "sowing," and declares that the measure in which we "sow" our money by giving determines the measure in which also we shall "reap" by receiving.

Let us apply this in a simple and practical way. If you sow nickles, you will reap nickles. If there is a sixty-fold increase, you will reap \$3.00. If the increase is a hundred fold, you will reap \$5.00. Always you reap in terms of what you sow. Sow nickles and you will reap nickles; dimes and you will reap dimes; dollars and you will reap dollars. If you sow in units of ten dollars or a hundred dollars, you can count on a proportionate return.

This language of sowing and reaping suggests the pattern of a farmer working for a harvest from his field. Such a man does nothing at random. He first chooses the best and most suitable soil. Then he carefully prepares it. Finally, at the right season, he sows the type and quantity of seed which will give the maximum yield, without waste.

As Christians, we need to be no less careful and practical in our giving. First we should look for "good soil" — Christian operations and ministries that are sound in their doctrine and spirit, effective and fruitful in their out-working. To these we should devote much prayer and intercession. Then we should offer as much as God indicates will be blessed and used by Him to bring forth an abundant harvest.

Unfortunately many Christians are unwise and unpractical in their giving. We should not give on the basis of habit or tradition, nor on the prompting of impulse or emotion. There are unscrupulous men who systematically exploit this emotional, impulsive type of giving on the part of Christians. To respond to the appeals of such men is often an unwise use of our money. We

need to seek God earnestly for the most effective ways in which to sow our money. What would you think of a farmer who had good seed and walked down the street scattering it in the gutter? Would he expect to reap? Of course not!

Do you carefully consider and pray over the money that you sow, seeking the means whereby it will yield the greatest possible harvest for the glory of God? You should. The Bible says that every one of us will one day give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:12). The word used denotes primarily a financial account. We are going to have to account for what we have done with our money. For some, this could prove embarrassing.

### BRING THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE

In Genesis we studied God's promises of blessing to Abraham, and in Deuteronomy we heard Moses set before Israel the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience. In Malachi 3:7-10 God again confronts Israel with issue of blessings and curses, together with the personal decision that this demands. Twelve centuries after Moses, God reproves His people for their long record of disobedience and unfaithfulness in the matter of giving:

(7) Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts, But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

(8) Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

(9) Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

(10) Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

"Tithes" denotes the first tenth of

(Continued on page 68)



# FAITH OR PRESUMPTION

Real faith is a fine line between unbelief and presumption.

by Charles Farah

**B**ad theology is a cruel taskmaster. It is like Procrustes, a cruel giant of ancient mythology. Procrustes was a highwayman from Attica who used to bed strangers down for the night by attaching them to an iron bed. If they were too short, he stretched them until they fit. If they were too long he cut off their legs. Bad theology, like Procrustes, tends to say, "If the facts don't fit, then stretch them. If there are more facts than the case allows, then cut off the excess facts."

Many people have been destroyed by a few words of bad theology. A friend of mine recently related how his mother had become a gnarled old woman before her time, bereft of joy, because of five words of bad theology. She had married a man who had been scripturally divorced and a minister left her with five crippling words of bad theology, "You are living in adultery."

Lives all over the Christian community have been wrecked by a bad theology. It says, among other things: Miracles are not for today; the enemy cannot bother a Christian, he is off limits; everyone who is prayed for must be healed since the only condition for healing is faith. And on it goes.

Listen to some classic words of bad theology:

Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he stood Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, *'He will give His angels charge concerning you; and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone'*" (Matthew 4:5-6 NAS).

In this passage of Scripture we see the enemy tempting Jesus. Satan, the master of temptation, had recourse to any temptation he wanted to use — the sins of the senses or spiritual pride — but he chose the sin of presumption. It is strange we do not hear more about the sin of presumption, because it is one of the most prevalent problems in the body of Christ.

The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, then prove it, jump off the temple." This was a short cut! A way to instantly win the allegiance of the people. Jesus was on the defensive. Satan knew Jesus' strong point was the Word of God, so he quoted a proof text to back up his statement, "... He will give His angels charge over you..." Here is the sin of presumption.

I thank God for a sound tradition which says you need more than one text of Scripture, you need the *whole* counsel of God. For proper guidance

we need to know and understand all that God has to say on a subject. The devil knows the Bible backwards and forwards and he knows how to get us in trouble with it.

Notice how carefully the devil quoted Psalm 91:11-12. He says, "He shall give His angels charge concerning you," but he carefully omits the phrase which follows, "... to guard you in all your ways." This phrase qualifies the verse by saying that God will guard you in all your *ordinary* ways of life. But without this phrase Satan can turn it into a universal and say, "You can climb up on the temple and jump down and expect God to take care of you."

Satan wanted Jesus to believe, as he would us, that He could do anything He wished and God would have to take care of Him. The Lord has allowed many of us to live with the tragedy of our mistakes. We find out that God's protection does not necessarily apply in *all* situations.

On the other side of the sin of presumption, is the sin of unbelief. In between is the golden mean of faith. Jesus lived in the realm of faith. So when the devil tempted Him, Jesus, knowing the whole counsel of God, answered, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Matthew 4:7 NAS). He was saying that by casting himself off the temple He would be committing the sin of presumption in tempting the Lord God. Not even He, the Son of God, had that right.

Many times we have been guilty of playing the devil's advocate by telling people to jump off the temple. "I've prayed for you, now take off your glasses, you're healed. It doesn't make any difference if your driver's license says you must wear them and you still can't see." Or "Since you have been prayed for, you are healed of diabetes. Don't take your insulin even though the symptoms are still there. The symptoms are lies." I have seen lying

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symptoms turned into harsh reality, doing great damage to the cause of Christ. This is why we must come to understand the whole counsel of God.

### RAYMA AND LOGOS

There are two Greek words which should throw a little light on the difference between "faith" and "presumption." One is the word *rayma*; the other is the word *logos*. Both of these words are translated in the New Testament as "word." Karl Barth speaks of this difference as the "the word of God *to you*, which is *rayma*, and the word of God, *logos*, which is *universal*."

Romans 10:17, which is so freely quoted, says, "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." In Greek it is "the *rayma* of Christ," which is the word of God *to you*. Let me illustrate what this means. How many of you became Christians the very first time that you heard the gospel? I dare say you heard it many times before you repented and believed. There was one moment in your life when God spoke a word to you and it sank into your spirit. The *logos* became a *rayma*.

The Bible, the Ten Commandments, the gospels are all *logos* — the universal word of God to all men. Jesus Christ is the final *logos* to all men everywhere. He never changes, He is the same. But before the *logos* can do us any good, it must become *rayma*. Some of you may have read the Bible yet it never meant a thing to you. It was *logos*. Then one day it came alive — it was *to you, rayma*.

We can apply this to four areas which are often troublesome in finding balance in the life of the believer: Guidance, Healing, Prophecy and Finance.

### GUIDANCE

We are usually not very advanced in the Christian life until we realize that the word of the Lord which is spoken *to us* may not be the word of the Lord which is given to another person. God's guidance for me is not the same as it is for my friends.

There are two wonderful examples

of this in the New Testament. The first is in Matthew 14:22-33, where we find the story of Peter walking on the water. The disciples had been through a rough day ministering to the multitudes. Toward evening Jesus made them take their boat and start home across the Sea of Galilee while He went off to pray. The boat had not gotten far out when it was hit by a storm. The disciples rowed for all they were worth, but they did not seem to have much success against the wind and the waves.

To make things even worse, a ghost showed up about three o'clock in the morning. Frightened, they began to panic and yell with fear, but Jesus said, "Don't be afraid, it's me!"

Peter became a little bolder at this point and challenged, "Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you." (I don't really think Peter had any idea of walking on the water, but he asked anyway.) Jesus answered him, "Come." Now here is the point of the whole story. Who came to Jesus on the water? *Peter*. None of the other disciples jumped overboard to join in the fun — only Peter. They were quite happy to let him go it alone. When Christ said, "Come," it was clearly a *rayma* for Peter and no one else.

Christians have never taken this verse and said, "The Scripture clearly teaches from this that we don't need boats, we can all walk on the water." That would be absurd because it was a *rayma* for Peter and no one else.

The second such incident again involves Peter and is found in John 21:18-22. Looking very briefly at this passage we find that Jesus is with His disciples by the Sea of Galilee one morning after His resurrection. Sitting at breakfast, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "I have a word for you. The day is going to come when you are going to be crucified and you are not going to want to be. Now, follow me."

Peter asked Jesus, "What about my friend, John?"

Jesus told him, "John is none of your business, follow me."

Jesus' *rayma* to Peter was not intended to be His *rayma* to John. He had a word for each of them and all

they had to worry about was following their shepherd. Your guidance and my guidance may not be the same, but the thing which we have in common is hearing the voice of the shepherd.

I learned while visiting Scotland how really dumb sheep are. Believe me, it is no compliment to be called a sheep. They get themselves caught in fences; if one jumps off a cliff, the rest will follow. But in spite of their stupidity, the sheep do know how to follow their master's voice. It is the voice of the master that we must learn to hear in this matter of guidance.

It may be God's word (*logos*), but is it God's word (*rayma*) to me? We can begin to harangue the Lord, "Lord, it's in your word, You've got to do it, it's in the book!" That is what the devil did, "It's in the book, Jesus. If you believe the book, you'll jump off temple." It is possible for us to set our beliefs above God, Himself. We say, "God, it's there in the book, it's got to happen." You may discover, as I did, that it does not always happen. I have argued with God when things did not go according to the rules. "God, if I had a son who was doing all he could to serve you, I wouldn't have treated him like you've treated me!" I forgot how God treated His Son. What God does to us may not always be "fair."

Man's glory is to walk upright and gaze into heaven and argue his case with his Creator. But his glory can also be his mistake as it was with Job's theologians. They had God boxed in with their little syllogisms. They said: A godly man does not suffer. Job, you are suffering. Therefore, you are not godly. Bad theology! Formulas scare me to death. Do you remember how Job and his friends ended up? When Job saw God he said, "... Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Then God told Job, "Make an offering for your friends, they have sinned *presumptuously* against me." The sin of presumption — putting God in your little box.

I lived for a time in the book of Job and the message God gave me through that time was His sovereignty. The secret of Job is in Job 33:12. It says



simply, "God is greater than man." God does as He wills and no one can stay His hand.

We need to understand our place under the sovereignty of God. When Jesus came to the end of the road at Gethsemane, he knelt and prayed. When we as Christians kneel in prayer for guidance, there must come a higher prayer than, "What is fair?" or "Why is this happening to me?" We need to ask, "What is your will, Lord?" And when we come to the place where Jesus came in Gethsemane, we need to bow our heads and say, "Not my will, but thine be done."

### HEALING

Healing has caused severe problems because many of the things which are supposed to work do not bring the desired results. Sometimes people are healed, sometimes they are not.

The arguments run like this: Is healing in the atonement? Isaiah 53:4, "Surely our sicknesses He Himself bore and our pains He carried . . . by His scourging we are healed." No question — healing is in the atonement. With this in mind we box God into our little syllogism that goes like this: Healing is in the atonement. Faith is the key that unlocks the healing of Jesus. Since I have prayed for you in faith, you are healed, right? Not necessarily so. There are other factors that enter into the picture.

It is a great tragedy that we have placed so many of God's children under condemnation because we have told them, "You were not healed because you did not have the faith."

A friend of mine went into the home where a little girl was dying of leukemia — he had the *logos*. It was in the book, she would be healed. He told the parents not to worry about a thing, prayed for the little girl and went out praising God. Three weeks later the little girl was dead. My friend went into a spiritual tailspin for six months.

I recently returned from a city where one of our young graduates from Oral Roberts University was emerging from a shattering spiritual experience.

A man had joined his church who practiced a brand of theology which says: Faith, if exercised, would always save the sick. This man prayed for a fine Spirit-filled, Christian professor who was a diabetic and told him, "You are healed, get off your insulin." This was on a Thursday and by Sunday the man was almost dead. The wife was frantic with fear. When the man who practiced this type of "faith" returned to the home, he found the wife on the floor and began casting demons out of her. He said to the professor, who was approaching death, "You are going to be all right." My friend finally took over and got the professor to a hospital an hour away from death. He was convinced that this man would have let him die.

Bad theology is a cruel taskmaster. If, however, God speaks a *rayma* to you, you can be sure it will come to pass.

Some time back a young wife of a professor at Oral Roberts University called my wife. She had just returned from a visit to her doctor and was quite shaken. After the doctor had finished all his tests he told her, "You have an obstruction in your heart. We don't know how great it is, but this obstruction has to be viewed and we are going to give you an angiogram. This procedure itself can induce a heart attack. You must understand the dangers that are involved."

When she called my wife immediately there was a word, a *rayma*, spoken to my heart. "Honey, she is going to be all right," I said. We went over and spent an evening with her and her husband and together we were refreshed in the spirit. After we had prayed, she asked, "Do you still believe I am going to be all right?"

"You are going to be all right," I answered.

During the night my wife and I were awakened individually to intercede and pray for her. The next day president Roberts came over to see her. He told her, "I didn't need to come, you are going to be all right." The word had been confirmed by the witness of two.

That night in the hospital she faced the terror of a serious operation the following morning. I cannot explain it, I only know God let me feel that terror, and I prayed specifically that when they did the angiogram there would be no terror for her. God answered and she had perfect rest.

When the doctor came in after the operation he said that it looked very encouraging. They had found nothing. Confirming it with X-rays, he reported there was absolutely no obstruction. There was no explanation. Her heart was perfect, and he sent her home.

Now that was a *rayma*. We did not need twenty-nine verses of "Only Believe" to work up faith. It was a gift from God. I had nothing to do with it. How do we know this was a *rayma*? Because the facts proved it. God was at work. He spoke and He healed.

When we tell people, "You are healed," we had better be sure that we have a word from God. Many times people are healed because they exercise faith in God, but Mark 11:22 tells us that there is the faith of God. When God speaks a *rayma* it is from His own mountain-moving faith and it is unshakable, no matter what the circumstances are. This kind of faith is from a sovereign almighty God.

### PROPHECY

Prophecy normally falls into the category of *rayma* since it is a word for a particular time and situation. This is why we must be most careful about publishing magazines full of prophecies. These prophecies, however valid, were given by God to a particular assembly for a particular time and situation, and are not necessarily meant to be universal prophecies.

Prophecies circulated around from group to group may be listened to, if they witness to your spirit, but the normal means of receiving a prophetic word is found in 1 Corinthians 14. It is to be given to a specific congregation and judged by others. Such words given to other groups may not fit what is happening in your own congregation.

Often we do not know it, but we

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are speaking a word of prophecy. I was in Jacksonville, Florida, staying in the home of a Presbyterian minister and his wife. In the course of a conversation one evening on healing, I told them, "Sir, you may have a backache and your wife may have arthritis, but when the Lord heals, it will be a gift of healing to each of you."

Later when they had both beautifully received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the wife told me, "One of the factors in our receiving the Baptism was what you said about my arthritis and my husband's backaches. There was no way you could have known except from God." It was a word of knowledge, even though I did not know it at the time. This is what 1 Corinthians 14:25 means when it says, "The secrets of a man's heart will be revealed."

Personal prophecy is the area in which we most generally find difficulty. I would venture to say that 60% — 70% of the personal prophecies which have come to me in my life have not proved true. Many of them had to do with specific times and details. We often hear people say, I want a word of prophecy from this person or that person. Often the word of the Lord is "Wait on me," and we never hear it because we are so busy running around.

Do not take this wrongly. I have received and believe in personal prophecy. The other day one of the elders in our group brought a prophecy which said to beware of Elymas the Sorcerer when I went to a certain place. I arrived at that place and sure enough there was Elymas the Sorcerer — only it was a woman. That word of prophecy was an aid to help me receive understanding in a given situation. Prophecy is meant to be *confirmatory* rather than *directive*.

In the Church the Spirit is in the *community* of believers and the community of believers has the right to judge prophecy. It will be necessary occasionally to judge the prophecies that come and reject those that are not of the spirit of the meeting.

One time during a beautiful spirit of praise a young lady brought a

prophecy that was terribly condemnatory. She said, "You must likewise repent or go to hell."

I had to say, "I'm sorry but we do not accept that prophecy as coming from the Lord." The lady and her bevy of followers got up and left. That proved that it was not from the Lord, because the body is given the right to judge.

If someone has a word for you, ask if they mind if you put it before the body to be judged. If he refuses, he is not a true prophet. A true prophet will say, "Of course, let's judge it." If it is received, then it is true prophecy.

### FINANCES

God is speaking to the Christian community about finances. I believe His special message to the American church is, "Get out of debt." He wants us to be free to move and go where He wants us. Any man in debt is not free to go, he is tied down.

I am afraid that we have become lax in our handling of money. Financial integrity is the basis for spiritual leadership. It becomes very easy for pastors to feel that certain things are due them — certain privileges, certain tabs picked up, certain discounts, and so on. They excuse it by saying, "Well, we don't make as much as we could in another field. We feel that God should supply us with new cars — the best of everything."

Very soon we are burdened with debt. I must admit with regret that pastors are considered to be among the worst at paying off their debts. It is tragic. You may not realize it, but God is very interested in our debts. Did you realize that Jesus speaks about money or material possessions in one out of five verses in the Gospels? Paul often talked about money. It is nothing to be ashamed of. In 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12 he writes:

For indeed you do practice, it [love] toward all the brethren who are in Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you; so that

you may behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

There are many young men here in Tulsa who really believe that work is not the Lord's will for them. If the Lord ever leads me into community living again I am going to hang a little motto in a prominent place. It is a quotation from an early Christian community. It reads, "No idler can be a believer." Underneath I would like to put something like, "Three days for nothing, after that work or leave."

Work is ordained of God — it is not a curse, but a blessing. Paul worked with his own hands to support himself, but too often the young men of our day are not willing to do this.

A few years back I was in Washington, D.C. after a disastrous spiritual adventure. When I got through bouncing around, I began going to employment agencies looking for a job. They all said, "You have a wonderful education, but you are short on experience." I finally landed a painting job.

I muttered and complained about it and finally said, "All right, I'll paint until Jesus comes if I have to."

Then the Lord said, "You don't have to paint anymore." About that time I was called to teach at Oral Roberts University. I would much rather teach than paint, but God wanted me to be willing to work.

Christians sometimes think that if it is a good idea, then it must be God's work and He will pay for it. An all inclusive *logos*. There is a principle, however, which says: What God orders, He pays for. What God does not order, He does not pay for, even if that something is for Him.

I once helped an enthusiastic young man in our town put on a Jesus Festival. It was a wonderful idea and his only motive was to win people to Christ. However, he did not have a *rayma*. The Lord had not ordered it and no one had conferred with the elders. A few were won to Christ and some are still going on. For that we thank God. But that young man is still trying to pay off the debt of that festival. It was a good idea, but God



had not ordered it and God was not paying for it.

A man with a special ministry at state fairs used to come to our fellowship occasionally. As time went on this man began to find himself short of funds and he discovered a new gift — writing checks on faith. It is also known as writing hot checks in less spiritual language. I think we can all see his line of reasoning: "Lord, you know that I have a need. 'My God shall supply all your needs.' That's what your word says, Lord. I'm writing this check on faith. I know you own the cattle on a thousand hills and I believe you will have a few of those cattle to the bank before the check gets there." He had a *logos* and that's all. He was operating on presumption and not faith.

The Lord is calling us to live lives of sober integrity, to begin to hear His voice in these four areas. Jesus was tempted, as are we, by the sin of presumption, but He did not succumb. We must learn to distinguish between the *logos* which is universal, eternal and objective; and the *rayma* which is particular, temporal and subjective. ♣

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## FROM CURSE TO BLESSING

(Continued from page 63)

our income, systematically set apart for God. "Offerings" denotes that which we give to God over and above our tithes. In the terms of Scripture we do not *give* our tithes to God, we *pay* them. God says very emphatically, "The tithe is mine" (Leviticus 27:30). In a certain sense, all we own belongs to God; but in a specific sense God has laid claim to the first tenth of our income. In countries which use the decimal system in their currencies, the calculation of our tithe is extremely simple. We merely move the decimal point one place over to the left!

In these verses of Malachi God tells His people that they have "gone away" (i.e. turned away from God). When the people ask in what way, God gives them a practical answer — in a financial way. He asks them to repent and turn back to Him, and He tells them how to do this — also in a financial way.

God warns His people that the result of their wrong financial dealings with Him is a "curse." However, He also tells them how the "curse" may be replaced by the "blessing." He says, "Prove me . . ." — that is, "Put me to the test . . ." He is specific and practical in telling His people how to do this: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . ." Upon this condition God promises to pour out such "a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." The way to enter into the promised blessing is by a practical step of faith — to bring to God all that which is His due.

In the New Testament the same faith principle is presented by Jesus: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6:38). Once again, this is abundance!

Always the step of faith must come before the blessing. As it was with Abraham, so it must be with us. First, "give." After that, "it shall be given unto you." First, "bring all the tithes into the storehouse." Then, "I will pour you out the blessing." This is the unchanging law. First the "sowing," then the "reaping."

When a Christian tells me that he cannot afford to tithe, my answer is, "You cannot afford *not* to tithe!" Not only do I declare this on the basis of the clear teaching of God's Word, but I have seen it in my own experience and in the experiences of thousands of others. It works. God is faithful.

God's promise in Malachi provokes one important question: Where is the "storehouse"? Some preachers declare that the storehouse is the "local church," but the Bible does not actually say this. What is a storehouse for? Mainly for two things — to store the food that we eat and the seed that we sow. This applies also in the spiritual realm. The storehouse is the place from which we obtain the spiritual food that we need to eat and the spiritual seed that we need to sow.

Paul uses similar language in 2 Corinthians 9:10: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown . . ." Paul speaks of two related provisions: the bread that you eat and the seed that you sow. Both come from the storehouse.

Quite simply, then, the "storehouse" is the place from which you get your spiritual food, and also the place from which you get the seed to sow for the harvest. If you are blessed by fellowship in a local church which fulfills these two requirements, then it is your storehouse. But if you are associated with a church which provides neither spiritual food for your own needs nor seed of God's Word to be sown in the harvest field, then it is not your storehouse, and it is foolish and illogical to support it with your tithes. Where you eat your meal is where you pay your bill. You do not eat at Howard Johnsons and pay your bill at the Holiday Inn!

Remember that the right use of your finances is a solemn responsibility for which you must one day account to God. Faithfulness in our financial dealings sets us in the path that leads to blessing and abundance in every area of our life. But unfaithfulness in this respect brings a curse upon us. ♣



# WHAT A SHEPHERD CAN EXPECT FROM HIS SHEEP

by John M. Poole

And Jesus was going about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35,36)

Can you see the picture? Jesus is going about *all* the cities and villages, *teaching* and *preaching* the gospel of the kingdom. There is a great confirmation of the Holy Spirit. *Healings* are taking place at such a rate that the writer describes it as a scene that few of us have ever witnessed — *every kind* of sickness and disease was being healed. *And yet — Jesus is not content.* As a matter of fact, *He is disturbed by what He sees.* In spite of all things that have happened, the people to whom He has been ministering were distressed, harrassed, and downcast, *like sheep without a shepherd.* Most of us would have been thrilled with the results that Jesus had during this time of ministry. Undoubt-

edly there remains in our minds the conviction that if only such meetings could be reproduced today, the world would truly believe on Jesus and thousands would be saved and brought to a full life.

Let us look at the scene again! Despite a teaching ministry that opened the Scriptures and had authority that had never before been heard, the sheep were distressed and downcast. The reason — *they had no shepherd.* In spite of a ministry of healing that brought relief from physical afflictions of every description, the sheep were distressed and downcast. *They had no shepherd.* Religious leaders? They had them in abundance. Scribes, lawyers? There were plenty of them, but no shepherds. The response of Jesus indicates that He would not be satisfied until the work and ministry was complete. Teaching and healing were not enough. He knew and understood the nature of sheep. It is a fact that they cannot take care of themselves; that more than any other class of livestock, they require endless attention and care. They must be shepherded! In John 10, the obvious concern of Jesus

over this matter becomes more apparent as He talks with the people concerning their need of shepherding. He warns the people about the coming thief, whose goal is to steal, kill and destroy the sheep. He describes the hireling who flees when the wolf is coming and does not have genuine concern for the welfare of the sheep. Finally, He announces Himself to be the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep and calls them to follow Him. With great simplicity He spoke regarding the relationship that should exist between the shepherd and the sheep. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). The responsibility of the shepherd is clear: *to know the sheep and to lead them.* The responsibility of the sheep is clear: *to hear and know the shepherd's voice and to follow him.*

It is at this point that we run into a practical problem of extreme importance. An understanding of it is crucial for the development of the subject matter of this article. There is not a Christian anywhere who would disagree with the fact that they are to hear and follow the voice of the Lord



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Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. They would say with deep conviction, "If I only had a shepherd on earth like Him, I would follow him wherever he would lead me." They know that to follow Christ is to be led to security and safety. If they desire to be fed and watered properly, they must learn to follow Him. However, when it comes to following a man, an earthly shepherd, it becomes a different story. After all, *men are fallible*. They all make mistakes. What if you are misled? How can you trust anyone but Jesus?

Let's go back to Matthew 9. Do you remember the cry of Jesus? "He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd." He then charged the disciples that they "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest." To separate that statement from the description that has gone before is folly. They were to pray because of the conditions that have just been described. Workers are to be sent out because of the need. What was it? The lack of shepherds for the sheep. I submit that from this point on the goal of the ministry of Jesus became abundantly clear — *He was going to prepare men who could not only preach the gospel and heal the sicknesses of mankind but who could shepherd the sheep*. These men would preach, but He was not preparing preachers. These men would minister healing to the sick, but He was not preparing healers. *He was preparing shepherds*. The Good Shepherd would carry on His ministry through the men that He had prepared.

It is important to notice the personal conversation that Jesus had

with Peter just before the ascension.

After breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others?"

"Yes," Peter replied, "you know I am your friend."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him. Jesus repeated the question: "Simon, son of John, do you really love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I am your friend."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said. Once more He asked him, "Simon, son of John, are you even my friend?"

Peter was grieved at the way Jesus asked the question this third time. "Lord, you know my heart, you know I am," he said.

Jesus said, "Then feed my little sheep" (John 21:15-17, Living Bible).

Leaving aside a discussion of the questions of Jesus and the answers that are involved, and the play on words, let us pay attention to the instructions that follow each exchange between the Master and his disciple.

### FEED MY SHEEP! TAKE CARE OF MY SHEEP! FEED MY LITTLE SHEEP!

There can be little doubt left. Jesus had been preparing shepherds. His shepherding ministry was to be carried on through the men that He left behind. Therefore, following the heavenly Shepherd confronts us with the necessity of having, and learning to follow an *under-shepherd*. And this is where the rub comes in for many of God's people. They do not like the idea of following an earthly shepherd.

I think sometimes that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit of recent times has served in some way to complicate the issue even further. A Christian is baptized in the Holy Spirit, and perhaps for the first time in his life becomes aware of scriptures such as 1 John 2:27 — "And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have not need for any to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things,

and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." This is interpreted to mean that once one is filled with the Holy Spirit, the need for shepherding, that is, feeding and protection by an earthly man, is unnecessary, especially if the suggested shepherd is *not charismatic*. This scripture somehow makes of no importance that fact that Christ has set in the church — *shepherds*.

*Every sheep needs a shepherd!* And contrary to what one might think, a charismatic Christian needs shepherding to an even greater degree. Certainly he has more potential in God, a source of great power, gifts and abilities that come from God; but one would be foolish to overlook that fact that the dangers are greater and the attacks of the enemy more subtle for the Spirit-filled Christians than for anyone else. They have become a greater threat to the kingdom of darkness than ever before. It makes good sense that Satan endeavor to push them out of the race.

You cannot read through the New Testament and not become aware that the shepherding ministry of Jesus was carried out in its practical, daily aspects through the men that He called to Himself, trained and sent out.

### SHEEP BELONG IN A FLOCK! EVERY FLOCK NEEDS SHEPHERDING!

It is not the purpose of this article to deal with the question of how a person should go about finding a shepherd, that is dealt with elsewhere in this issue. Let me suggest that you be sure to cover that ground as it is of great importance. Remember the distinction Jesus made — some are hirelings, others are true shepherds. Learn the characteristics of a true shepherd. Ask God to lead you to one, and then you are ready to face up to the following. Let me give to you some areas of responsibility that the sheep have toward the shepherd.

(1) Jesus said that sheep should *know the voice of their shepherd*. This makes very clear the fact that there is no dodging the issue here. Every sheep



should ask himself the question — “Who is my shepherd?” and be able to give a specific answer. Settle the question in your heart that God has a shepherd for you. He has given His word to you that He would provide shepherds who would feed the sheep with knowledge and understanding (Jeremiah 3:15). Believe that promise. There is another important scripture in Jeremiah 23:3,4. After promising a great gathering of the remnant of the flock and a bringing them back to their pasture (which is being fulfilled again in this generation) and a further word that they will be fruitful and multiply, God says “I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will shepherd them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing.” There is sure ground to stand on here. The Lord speaks about a great gathering together of His sheep and a fruitfulness coming to them such as they have not known. We are witnessing this right now. But the promise does not stop there — the Lord goes on to make the definite prediction that after that gathering has begun, He will raise up shepherds over them and they will shepherd them. This is significant. The Lord is not going to leave His people defenseless. He gives some insight into the future when He speaks about the fact that it is only the shepherded sheep who will not be afraid, terrified or missing. Evidently the hour that is to try the whole earth is near and at hand, and the Lord is making preparation for the flock.

God has a shepherd for you. Let Him lead you to him. Don’t try and escape the issue by pointing out how dry and barren the area of the country in which you live may be. You have God’s own promise. Stand on it, believe it, and it will be fulfilled.

(2) The second thing that Jesus said concerning sheep is that they would *follow the shepherd*. Every true shepherd has the right to expect that his sheep will do this. In a practical vein this has two important aspects. First, the sheep should expect that the shepherd will set the pace at which the

flock will travel. Many sheep live with the impression that the whole flock should move at the spiritual speed that is best for them. So the flock is made up of some that desire to run ahead of the main group. There are others who are constantly dragging behind, another group who always seem diverted by attention-getting things on either side of them. The responsibility for the setting of a pace that is within the range of the whole flock belongs to the shepherd. He knows that to give in to the “do-it-all-right-now group” would mean the loss of many of those sheep, who with a little encouragement, and allowed a little more time, will make the goal. On the other hand, to allow stragglers to control the speed at which the whole flock moves may well mean that a listless lazy group of sheep would be produced.

Many sheep have missed God’s best by not trusting the Chief Shepherd to speak to the under-shepherd concerning movement. The shepherd sees the overall view, he knows the state of the whole flock; individual sheep do not possess such knowledge. This becomes extremely difficult to accept when one or more of the sheep enter into a realm of experience that is unknown to the shepherd. Patience, prayer and divine guidance are vital in a situation like this, and any hasty decision to leave the flock and look for another should be discouraged.

Secondly, the shepherd can expect that the sheep will eat and drink in the appointed pasture land. I remember a few years ago hearing a song titled *The Other Man’s Grass is Always Greener*. This might well be the theme song of many a charismatic. If their shepherd is involved in a teaching ministry, they want to see miracles. If the emphasis is on healing, they want to see demons cast out. They run from place to place, conference to conference, feeding whenever and wherever they want. They reserve to themselves the right to pick and choose the things that they will eat and drink. It ought not to be so. A shepherd has the right to expect that his sheep will graze at the spot where he has chosen. They can trust

God that He will see to it that all that they need to come to maturity will eventually be included in their diet. They must trust the shepherd. There is, of course, a very valid reason for this. Every sheep feels as though he is able to discern for himself what food is right and when he should be feeding on it. The truth, however, is very different. Many sheep have been poisoned when they ran off to feed in a strange pasture. Others have found themselves sick because the pasture land into which they went contained a diet that was too rich for their young stomachs to handle.

Let me stop here and face a thorny issue. There is not one thing that I have said so far and will yet say in the conclusion of this section that cannot be abused. I realize that many Christians have come under a yoke of bondage to men that has kept them back from making progress in God. They feed the sheep in the same pasture year after year. They cry wolf, when there is none, and endeavor to keep hungry sheep from getting to God’s good grazing land. But the abuses that abound — committed by both shepherds and sheep — cannot turn us aside from the careful consideration of these principles. They are valid. They are scriptural; they will work. It is a sign of hidden rebellion when any time truth is mentioned that involves submission, the exceptions and the cases in which such submission brought damage are always dragged out. It is like trying to speak to a wife about being in subjection to her husband and have her tell of the terrible kind of man that he is, or recount the story of a friend of hers who tried this and it didn’t work in their situation. It is a clear evidence that something is very wrong. Remember, also, all of this presupposes that you are submitted to a true shepherd!

(3) A shepherd should expect that his sheep will heed his warnings. One of the responsibilities that God has given to shepherds is to protect the sheep. They are not only charged with feeding, but with keeping them from



danger. These dangers come from within and without. Paul gave the Ephesian elders the task of looking for grievous wolves that attack from the woods, and perverse men from within. Learn to put your trust in your shepherd. His warnings should be heeded. It is worthwhile to study how often Paul warned the people that were under his charge concerning ministries that would bring harm to the flock. Very often, if the circumstances warranted it, he would name names and the offenses. To do this today is interpreted by some as a "lack of love." If we truly believe that the last day period is to be characterized by deception, then the need to listen carefully to the warnings of godly shepherds becomes paramount. It is very encouraging to me to note the renewed sense of responsibility that is growing among pastors within the charismatic movement. There is a growing awareness that we need to let the flock know that every ministry that comes through the area does not carry the approval of a properly constituted body of believers; that many neither come *from* a fellowship of saints, nor do they come *to* a fellowship of saints, but rather are simply a law unto themselves. They serve their own self interests and not those of Christ's.

This area also includes the care that must be taken that danger does not come to the flock from within. A false shepherd may arise within the group seeking to draw away disciples after himself; or one of the sheep may endeavor to lead others astray. When this happens the real shepherd must bring rebuke and correction. This should not come as a shock. The real shepherd should not be censured for being "un-Christlike" when he must bring rebuke in caring for the flock. He should be thanked and commended for fulfilling faithfully the responsibilities that have been given to him by Christ. Remember, "he must give an account. They watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:17).

(4) Every shepherd has the right to expect that sheep under his care will

be fruitful; that is, they will reproduce. There are many changes taking place within the Church during these days. One of the more significant revolves around the truth that the main purpose of the ministries that God has given to the Church is to build up and equip the Church so that it might do the work of ministering. Most Christians grow up with the conviction that it is the pastor's job to win souls; they will pay his salary. How difficult that is to substantiate scripturally. The shepherd has the responsibility of feeding and protecting the sheep. There is every reason in the world to assume that sheep, properly cared for and watched over, will reproduce themselves on a regular basis. Let the shepherd concern himself with the feeding of the flock; let the sheep bring forth new sheep that the fold may be full. The times when the sheep gather together with the shepherd should be occasions for teaching and instruction. Much harm is done when meeting after meeting is devoted to "soul-winning" messages at the expense of the feeding of the flock. Healthy, normal sheep will bring forth other sheep. It is to be expected.

(5) Finally, I submit that every shepherd has the right to shear his own sheep. He does not expect a visiting shepherd to come from across the country to take the wool from the sheep for whom he has given his life. Neither does he expect the sheep to walk up to him one day, self-sheared, and announce that they have sent their wool to another shepherd down the street, because they "felt led." A shepherd expects to gain his support, his livelihood from the sheep to whom he ministers. I realize that to many this smacks of legalism, but study carefully the principles of giving as outlined in the New Testament. I find no place for the independent type of giving that characterizes many Christians and only speaks of their independent spirit. Jesus made it clear that the issue was God or money. The control of finances, the question of where God's money should go is crucial. And the sad truth is that

within the Church, millions upon millions of dollars are wasted each year, because uninformed sheep send their wool to organizations and individuals that they know very little about. Support the man and the ministry that God has given to you in the area where you live. Together agree to help other works and missions, or individuals as God directs you. Get information concerning them, find out what they are doing. Check the fruits of the ministry and then, together, as a body, minister to them your finances in the name of Jesus!

Remember, the shepherding ministry of Jesus is carried on through the under-shepherds that He has ordained! *Sheep belong in a flock! Every flock need shepherding!*

Now, shepherds, let me share with you out of my heart. Some months ago, I had the opportunity of hearing Sean Kearney of Auckland, New Zealand, teach on the subject of "The Shepherd and His Sheep." Some of the insights that he had were well worth repeating, and are included in the following. We are warned in Proverbs to know well the face of our flock. It is vital that we learn to recognize the individual characteristics of the sheep that we are leading, and what we can expect of them.

(1) Expect that special care will be required by new lambs. This care can best be evidenced by allowing them to drink milk from the one who gave them life. Let them be nursed by their spiritual mothers. There may be times when an exception has to be taken; but in the vast majority of cases, it is best for all concerned — the new lamb, the one who gave birth to him, and the shepherd — if this pattern is followed. Your main concern is to make sure that the new lambs are being taught to stay with the rest of the flock and not wander off. The wise shepherd carries with him his spiritual tidbits especially designed to keep the young lambs close at hand. One day they will learn to follow by the sound of the shepherd's voice; but until that time, they will be kept out of harm's way by



the special care and attention that they will receive.

(2) Expect a variety in a flock that God has given to you. A healthy flock is well balanced. There is the strength that comes from experience, the vigor that comes from youth. Learn to encourage the faithful in the flock. The sheep that are continually following and are close by no matter what the change in weather or terrain, are a treasure indeed. They may not be the most spectacular members of the flock, but without them progress would be impossible.

(3) Keep a sharp eye open for the following:

*Solitary Sheep* — These stay away from the rest of the flock, always off by themselves. The reasons advanced can be varied: the rest of the flock is too immature, not sufficiently advanced for their fellowship; or they might be afraid to expose themselves to the light of fellowship. They are afraid to become vulnerable and subject to hurts or wounds. They may just be looking for special attention. Whatever the reason, one thing is certain — *a solitary sheep is always sick*. The healthy sheep craves the companionship of the flock. If you see one off by itself continually, you had better get busy and investigate — something is wrong.

*Hermit Sheep* — These type of sheep have a similar problem, yet with a different twist. They stay away from the flock because of their unwillingness to face the shearer. They refuse to be clipped. This results in many serious things. The uncut wool often grows over the eyes and they have great difficulty in seeing. To even attempt to spot danger in such a condition is an impossibility and they often become the prey of wolves. Another possibility is that of the wool becoming so heavy that it weighs them down so that they can no longer rise. They settle in one place until they are devoured by hungry beasts, or starve to death. Still others become caught in the thicket and again are open prey. I spoke earlier of the need of the sheep allowing the shepherd to shear them.

Let me have a little literary license and change the analogy. The Scriptures speak of a sheep being before his shearer as dumb. This is used of Christ before his accusers, just before Calvary. The hermit sheep, the one who will not face the shearer speaks of the individual who constantly refuses to face up to things in life that are destined to bring Calvary to him experientially. The sheep who stays away from the experiences of life that God allows to uncover us, to expose us, will never make spiritual maturity. This is the place where we learn to trust our case to God. No self-defense, no arguments, but submitting to Him who judges righteously.

There is danger here that must be faced. The hermit sheep eventually will begin to influence others. He will seek to persuade them by his example that the comfortable path that he has chosen, the uncrucified life is the only way. "Stay away from the painful experiences, dodge the difficult things in life. That's the way to live." I can still remember the soberness that gripped me when Sean Kearney said to me, "The hermit sheep must be taken from the flock. He will not make it, and will influence others."

*Wandering Sheep* — These are sheep who are never content with things as they are. No matter what God is doing in the flock, it is not fast enough, big enough, as good as what is happening in other places. The meeting that they have just come from, the way things used to be, all become loopholes in the fence. They look for any opportunity to break through and graze in territory of their own choosing. Phillip Keller describes such a sheep in the book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*:

This type of sheep will often force its way through some spot in the fence or find a way around the end of the wire . . . and end up feeding on bare, brown, burned-up pasturage of a most inferior sort. But this sheep never learned her lesson and continued to fence-crawl time after time. Now it would have been bad enough if she was the only one who did this. It was a sufficient problem to find her and bring her back. But the further

point was that she taught her lambs the same tricks.

Shepherds, unless under God we learn to discipline, or cut out of the flock the wandering sheep, we are in for trouble. The rest of the flock will suffer as we spend our time running after them.

*Judas Sheep* — I hesitated before including this category, but it is vital. This is the sheep that leads others to the slaughter — deliberately. If, within Jesus' congregation of twelve, there was one who was a traitor, so the wise shepherd understands the possibility of having among the flock a Judas sheep. He is the one who is so deceived and blinded by his own stubbornness that he not only walks contrary to the path laid out by the shepherd, but boasts over the fact that his way will lead to much greater light and truth. This type of sheep must be spotted and removed from the flock. I am deeply convinced that many of the problems that we, as pastors, face can be traced directly to the lack of discipline in our churches. There needs to be a great recovery of New Testament principles relating to this area of truth.

One closing thought: I believe with all of my heart that the things I have shared in this article can best be worked out, both for the benefit of the sheep and shepherd, if shepherds would function in plurality. It is taken for granted in Scripture that more than one man pastors the flock. It is always the shepherds, the leaders, the plural, not the singular that are referred to. How much easier it is to bring sheep into obedience, how much better is the care the flock receives if there is an honest sharing of responsibility. If we are looking for sheep to follow the shepherd, then is it not fair that we face the question, who is looking after us? If our only answer is Jesus, we become guilty of the same escapism that we accuse the sheep of when they fail to find an earthly shepherd. We must be working in harmony and love with other shepherds if our ministry is to be that which will produce strong, healthy reproductive sheep. ♡



By Bob Sutton



# ABORTION

**T**he teen-age girl sitting in your living room is pregnant by a man she cannot marry. She has been a Christian only a few minutes and desperately wants to untangle her life from the hell of drugs and occult that has bound her. The young man she was planning to marry has no intention of ever giving his heart to Christ. She wants to separate herself from everything that has been her life with that man — including his child. She wants an abortion.

Her parents are insisting that she go to New York for a "vacation" at her sister's and have the abortion performed while she is staying with her.

In her mind, the only decision is one of leaving the old life behind or of being bound for months to a memory which causes her extreme mental anguish. What do you tell her?

The agonizing dilemma of abortion is being faced daily by Christian women and counselors all over the nation. Until January, 1973, the alternatives open to a woman seeking an abortion were limited. In most states, by law, only extreme circumstances in pregnancy allowed a legal abortion. This left a woman seeking an abortion with the choice of an illegal abortion, which could be dangerous both legally and medically; or traveling to another state which had more liberal abortion laws. Because of fear, financial need or respect for the law, many women chose to face unwanted pregnancy.

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States overturned as unconstitutional the abortion laws

of the state of Texas and opened the doors for liberalized abortion in every state. In overthrowing the Texas statutes, the Court declared that the state may not regulate abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. This amounts to abortion-on-demand by the mother, with no restrictions. The only restrictions allowed during the second trimester (4 to 6 months), are to "protect the health of the mother." These restrictions would generally deal with hospital standards and procedures.

The Court ruling places the only real restrictions on abortions during the last three months of the pregnancy. At "about six months," says the Court, the fetus is viable and capable of "meaningful life outside the mother's womb." Then the Court declares "If the state is interested in protecting fetal life . . . it may go so far as to proscribe abortion during that period — except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother." The term "health" includes "mental health," which is open to the broadest spectrum of medical interpretation; and, in practicality, therefore means little as far as protection for the fetus.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

What effect has the Court's ruling had on abortions in the United States? First, as could be expected, the number of abortions has significantly increased. From July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1971 there were an estimated

500,000 abortions performed in the United States. But, by the first anniversary of the Court's ruling, January, 1974, the annual figure was near 1,500,000. Increase in abortions has logically decreased the total birth rate to the point where there is now approximately one abortion for every two live births in the United States.

Morally and psychologically the effect of liberalized abortions goes beyond mere statistics. Billboards in various parts of the U.S. openly advertise telephone numbers to call for an abortion referral service; groups, such as Planned Parenthood, are urging government financed birth control centers that would serve any woman, with no questions asked about marital status or age. An eastern newspaper recently carried a story about the Girl Scouts planning an abortion study program for the older girls (7-10 grades) which would include a visit to an abortion clinic to familiarize them with birth control techniques. The abortion laws, per se, cannot be credited with all of these trends, but an attitude toward abortion that treats it as a part of "normal" sexual activity enhances and helps accelerate a growing moral decay.

## WHAT IS ABORTION?

Current medical practices usually effect an abortion by one of four ways:

1. During early stages of pregnancy the suction method is usually used. A tube is inserted in the mother's uterus which creates a powerful vacuum, tearing the fetus from the womb.

2. The curette-type method, in which a spoon-shaped instrument with sharp edges is used to cut the fetus into small pieces and separate it from the womb.

3. In more advanced pregnancies an operation similar to a Caesarean section is used to remove the live fetus. Usually the fetus is developed enough to move its arms and legs, struggle to make its little lungs breathe, and occasionally, cry. Since these fetuses are "non-persons" — having no protection under the law,

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they are available on occasions for scientific experimentations.

4. Then there is the Salt Brine technique. After removing much of the fluid that surrounds the fetus, a strong saline solution is injected into the womb. The fetus is literally burned to death by the salt fluid. The fetus struggles violently for a short time, causing the mother considerable pain before it dies. In a few days it is delivered as a stillbirth. Among New York's late abortion patients, there have been about two dozen live births by this method, one of which lived to be put up for adoption.

### THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM

The question of abortion is not a simple one. Three features of the question tend to complicate it and hinder us from reaching a conclusive answer.

First, is the *number of realms* that must be considered. Abortion is a moral, medical, legal, sociological, philosophical, demographic, psychological, and religious problem all at once. This is not an exhaustive list, but it illustrates that abortion affects not only the individual but society as well. No mother may freely say, "It is my life — I can do as I please!" The same attitude multiplied thousands of times becomes a significant portion of the population, and that combined action of many individuals can have considerable effect on the life of the nation. Thus, abortion is not just an individual question, but a social question.

The second confusing factor is the difficulty of establishing *consistent moral guidelines* around which abortion may be discussed. This has come about because of our society's departure from the Bible and the Judeo-Christian tradition as a basis for making value judgments.

At one time Western civilization derived objective standards of moral conduct from the scriptural tradition. However, with the rise of rationalism, secularism, and liberal theology, the validity and authority of the Bible was

called into question. With the objective authoritative standard of Scripture gone, the standards by which we are forced to make our judgments becomes fluid, subjective and variable with the whims of popular feeling.

Hence, if we say, "taking human life is *bad*," we are left with no authoritative standard by which to say, "It is bad *because* . . ." It becomes bad because it has some objectional effects or the majority of the people think it is wrong, but not because of an unchanging authoritative standard which says, "It is wrong!"

The third complicating factor is the number of *separate arguments* which are involved in both sides of the question. Those arguing *against* abortion say that it: (1) terminates human life; (2) interferes with the rights of the fetus; (3) interferes with the divine plan; and (4) fosters sexual promiscuity.

Those who favor abortion and liberal abortion laws argue that prohibition of abortion: (1) denies a woman authority over her own body; (2) forces unwanted children upon society; (3) discriminates against females and low income groups; and (4) can be held responsible for unsafe medical practices.

Considering the number of realms involved, the lack of an authoritative standard, and the complexity of the separate arguments on both sides, it is little wonder that the debate goes on with little or no resolution in sight.

As in many legal-ethical debates, the question often boils down to a matter of someone's rights. In the case of abortion, it is the rights of the mother vs. the rights of the unborn child vs. the right of society to regulate the life of the individual. The argument is usually rather lopsided against the fetus, since it is silent and helpless, and quite unable to "defend" itself. The declaration of the Supreme Court has, in fact, made a fetus under six months a non-person by depriving it of any protection. The 14th Amendment to the Constitution declares that "A state may not deny any *person* of life, liberty or property without due process of law." Since no due process

of law is taken to deprive the fetus of its life, it must then be considered a "non-person."

### THE CHRISTIAN VIEWPOINT

For the Christian, the situation is considerably *less hopeless* since he retains an authoritative standard by which to measure his life and practices — the Bible. After seeing the complexity of the problem, an authoritative voice is a welcome breath of fresh air. It is all too easy for Christians to become deeply immeshed in philosophical conjecturing and forget that he has available to him a divine perspective that transcends the fluctuating moral standards of modern society.

When God called Israel to be a nation set apart to Himself, He told them, "When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations" (Deuteronomy 18:9 NASV). God has called His people to live by a standard that is radically different from that of the world and to be set apart as a people who will be known because they keep His law.

The central issue to the Supreme Court, and to most who are vitally interested in this question, is whether or not a fetus may actually be considered a human being; and if it may, at which point in the gestation period does it become one? If the fetus is *not* to be considered human, then an abortion has little more meaning than removing a malignant growth from the mother's body. If, however, it *is* human life, the problem becomes at best the sacrificing of a life for the good of another; and at worst, premeditated murder.

Though the Scriptures never mention abortion, either to prohibit or allow it, it does leave us with certain concrete principles of divine revelation which will allow us to draw some helpful conclusions.

It is of utmost importance that we see *all* life as coming from God. In three separate acts (Genesis 1:11, 20 and 24), God brought forth life upon



the earth and inaugurated it with a divine commission to be fruitful and multiply. It is significant that a fourth and separate work of God created man, whom God made in His own image, and breathed into him the breath of life. In so doing, He separated man from the stream of biological life that teamed on the earth and said, "This is a special creation; man is made in My image and he will rule over the rest of My creation" (Genesis 1:26). Human life not only has a divine *inception*, it has a divine *purpose*.

Not only was human life *in general* from God, the Scripture also tells us that human life *in particular* is a gift from God. Since this runs counter to the cause/effect thinking of modern materialism, it will be well to consider a few portions of God's Word on the subject.

In Job 33:4, Job says of himself: "The *Spirit of God* has made *me*, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." Job viewed himself as a unique work of God's hand, and not merely a product of a biological chain of events.

Of his children Job said, "The *Lord* gave, and the *Lord* has taken away." He knew that God not only had the power to give life, but to take life.

Scripture views new life as a direct gift from the hand of God: "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; The fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalms 127:3). He also has the power to give and withhold the conception of children, as illustrated in the lives of Sarah, wife of Abraham (Genesis 18:14-15); Leah and Rachael, wives of Jacob (Genesis 29:31 and 30:22); Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:5-6, 19, 20); and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1:7 and 13).

Beyond the fact that life in the womb is a gift from God, it must also be established that fetal life is more than a mass of tissue which is biologically alive, but that it is viewed by God as *human life*.

David, King of Israel, saw the beginning of his existence as an individual, not beginning at birth, but from the time he was a developing fetus in his

mother's womb. He said to the Lord, "Thou didst weave *me* in my mother's womb . . . *My* bones were not hidden from Thee, when *I* was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen *my* unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that they were ordered for me, when as yet there were not one of them" (Psalm 139:13, 15, 16).

David considered himself an individual while still in the womb, who was capable of being seen by God as an individual with a future and a life ahead of him.

Likewise, God spoke to Jeremiah, the prophet to the nations, "Before I formed *you* in the womb, *I knew you*" (Jeremiah 1:5). Even before the conception of Jeremiah had taken place, God saw him as a person. The implication of the word "knew," is more than having possession of a bit of factual knowledge; it possesses an intimacy that demonstrates the existence, or potential existence, in the eyes of God of an individual who is capable of being the object of God's special attention.

The same unique revelation comes to us concerning John the Baptist. Before conception his life, calling and ministry were known by God. When John was a six-month-old fetus, still legally a non-person by the ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court, he leapt for joy in the womb of his mother when he heard the greeting of Mary, the mother of his Savior (Luke 1:36-44). "Leaping for joy" is an action which involves emotional capabilities normally attributed to human beings.

God also said of John, ". . . he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). Again, God's sovereign act of filling the unborn John with the Holy Spirit bears witness to the fact that He regarded him as a human being.

Few people actually realize how rapidly the fetus develops after conception takes place. A mere four weeks after conception, usually about the time the mother is suspecting that she might be pregnant, the heart has

begun to beat. Between the sixth and eighth week, when the pregnancy is being confirmed by a doctor, all the organs are complete and the hand, face, mouth, tongue, fingers and toes are formed. The brain shows a unique electroencephalogram (EEG) pattern the disappearance of which is generally accepted as a definition of death. A baby at this stage of development can respond to external stimulus such as tickling. It is usually sometime *after* this stage that abortions take place.

## DIVINE SANCTION OF HUMAN LIFE

If we know then that God considers fetal life to be human, it is removed from the realm of animal or biological life over which man has been given authority (Genesis 1:26-28) and places it under divine sanction and protection. Human life is set apart from animal life by its unique place in the scheme of God's purpose and the divine image that bears the mark of its creator.

Around human life God has always placed the protection of His care and commandments. When Noah came out of the Ark, God gave him the simple command, "Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed" (Genesis 9:6). Taking human life was viewed by God as an act grave enough to warrant capital punishment — taking life for life.

The Law of Moses ordered that any man who committed murder by premeditation was to be put to death even if he had to be taken from the altar of God — a place of God's mercy and forgiveness (Exodus 21:14). The Law also declared that taking a life through negligence was punishable by death (Exodus 21:29). God has placed special value on human life and He jealously regards the right to take it and dictate the circumstances under which it may be taken, i.e., capital punishment, etc.

As we have said, abortion is never prohibited or allowed, *per se*, in the Scriptures. However, we have seen a few underlying principles of the Scriptures: i.e. all human life, both



general and particular, is a gift from God; God views a child developing in the womb as a human being; and God has placed His divine protection and sanction on human life that protects it from being taken carelessly or arbitrarily. Understanding these principles from the Word of God, the conclusion must then be drawn that abortion must fall under the category of taking human life and would be viewed as such by God.

This is not to say that Christians must begin to stone abortionists or anyone who has had an abortion. It should, however, cause Christians to stop and deeply consider the ramifications and consequences of abortion, individually and as a nation. Many women who have had an abortion have suffered severe emotional and spiritual anguish and been left with deep wounds which will be long in healing.

#### WHERE CAN ABORTION TAKE US?

The Supreme Court ruling on abortion may have effects which will reach far beyond the question of abortion itself. In its declaration the Court stated that a fetus was viable after six months because it was capable of "meaningful" life outside of the mother's womb. This would imply, as stated earlier, that a fetus *under* six months then becomes a non-person, stripped of his rights under the law.

We might ask, then, if the capability of having a "meaningful" life, whatever that may be interpreted to mean, is the criterion for the protection of the law, who else might be declared non-person? Why not kill all the severely mentally retarded? the crippled? the aged? Who is to say their lives are "meaningful"? In Germany the Jews were declared non-persons by the Nazis and six million "non-persons" were slaughtered. It may all sound absurd in a civilized nation such as ours, but bereft of a moral standard there is no longer any limit on what can be done in the name of "mankind."

Dr. James Watson, a researcher in the DNA molecule, was reported in an article in *Time*, May 28, 1973, to have stated in regard to deformed children: "If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed [a] choice . . . The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so chose and save a lot of misery and suffering."

The precedent for infanticide and euthanasia has already been laid, however innocently it might seem. Someone once said, "Tragic sin is rarely a big bang, it is usually a slow leak!"

Emotional cries of those favoring open abortion laws often point to the instances of possible deformed children, the unwanted and battered children in our society, the possibilities of rape and incest, or the economic strain of extra children.

It should be considered, however, that the vast majority of abortions are performed simply because the mother doesn't want a baby. New York data on abortion showed that the most frequent abortion patients were young, single, white, and pregnant for the first time. Similarly, the Maryland State Department of Health reported that in 1969, 91% of all abortions were to relieve "maternal emotional stress." These were usually career women, careless marital partners, single women and accidental pregnancies. Rape, incest and the possibility of a deformed child enters the picture very rarely.

There is no question that all children should be "wanted." The sad commentary on our moral standards, however, is that we will allow the worth of a child's life to be decided by the emotional acceptance of the parents.

A Christian should always maintain the divine perspective that the grace of God is able to triumph over the forces of evil that often bring tragic circumstances to bear on our lives. God is faithful. If we conduct ourselves as God has commanded us and live according to His law, then *He* is responsible for the outcome and seeing

that *His* children are taken care of. We have lost, in America, the meaning of sacrifice of self for others, even the unborn, and the value of God's Law above our own wants, desires and ambitions. We have forgotten how to be responsible for our actions.

The solution for many of the problems which abortion seeks to cure unwanted children, poverty, etc. would better be found through the dedicated action of a united Christian community. All too often we have taken the easy way out, as individuals, and as a nation.

The abortions being multiplied in our land are an abomination in the sight of God. We cannot point a finger and say, "Those non-Christians are responsible," — it has come about because God's people have not "salted" their communities with holy, committed lives. When God's people will repent of their own sins, and begin to pray, then God will lift the curse from us.

It must be remembered, in conclusion, that God offers an abundance of grace and forgiveness in every situation when His children acknowledge their sin and repent of it. And we must never become so pharisaical and rigid in our zeal for the Law of God that we forget that abortion may not always be a cut and dried "yes" and "no." It is conceivable that there could be extreme situations, such as the mother's life being in definite danger, when through counsel by mature Christians, an earnest and pure desire to fulfill the will of God . . . whatever the cost, and a sincere seeking of His will, we would decide that seeking an abortion may be justified in the eyes of our Creator.

Decisions such as those faced by the young woman at the beginning of this article are complicated and difficult, to say the least. There are no easy, simple answers to the question of abortion as it applies to each individual. The prevailing truth in which we may rest, however, is that we have a loving, caring Father who is infinitely concerned about the well-being of all His children, born and unborn. ♡



# The Blessing of Betrayal

by H.L. Roush

A divine maxim  
of deriving good  
from evil.



Copyright by H.L. Roush, Route 1,  
Belpre, Ohio, March 1967.

**T**he snow fell silently like drifting feathers and soon covered the drab and soiled earth with white. It had been snowing all night and I looked from my study window with a warm quiet heart on the first snow of winter. It was the day after Thanksgiving and the snowfall gave me all the excuse I needed to slow down my busy schedule to take the needed time to enjoy the fellowship of my family. We had much to be thankful for that year, as always.

The precious calm of that morning was soon shattered by the insistent ringing of the phone. It was the first link in a heavy chain that was soon to bind me in despair and sorrow; for the voice on the other end of the line informed me that great trouble had just entered my life. Circumstances had been brought to pass that now endangered my whole ministry, as well as the potential ruin of my personal and family life. It is amazing how quickly the whole world seems to change when our circumstances change. Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, for the quiet white of the snow now seemed to me to be

only hypocrisy that covered the hard, cruel facts which I knew lay beneath its deceptive cover. Serious accusations had been made against me by an unknown accuser, and God knew my heart that I was an innocent victim of distorted circumstances. I could only cry, "Oh, Father, who would do this?" My prayer was answered in a few short days and with it came the deepest pain of all, for my betrayer was discovered to be a friend who professed to love me.

For two days I brooded in stunned silence and blackest despair. The trouble which I found myself facing was serious enough but was compounded beyond that which I felt that I was able to bear by the unbelievable fact that the one who had brought this grief into my life was one who broke bread with me around the table of the Lord and spoke often his love for me.

Our "personal" experiences are not so personal as we might imagine — what is happening in our lives as members of the body of Christ is happening for the comfort and help of others (2 Corinthians 1). It is "happen-

ing" because it is the mutual inheritance of the members of Christ's body to share in the sufferings of the Head (Philippians 1:29; Colossians 1:24).

## THE CERTAINTY OF BETRAYAL

The withering experience of being betrayed by our friends and loved ones must of necessity come in every believer's life. I base this observation on much experience in the Christian life plus the clear and simple teaching of the Word of God. It is an interesting discovery to learn that the word "betray" and its forms are only used in regard to Jesus' betrayal by Judas except a single time in Luke 21:16. In this passage, which is prophetic, it is used to depict the end of the age of grace and is stated to be one of the identification marks, or signs of, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The verse simply reads:

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall be put to death.

This is a terrible thing to look forward



to, but it is the plain promise of the word of Christ. The age of grace is to end with a world-wide religious deception. It will be the time of the great counterfeit — perilous times in which the truth will be resisted by deceit and trickery. (Study Paul's words in 2 Timothy 3:1-8).

I believe that every man, in whom Jesus dwells, will in these last terrible times have his own personal Judas; for, in the age of the counterfeit the false brother will be prominent. Also, betrayal is the common experience of every man whom God has ever used for His glory.

Our verse in Luke 21:16 says that betrayal comes by the hand of "parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends." Startling, but true and for a good reason. First, our enemies cannot betray us. We do not let them close enough to our hearts. We are not intimate enough with our enemies. It is with our brethren and our friends that we share our hearts. Since our enemies cannot hurt us, it is our friends who wound us. So, the Psalmist said in Psalms 55:12-14:

For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have born it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

So all Bible history echoes the fact of betrayal at the hand of our friends. Abel was betrayed by his only brother, Esau by his twin brother, Isaac by his son, Uriah by his trusted king and by his lovely wife, Jesus by His devoted disciple, Paul by "false brethren." We need not go on, for this solemn truth remains: it is often our friends that rise against us and so magnify our troubles in the Christian life.

### THE METHOD OF BETRAYAL

The method will always be the same. First, our betrayers will choose the time carefully. In the case of Jesus, He was betrayed at the exact moment

in His life when He needed human fellowship the most (Mark 14:37); at the hour of His greatest need; and when He stood at the threshold of His greatest work (Calvary).

Our betrayers also know the *place* to strike us. John 18:2 shows that Judas knew the secret place of Jesus' retreat. They observe us and know our place of agony and prayer; and so having the advantage of intimacy, they smite us in an opportune place.

Their means of betrayal will always be the kiss. They encourage our love that they might strike us in an unguarded moment. The Word of God says:

Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me (Psalms 41:9).

There is a precious word picture in this verse. The original meaning portrays a trusted family horse viciously kicking from behind an unsuspecting and trusting friend.

### VICTORY OVER THE BETRAYER

What became of Judas? History has written his tragic end, but lurking in the seeming vagueness of the brief accounts of his death is a drama that has remained untold too long.

In order to see it in its real perspective, we must look briefly at the relationship between Jesus and Judas. Jesus chose Judas and prayed for him (Luke 6:12-13), as He did for Jerusalem that rejected Him and for those who crucified Him. Jesus desired Judas to eat the last Passover with Him (Luke 23:14-15), loved him and offered him the place of love and communion at the table in the Passover chamber (John 13:26). Jesus washed his feet (John 13:5) and, hence, expressed to him a love that was indeed unfeigned and worthy of the Son of God. Jesus gave Judas full recognition and never revealed him as His future betrayer, referring to Judas as His "friend." Careful meditation on the events leading to the betrayal will reveal that Jesus offered to Judas every token of love and was unwilling

to disown him even at the moment of his crime.

Jesus taught in Matthew 5:44 that we love our enemies and He practiced all that He preached on the subject. Even though He knew full well in advance the evil which Judas would work against Him, He demonstrated His sincere love in every conceivable manner.

In Mark 14:45 Judas agreed to betray Jesus with a kiss. There are two words in the original for kiss. One means the kiss of friendship and one means to kiss fervently or the kiss of real love. Now come to Gethsemane and see the final scene. Judas comes with the multitude armed with staves and swords to take Jesus prisoner. Judas greets the Lord and kisses him; but, according to the original, not with the kiss of friendship as he agreed, but with the kiss of genuine love! Only eternity will reveal what happened that moment in Judas' heart. Perhaps, in the flickering light of the torches, Judas sees in the face of Jesus the shocking truth that in spite of his betrayal, Jesus loved him yet, for He called Judas, "friend." Jesus is taken away and Judas cries that he has betrayed innocent blood; he had learned that Jesus' love for him was real. His heart must have experienced a crushing blow, and now he cannot rationalize his madness or justify his dastardly deed.

Did Judas die at his own hand? It seems apparent to me that Judas died under the force of the irresistible love of Christ. Judas destroyed himself because he could no longer live with himself or others and all of this was worked by the unfeigned love of the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems to me that the words of Romans 12:20-21 are suddenly clear:

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Is not the Word fulfilled that states: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal . . ." (2 Corinthians 10:4)



and "Charity (love) never faileth" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Indeed we desperately need to settle in our hearts that the Word of God is true. We only give reason to the hatred of our enemies and cause to the betrayal by our friends when we recompense evil for evil.

### THE NEED FOR BETRAYAL

There is another consideration in the fact of Judas' betrayal. He was chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ, although the Lord knew beforehand that Judas would betray Him (John 6:64). In my own personal experience of betrayal at the hand of a friend, the dear Lord showed me this precious truth. While in the fire of this trial, I went to bed one night brooding over this one who pretended to love me and used his profession to betray me into the hands of enemies. In the night I awoke in prayer to be answered with these thoughts: the Lord Jesus chose His own friends and knowing in advance the treachery of Judas, He chose him anyway! He said of them that He had chosen them twelve and one of them was a devil. I was made to thank God for that devil, as he was necessary to the ministry of Jesus, and for my betrayer since he must be needed in my life as well.

What possible need could a believer have to be betrayed by friends or loved ones? What good purpose could the pain and sorrow of a wounded heart serve? I asked these questions and found answers in the night that met the need of my heart.

We have need to learn the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Consider the fact that Jesus was never deceived in Judas.

... for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him (John 6:64).

I am sure that in every experience of betrayal in the believer's life he can look back and remember the faithful warning of the Holy Spirit. In one case, I recall I could have known from the beginning if I had only listened to

the witness of the Spirit within. Who can explain the nature of the warning of God in the soul against a false brother? It is not easily put into words but all saints know the uneasiness that reason cannot take away about some who profess to be our friends. The betrayal experience brings into sharp focus the truth that public acceptance among believers, using the phraseology of the saints, doing religious works, preaching or any other outward mark that is often accepted as "proof" of a man's salvation and trustworthiness, does *not* tell always the true story. "... for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Let us give to every man the standing which he professes to have with God, but never let us go beyond the testimony of the Spirit of God in our hearts in our relationship with others. We read of many who came to Jesus and professed faith in Him, based purely upon the miracles that He performed and not upon a real heart faith in Him as the Son of God. Drawn only by the impression of His outward works, they numbered themselves among His followers:

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man (John 2:24-25).

Our obligation is not to open our hearts to every man who seeks entrance into our inner man, but to let our hearts be affected toward others by the Holy Spirit who will never fail to warn us of those who seek to deceive us. Let us learn that "fellowship" is the work of the Holy Spirit and not of man. Let us not seek to establish it without His help or to ignore it when He has so obviously created it between our hearts and others in the body of Christ.

What is the need of betrayal? Perhaps it comes to light through Peter's words in his first epistle when he observes that the "heaviness through manifold temptations" of his readers "need be." Needed because, as he so beautifully explains, there is a

future and present fruit of such heart-searching experiences. In the future, this trial of faith, like gold tried in the fire, will be brought out of the furnace of our lives as praise, honor, and glory for the Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing. If we could only lay hold of this tremendous potential in the midst of our trials, how differently our hearts would respond to the challenge of the hour! Yet, besides this, (grace upon grace), the heavy trials of life are used to do a work so necessary to all of us — the work of increasing our love and joy in this present life. Read 1 Peter 1:6-8 and remember that out of every furnace of affliction, we have come out loving the Lord as never before and rejoicing in the reality of His fellowship.

We need the betrayal experience to learn true submission to the Lord. The greatest prayer which the child of God can utter is the prayer of the perfect Son: "... even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). When we can thus cry from our wounded hearts, the sting is gone and we have triumphed; for our submission to the pleasure of the Father in our lives brings victory over every attack against us (see 2 Corinthians 2:14).

Read 2 Corinthians 4:15-18, which gives more reasons for the seeming unreasonableness of life's great disappointments. Paul gives the proper perspective to our heartaches by telling us that the attack is not against the outer man, but against the inner man. We so often tremble under the fear of what this will "do to me," and forget in times of trouble that nothing can harm us in the inner man, if we have taken to ourselves the full armor of God. These things are only for a moment compared to eternity and will one day work an eternal weight of glory. These deep waters will only serve to lift our eyes from earthly ties and "things" and put them upon the values of eternity. The enemy would overwhelm us and darken our reason by causing us to concentrate on the fearful details of the outer experience; thus, while we occupy ourselves with meaningless worry about the outer,



we are often smitten in the inner man to our own defeat. Many a saint has survived the outward experience only to fall mortally wounded by bitterness, resentment, malice, and an unforgiving heart. In times of betrayal let the saint first learn to gird up the loins of his mind in Christ and to appropriate the full armor of God, which is actually putting on Christ in all of His strength and might.

### THE BLESSING OF BETRAYAL

Consider the blessing that betrayal brings when through it we learn to recognize no hand but the faithful hand of our loving Father in heaven. We give far too much glory to the devil, the world and the flesh in the circumstances of our lives. We blame our enemies when we are buffeted; but great peace and quietness of heart become ours when we refuse to recognize second causes in our lives. God is sovereign and He is our Father. He has been pleased to allow this to happen to us and our part is to believe that "... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

In the blessing of this quietness, David endured with a patient spirit the cursing of Shimei and forbade any evil to be returned to him for the evil rendered. David saw but one hand behind it all — the loving hand of God working good through Shimei's evil.

Joseph was bitterly betrayed by his brothers, placed in the pit and sold as a slave only to be befriended by Potiphar's wife and then cruelly betrayed again. Placed in prison, he made friends with the butler and soon knew the agony of the kiss of betrayal once more. But the years passed and Joseph was remembered of the Lord and exalted to the throne of Egypt in victory and the blessed secret of his sanity, yea, of his triumphant, conquering patience is revealed in his words to his brothers: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good..." (Genesis 50:20).

Peter manifested this same truth in

his perspective of Calvary's cross. Although he accuses the nation of taking Jesus by wicked hands to crucify and slay Him, Peter viewed it as no tragedy, saw in it no victory of Satan; but, triumphantly announces that the Lord Jesus Christ was "... delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God..." (Acts 2:23).

And so, my dearly beloved saints of God, who at this moment find yourselves in perplexity over the betrayal of a friend, admit this moment that God could have overruled it if He had wished, but allowed it for your good. Rejoice in this blessing, as He is owning you as His son and preparing you for the comfort and the blessing of others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). He has graced your life with the glorious privilege of sharing with you the most intimate of the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 3:10). This fellowship is with a select company, for not all are privileged to know the agony of betrayal that we might share in some degree the depth of the love of Christ. Your betrayer has meant it for evil, but God will make it all for good; and as Jesus chose Judas, since He had need of the betrayal in His own life, so God in His faithfulness has chosen our betrayers — He knew full well that if the choice had been ours, it would never have been made.

You ask — "*Chosen* our betrayers? What good can they do for us?" You have forgotten that Judas' betrayal delivered Jesus Christ to His greatest work and put in motion the events that fulfilled the eternal purposes of God in Christ. Eternal redemption through the blood of Christ was the fruit of Judas' despicable deed! It remains a fact that our friends will not do this work for us. Only our enemies will deliver us to the pain of circumstances beyond our control; and hence, perform a real service to the saints of God.

A betrayer delivered me to circumstances that changed the course of my ministry and released me to the greatest work of my life. A betrayer worked hardship in my life that

resulted in my being freed from dependence upon man and made me the Lord's free man!

The blessing of betrayal? Only God could make it thus, but I have found the paradox of these words to be a reality. Betrayal, at the hands of those whom we have trusted with our hearts, can yield blessing that we are not able to contain. Through betrayal I have learned what the Psalmist meant when he sang —

By this I know that thou favour-  
est me because mine enemy doth  
not triumph over me (Psalms  
41:11).

Also, what the Prophet meant when he wrote —

No weapon that is formed  
against thee shall prosper; and every  
tongue that shall rise against thee in  
judgment thou shalt condemn. This  
is the heritage of the servants of the  
Lord, and their righteousness is of  
me, saith the Lord (Isaiah 54:17).

Through betrayal I have learned that the strength and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in my life can only be worked in the blessing of weakness brought to pass by the buffeting of Satan's messenger as a thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Through betrayal we are prepared for the blessing of being used to comfort others in the same trial of faith with the same comfort wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Through the experience of betrayal by false friends, I have received one of life's greatest blessings in learning how to love my enemies and to bless those who persecute me.

When the blessing of betrayal is realized, when we look back and see how much we have reaped in increased joy, love, grace, strength and fellowship with the dear Lord Jesus, we are overwhelmed with the realization of how much good our betrayer has worked for us. His intentions are of no concern. It is the blessed fruit which he had brought into our lives that matters. ♡



# WHAT WE DO

The heartcry that opens to us the kingdom of God.

by Charles Simpson

"Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), Paul declares to the Philippian church. Paul held multiple citizenship as a Jew, a Roman and a Christian. As such he was subject to three sets of laws: Roman, Jewish and the law of Christ. Caesar laid claim to Paul's loyalty as a Roman; the Sanhedrin laid claim to his loyalty as a Jew; and Jesus laid claim to Paul's loyalty as a citizen of God's kingdom.

Being a citizen of three kingdoms was not easy. Paul sought to be a better Jew and a better Roman in order to bring glory to the Lord Jesus. He paid his taxes, loved his neighbors and worked with his hands. He sought to be "all things to all men." But from the very outset of his Christian experience, serving the Lord Jesus was his priority. Caesar was lord of Rome, but Jesus was Lord of Paul and the church. Because of Paul's renunciation of earthly ambition and his dedication to enthroning Jesus in *every* life, he got into trouble. Eventually, Paul lost his Roman and Jewish citizenships through martyrdom. However, he received eternal citizenship in God's kingdom which shall not be taken

away. Being a good citizen of heaven will make you an earthly alien.

The kingdom of God consists of those, whether on this side of death or the other, who are registered under God's government through Jesus Christ. This is what the Good News is about! There is another kingdom whose Saviour is the Lord, where abides righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, now and in eternity.

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" Peter declares. Christianity is a *nation*? I thought it was a *denomination*. No! Christians are a distinct nation of people among the nations who have a government, laws and a Lord.

Gypsies are known as a nomadic people without a country. Centuries ago, they were driven from their homelands, and have since been wanderers. Nevertheless, they have a king and rulers among them who are recognized.

In a real sense, Christians are pilgrims and sojourners in this world. We are in it, but not of it. We are moving toward the land of God's promise, which He has prepared for us. Though we are not yet in the land, we are already a people with identity and

government. The Lord Jesus is our King. We maintain our identity among the people of the earth by learning and living His ways. One day He shall reign in all the world and we shall reign with Him. In the meantime, He is reigning in our lives and teaching us to reign over ourselves, in our families and in the church, which is His body. As He reigns over us, He is able to reign through us, and one day we shall reign with Him.

Often I have noticed in various large, foreign cities an American community living abroad. Just as in America, where we may have a German community, a French community, a Chinese community and a Latin community, so in foreign cities, there is often an American community. Americans abroad are under the U.S. Government just as we are at home. They speak the same language and have the same customs, but they live away from their homeland, and are subject to a foreign government and its laws. Because they have so much in common with other Americans, they tend to live near one another in some kind of community relationship. So it is in the spiritual realm. Some of us live on this side of



the sea of death, some on the other — already in heavenly places. Nevertheless, those who live in Christ share the same government and ways of God. We who yet live in this foreign society, show the righteousness, peace and joy of God's eternal kingdom. While we are yet in this present, secular world we pray for those in authority as ministers of God, that we may have a peaceful atmosphere in which to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus. Though we are involved in this world, our citizenship is in heaven. We are citizens of an eternal kingdom.

Early pietists, reformers and anabaptists strongly reacted to the church-state relationships of the eleventh through the sixteenth centuries. As they separated from the state church, they also separated from the state. They saw themselves as a state within the secular state. So sensitive were they to their separation, that they formed separate communities and abstained from military service and other secular involvement. Their motivation was not so much pacifistic as it was their awareness that their kingdom was not of this world. Without promoting withdrawal, one could hope for a revival of the same awareness in our generation. We would do well to take seriously Paul's admonition, "Prove yourselves blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15 NAS).

## IDENTIFICATION AND ORIENTATION

Jesus spent the last forty days of His time on earth speaking to His disciples about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). I would like to have the transcripts of those sessions! The fact that Jesus spent this most valuable time in that manner indicates the importance of the subject. The disciples were still interested in *when* the kingdom would come to Israel; Jesus was interested in their receiving the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim *the King*.

His instruction regarding the kingdom never had its full impact until He had sent the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Then, with divine energy, they began to baptize other disciples and give them the same instruction in God's government that they had received from Jesus.

After Jesus ascended, 120 of His disciples obeyed His command to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit. Finally, on the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended in a mighty torrent. Pentecost was fifty days after Passover. At Passover, the Jews celebrated the deliverance from Egypt; at Pentecost, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Now the Holy Spirit was coming to write a new covenant, not on tables of stone, but in the hearts of committed followers. As Sinai shook with fire and smoke, so did the upper room tremble under the power of God, as God's finger wrote His covenant in their hearts. They were filled not only with the peace of the Holy Spirit, but with the assurance, "He's there!" The Holy Spirit was saying, "Jesus is there at the Father's right hand! I am come to tell you He is Lord!"

When the power of God came, theology became reality. Suddenly, Jesus' teaching became practical for this life. *He is Lord now, not later!* Looking back on His teaching through Holy Spirit-given spectacles, His rulership was magnified and they were intoxicated with heavenly joy and peace. As the Holy Spirit took over His executive office in the church, God's government was a present and powerful reality expressed in the day-to-day life of the church. They were not of this world and it was all that they could do to stay in it. Soon, existing corrupt leaders would either acknowledge Jesus as Lord or seek to rid themselves of the powerful challenge. The church was regarded by many as subversive, and it was, in the holiest sense. The church was not reacting to Satan's program. It had a job to do and by God's grace they set out to do it: Reclaim the kingdoms of this world for God's glory. Make

disciples of all nations, not just *in* all nations.

Peter's Pentecost message to the thousands of visiting devout Jews was about Jesus' Lordship, His right to rule their affairs. It was no "easy believism" or "greasy grace," that he proclaimed. The challenge was total. He was Lord of all or not at all. The response would have to be total commitment to His Lordship and His commission to make disciples of all nations.

Standing with the eleven, Peter said:

This Jesus hath God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear . . . Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified! (Acts 2:32, 33, 36 NAS).

The impact was staggering and clear. They had killed the King. "*What must we do?*" they cried out by the thousands (almost in unison). This was Peter's moment. He was in charge. He and the others were God's delegated authority . . . messengers to the multitude. Whatever he said, they would do. They were ready to act.

"*Repent!*" Peter's voice thundered over the multitude as it had often done over Galilee's waters when he hailed a friend on a passing boat. ". . . *be baptized*, . . . for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). And they did, by the thousands. They repented; they were baptized; they received the Holy Spirit in power; they changed history.

Let us examine the question, "What must we do?" Notice that they did not ask, "What must we do to go to heaven when we die?" Prophets had long foretold the coming of the Messiah and His kingdom. Orthodox Jews all looked and longed for His coming. Now they had been told that He not only had come but that they



had killed Him. Not only had they missed God's government, but they had murdered the Governor! "What must we do?" they pled.

The apostles suddenly represented the only divine authority present. They were God's delegated representatives, trained for this hour. Hidden to natural vision, the Holy Spirit was dramatically convicting and unveiling truth. Only the apostles could answer their frantic question.

Peter's sermon was not about heaven and hell. True, heaven and hell were at stake, but his message was about the Messiah. Every Jew knew well — all too well — what had happened. "What must we do?" was the earnest plea of men who sorrowed with godly sorrow for their rebellion, and searched with all their hearts for the kingdom of God. Repentance was not simply a matter of dealing with nasty habits. They had rejected the rule of Christ in their lives. As orthodox religionists, their habits were nice, but their heart was nasty. There was murder there . . . hatred, strife and pride was in them. They were "whitewashed graves!" That is what *He* had said. *He* was right.

"Repent!" Peter cried. "Turn around. Start with the inside. Make Jesus Lord of your life. Be baptized and identify as His disciple." Proof that one had repented of rejecting Jesus would easily be established by publicly identifying with Jesus in baptism. Physical obedience in baptism would testify to His Lordship. Obedience in baptism would be an act of purification following genuine repentance.

The baptism that Peter preached was no popular cultural exhibition. It was a public identification with one who had recently been slain as a subversive, and His on-going government.

Several years ago I had an experience which helped me to understand what baptism must have meant to those Jews who heard Peter.

It was about 2 A.M. when I arrived in Bombay . . . travel-weary and dazed from crossing time zones. Nevertheless, I was quickened to the fact that Bombay was a long way from

home and that it was a totally different society. Dress, language, Eastern hospitality and anti-American hostility were constant reminders. By the next day I was south in Cochin and on my way to a small village in the state of Kerala called Mavelihara. The state of Kerala had a Communist government and Hindu religion. Both were strange and foreboding to me.

*Police Station Attacked — 2 Killed!* — the headlines shouted in Cochin. A band of local Communists had attacked the police station because of its unfriendliness to their objectives. The Prime Minister was to visit that week. The town was in upheaval. Yet the residents were living in the twilight of social apathy drugged by poverty and spiritual darkness.

Red flags lined both sides of the main road going south through small villages. Hindu shrines added to the evidence of an alien atmosphere. "Don't be too obvious with your camera," my Christian friend and host warned. "One of our ministers was badly beaten a few weeks ago. All of his front teeth were knocked out. Real Christians are not popular here with local officials." I did not have to be warned twice.

For several days Ken Sumrall, who had made the trip with me, and I preached to the assembly of Christians who had come from villages throughout Kerala. They sat from early morning until late evening under a brush arbor listening to the Word of God and worshipping. At times, rain filtered through the thatch roof and dropped on them as they sat on the mats which covered the ground. Then Sunday came. Down to the middle of town and down to the river they marched to baptize the new disciples. As they marched they sang to the beat of a large drum. Their songs were of their King whom they served in the midst of a hostile society.

At the river, the Christians lined one bank and looked across to the hostile faces of Hindus and Communists. As they sang to the Lord Jesus, the pastor waded out into the water and briefly proclaimed Jesus as Lord. Against their dark skin their eyes beamed hope

and commitment. Their pearl-like teeth shone, and broad smiles of kingdom joy were contrasted against a background of suffering and persecution.

Soon, one after another, the new converts moved out into the water and stood beside the Lord's appointed shepherd.

"Do you repent of your sin and accept Jesus as Lord?" he would ask in their own language, loudly enough for all to hear.

"Yes!" would come the answer, loud and affirmative. "I turn from my past life. I ask Jesus to forgive me. I will follow Him forever!"

Then placing themselves in the shepherd's hands, they would be lowered in burial . . . "I baptize you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." Amid shouts of hallelujah they were brought forth praising the Lord in a new language. Now there was nothing to which they could return. Baptism meant identity with Jesus. That meant rejection for most of them by society and family. It was not a secret ceremony.

After all of the new disciples were baptized, the line began to form and the procession moved back toward the brush arbor. Again came the beat of the large drum and the chant of Eastern hymns.

"We would be honored if you would march at the head of the group," my host smiled. Under the curious and hostile gazes of onlookers we moved forward. We had just held a registration session for the kingdom of God — publicly.

In Peter's day, registration in the kingdom of God was quickly followed by orientation.

So then these who had received His word were baptized; and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:41-42 NAS).

Their decision to come under the government of God as expressed in the church, was a decision to live a new



way with new values, attitudes and precepts. To walk this new way they would have to learn it by the apostles' example and instruction. The apostles immediately began to function as Jesus commanded. "Baptize and make disciples. Teach them to observe everything I taught you" (paraphrase). As the new babes were born into the kingdom, they came under visible government and into a visible fellowship. Soon they were totally immersed in a new culture. The community accepted full responsibility for the well-being and development of these new disciples who had changed governments.

Paul expresses it this way. "For he delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13 NAS). We have changed governments! Paul declares.

we do to change our lives *while we live*?" Their cry was not to do as little as possible, but *as much as possible* to separate themselves from the bondage of Egypt.

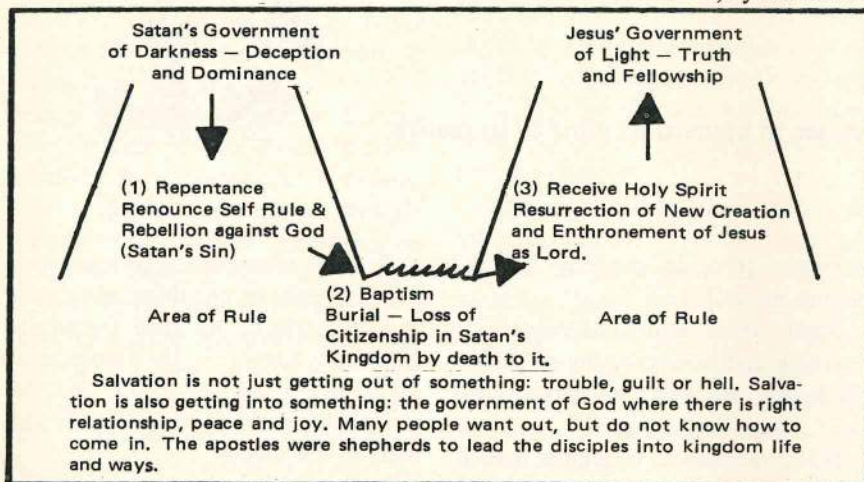
Israel separated themselves from the government of Pharaoh to the government of Moses through baptism. Moses preached a kingdom gospel. That is, he told them of a place of righteousness, peace and joy where God would rule over them. He told them of Mount Zion and milk and honey. However, he also told them of giants and obstacles. In order to leave Egypt and come into Canaan, they would have to submit to a new governor — Moses. They had to decide if he were really sent from God. Having settled that, they had to decide if the prize was worth the price. Having determined that it was, they started to follow Moses. The first thing he did was to lead them, by the Lord's

with all their possessions, family and friends, into Moses' hands, He baptized them into the sea and God baptized them into the cloud, confirming their discipleship. When they came forth, they could never return, though many would often desire to return. It was this constant looking back and denial of God's delegated authority in Moses that prevented the first generation from entering into Canaan. Jesus said it this way, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62 NAS).

When one desires the kingdom of God, or God's government, in his life, he must be ready to repent of his present state. He must acknowledge that going his own way got him into his present state of confusion and loss. In baptism, he literally lays himself in someone else's hands, believing him to be God's messenger sent to lead him into God's kingdom. Water baptism will put distance between him and the past, as well as identify him as a citizen of the new government. Holy Spirit baptism will confirm to his own heart that Jesus did indeed ordain his pilgrimage and put a wall of fire between him and the past. The Holy Spirit will be a cloud of light to the new disciple, but darkness to those who will not follow the Lord.

Once Israel was baptized under Moses' government, they became Moses' problem — and, oh, what problems! He had the job of turning those millions of slaves into a holy nation, an army that could drive out giants, and occupy a rich land. The journey started with Israel's cry, "What must we do?" But soon after the exodus began, Moses was crying, "What must *I* do?"

There is no greater challenge that faces God's people and God's leaders than this! How do we turn an enslaved and divided church into a holy nation, a mighty army? It will begin only as we cry out, "What must we do?" No doubt, we will hear some God-sent man say, "Repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit." As we respond, we will begin to find the government of God. ☞



In order to show more clearly how Christians move from one kingdom to another, Paul reminds us of Israel. In 1 Corinthians 10:6,11 Israel is said to be our example.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:1,2 NAS).

Fifteen-hundred years before Pentecost, Israel had been in Egypt under the whiplash of slavery. They, too, had cried, "What must we do?" Their question was not, "What must we do to get to heaven?" but, "What must

direction, to the Red Sea where everyone was baptized . . . into Moses. They turned their backs on Pharaoh and his pyramids and began the journey. Moses could lead them because He had already lived in the wilderness and had been taught by God the way through it.

There they stood at the water's edge . . . Pharaoh charging behind them . . . "Moses! Moses!" they cried. At God's instruction, Moses asserted his God-given authority and the waters parted. The cloud of God's Spirit came upon them. They moved forward putting their lives and confidence in this hope! God did hear our prayer and Moses was sent by Him. As they put themselves, along





# THOU SHALT NOT STEAL

by Derek Prince

This commandment comes closer to home than most of us realize.



**M**ost people in our Western world are familiar, in some measure at least, with the Ten Commandments, which were given by God, through Moses. These Ten Commandments are recorded in the Book of Exodus, Chapter 20, verses 1 through 17.

Of these ten commandments, the first four deal with man's relationship to God; and the last six deal with man's relationship to his fellow. Basically, we may say that the requirement stated by these commandments, in man's relationship to God, can be summed up in three words: reverence, worship, and obedience.

The last six commandments all deal with man's relationship to his fellows; and they are, briefly, as follows:

First: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Second: Thou shalt not kill [Or, in more modern English, murder].

Third: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Fourth: Thou shalt not steal.

Fifth: Thou shalt not bear false

witness [Or, in modern English, perjure thyself].

Sixth: Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that belongs to thy neighbor: his house, his wife, his servant, his beast, or any such thing.

It is important to remember that all of these commandments are given to man for his own well-being. They are not unreasonable or arbitrary requirements of God imposed upon man to test his willingness to do things that are without reason or purpose. Every one of these commandments has its root purpose in the well-being of man.

The six commandments that have to do with man's relationship to his fellow demand certain things which are basic to human life. They demand respect for life itself . . . for marriage, for the home, for property, for justice, and truth. Common sense and experience alike confirm that where these requirements of God are set aside, the result is a breakdown of society. Ultimately, the end of setting

aside these reasonable requirements of God can only be one thing, and that is anarchy, which, in turn, frequently leads to tyranny . . . the dominion of one man, or a small group, over the rest of their fellowmen, arbitrarily and without due justice.

In this list it is important to notice the place given to stealing. Stealing is placed in direct association with murder, adultery, and perjury. Any sensible person with any kind of moral values will acknowledge that murder, adultery, and perjury are extremely serious and evil things. Stealing is placed side by side with them. In other words, God evaluates stealing as an act as evil, as injurious, and as wrong as such things as murder, adultery, and perjury.

## WHAT IS STEALING?

It is interesting to consider the definition given by the dictionary of the word, *to steal*: "To steal is to take



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something that does not belong to one."

There are two important things to notice in this definition:

*First of all*, there is no precise indication of what means are used to take the thing. It may be taken by force. It may be taken by deception. It may be taken surreptitiously. The taking of it may be covered up by various different pretexts or arguments; but the fact remains that taking is taking, whatever means are used, and all forms of taking something that does not belong to one are forms of stealing.

*Secondly*, it is not important to whom the thing taken does belong. Providing it does not belong to the person who took it, that person, in taking it, is stealing.

It is important to see this because many people are somewhat morally blind about certain aspects of stealing. This is particularly true in today's society. For instance, many people would not directly steal from another person. They would not walk into a neighbor's home and deliberately take money, or jewelry, or some other item of value. Or, working beside another man or another woman, in an office or a factory, they would not steal his purse, or even his cigarettes, or anything like that. They would feel that this would be absolutely wrong and below their moral standards to do such a thing.

But the strange thing is that such people as this often feel no compunction, or sense of guilt, about stealing from a nameless group, or from a group that they do not know personally, such as a corporation, an institution, the army, or the government. This applies even to people who profess religion and claim to live by moral standards.

I served in the British Army, in World War II, for over five years and I had ample opportunity to observe that many people who claimed to be

churchgoers and had quite high moral and religious standards, would never steal from a comrade in the Army, but would happily steal from the Army, itself.

They would take rations, or equipment, or clothing, or items of value that they knew belonged to the Army, and not to themselves; yet they felt no sense of compunction or guilt about taking them, simply because it was not a person, or an individual, but it was a group . . . something large, and nameless, and unspecified, that did not seem to have much value or significance.

I heard of man who worked for General Motors in a large factory in a certain city in North America. He was a good moral man, by most standards. He attended church. But he felt no sense of guilt about purloining from the place where he worked. He would regularly take items of equipment or other things which he would either sell at a low price, use for unofficial repairs, or in some way appropriate for his own purposes.

This man was a churchgoer. He professed to be a good man. He claimed to set a good standard. He probably gave respect to the Ten Commandments and acknowledged their moral value. Nevertheless, he was guilty, frequently, of stealing. Stealing not from a friend, or a neighbor, but from a large corporation, which happened in this case to be General Motors.

Such a man would go to church and would certainly express horror if any friend or neighbor came into his own home and deliberately stole something that belonged to him. He would classify that man as a thief. He would rate him on a very low social and moral level and might even take legal action against such a man.

Is it not remarkable that this man could see that the person who came into his house and took something was stealing; yet he could not see that when he took things — unofficially, without permission, dishonestly, surreptitiously, by underhand means — from General Motors, that he was just

as much stealing as that man who would walk into his home and take an item of his own property.

## BLINDING RELIGION

It is remarkable, sometimes, how religion actually blinds people to the true nature of their own actions. In Romans, Chapter 2, the Apostle Paul is writing to people who claim to be religious, who claim to set the highest standard; and yet he says . . . and this is a verse that applies very, very, very directly to many people, today . . . in Romans, the 2nd chapter, the 21st verse: "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?"

You see, here is a religious person who preaches to others, claims to set a high standard, claims to know what is right and wrong, and yet he is caught himself stealing. There is no question that there are many such people in our society today, claiming to be moral, religious, respectable, employees of large corporations, or other institutions, or employees of the government, who regularly and habitually steal, and yet would be horrified to be called thieves, because their stealing is not from another individual, or person, or a neighbor, but is from some large group which does not seem to have personal identity.

Yet the fact remains that stealing is stealing, no matter from whom we may take the object stolen.

## AS GOD SEES IT

In this connection, I want to point out certain important, simple facts which relate to stealing and all activities of this kind.

The *first* fact is that God sees us. We may be able to cover our actions from man, from our employer, from the corporation, from the law enforcement agencies, but there is one person who always sees everything that we do. That person is God.

In Proverbs, Chapter 15, and verse 3,



the Scripture says this: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

Remember that when you go to work, in the office, the factory, or some other place, the eyes of the Lord are there, watching what you do, whether it be evil, or whether it be good. You can cover up from man but you cannot cover up from God. And in the last resort, it is God that you will have to answer to, and not man.

### THE JUDGMENT

Remember *secondly* that God judges both the bad and the good. In two epistles, Ephesians and Colossians, Paul writes specifically to employees, whom he calls servants.

In Ephesians, Chapter 6, and verse 8, he says this: "Know that whatsoever good thing that any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

In Colossians 3:24, speaking likewise to employees, he says this: "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done and there is no respect of persons."

When Paul says that there is no "respect of persons," he means that no one has a special privilege or favor with God that permits him to do things that God has prohibited.

The fact that you are a relied and trusted employee, a churchgoer, or a Sunday School teacher, or that you hold a place in the Rotary Club, or some similar position, does not mean that God evaluates your actions any differently from those people around about you who may not go to church, or may not make a profession of religion, or whom you may consider to live on a much lower standard or moral scale. God judges that person and you just alike. If that person steals, he is a thief, and God will judge him as a thief; and if you steal, you are a thief, and God will judge you as a thief.

### THE CURSE

The *third* fact is that God has placed a special curse upon those who

practice two things: theft and perjury.

This is stated in the Old Testament, in Zechariah 5:1-4. God gave Zechariah a vision of a great scroll which was flying out across the face of the earth, and entering into certain homes. When Zechariah sought the meaning of this scroll, which he observed had writing on both sides, this is the answer which he received from God:

This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth. For every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth falsely, [or, in modern English, *perjures* himself], shall be cut off, as on that side, according to it.

Notice how accurate the scripture is, because almost everybody who steals sooner or later will also be obliged to perjure himself.

For instance, if you are an employee of a firm that handles goods in transit, and you have to sign forms or consignment orders, or receipts of some kind, and you set aside some goods for your own purpose (You are in fact stealing them, as I have already said), the time will come when in order to cover up your theft, you will either have to perjure yourself in writing, or perjure yourself by word of mouth. Therefore, God has joined together these two crimes of theft and perjury, and united them under a single curse.

Speaking about this curse, which Zechariah saw in his vision, entering into one home after another, across the face of the earth, God told Zechariah this:

I will bring it forth [This is the curse — the scroll], saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely [Or perjures himself] and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and it shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

A curse may not be visible to the natural eye, but nevertheless it is very

real. This may explain why things are not going right in your home.

You are earning a good salary. You are married and you have children. And yet, somehow, there is no real peace, no rest, no harmony. Maybe your children are disobedient, resentful, rebellious. Maybe your finances just do not seem to cover your needs, although you are earning plenty.

Has it ever occurred to you that your home could be under the curse of God because you have been practicing theft, and then perjury to cover up your theft?

A dark shadow rests across many homes in modern America. It is the shadow of a curse — a divine curse that man cannot revoke or cancel by any act of his will. It is a curse upon everyone that steals and everyone that perjures himself.

Remember that the next time the temptation comes to you!

### CLOSED GATES

The *fourth* thing I want to tell you is this: Heaven's gate is closed to thieves. The Bible says this very clearly. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that no thieves will ever enter heaven (Matthew 6:20).

Again in the first epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 6, verses 9 and 10, the Apostle Paul tells us the same thing. Remember, too, that he is speaking to professing Christians. This is somewhat remarkable. Some people might imagine that it would not be necessary to tell churchgoers and religious people things such as this; but experience shows that many times it is religion that blinds people to the reality of their own actions.

Paul says to these people — professing Christians in the Church at Corinth:

Knew ye not [He has to remind them!] that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [And, in modern English, that is *homosexuals*], nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.



Notice again the company in which thieves are placed — side by side with adulterers, homosexuals, and drunkards. Not very good company for a person who claims to live on a good moral standard, to pay his bills and to do his duty by society!

In spite of your claims, God says, very clearly, that if you continue to practice thievery, you will have Heaven's gate closed against you, just as surely as you would if you were an adulterer, a homosexual, or a drunkard.

Remember that the next time the temptation comes your way!

### THE HARVEST

*Finally*, I want to point out that the end result of stealing is destructive to all concerned. God says in Galatians 6:7: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You cannot sow one thing and reap another. You cannot sow dishonesty and stealing, and reap benefit and blessing.

Furthermore, what we sow comes back to us multiplied many times over, when we reap. We are familiar with this law in the natural realm. Yet it is equally true in the moral and the spiritual realm. It is vividly expressed by the Prophet Hosea, in Chapter 8 and verse 7. Speaking of God's people at that time, he says: "They have sown the wind and they shall reap the whirlwind."

A wind may be strong and powerful, but a whirlwind, as we know, is many times stronger and more powerful and more destructive. If we sow evil, we shall reap destruction, abundantly.

This law of multiplied returns applies in the matter of stealing. You may practice stealing, individually, in private, and think that it has no real evil effect; but multiply that kind of action, across this nation, many thousands of times, and you have a result that affects the lives of all the people in this nation.

Persistent stealing brings certain obvious results. It sends up the price of living in various different ways.

For instance, it increases insurance costs . . . inevitably.

It increases law enforcement costs.

It increases general lawlessness. Have you ever stopped to consider why we are confronted with such a measure of lawlessness in this country, today? Has it ever occurred to you that if you, on the quiet, in your own little corner, are practicing dishonesty and stealing, you bear a great share of blame for the total condition of lawlessness that exists in this country?

Lawlessness in turn inevitably leads to other things. In the end it endangers individual life and property, creating a situation where a man's property and even his life are no longer fully secure.

That is why, in those ten commandments, God puts stealing so close to murder and covetousness. Because when we give way to one of these things, the others begin to appear . . . if not in our individual lives, then in the society all around us, and the total effect is felt by every member of society.

If we sow the wind, be very sure, in

due course, we shall reap the whirlwind.

If some of these truths concerning stealing come close to your own life, I would like to suggest that you stop and consider what you have been doing. Evaluate your own actions. Try to be objective for a moment. Stand back and view yourself and the things you do, as if you were another person.

If it really were another person, not yourself, would you approve? Would you endorse? Would you give consent? Or, would you condemn? And be angry? Remember that you would be condemning your own self.

It is time for many people in this nation to change their way of doing things. To change their sense of responsibility, to themselves, their families, their employers, and the community at large.

If things go on the way they have been going, the end result will be a breakdown of society, and a state of anarchy . . . and few, if any, will derive any benefit from this conclusion. ☹

### MY CALLING

I'm not especially called to be so brave or bold;  
But *very* special is the call

to do as I am told.

And as down through the ages my Father's plan unfolds;  
I need not be uneasy, but

just do as I am told.

It's not my place to plan great strategy untold;  
And anyway — it's easier

to do as I am told.

Not mine to struggle determinately to deliver someone's soul;  
I'm much more help to others when

I do as I am told.

As the furnace melts ambitions into this simple role;  
We find sweet joy when we submit, and

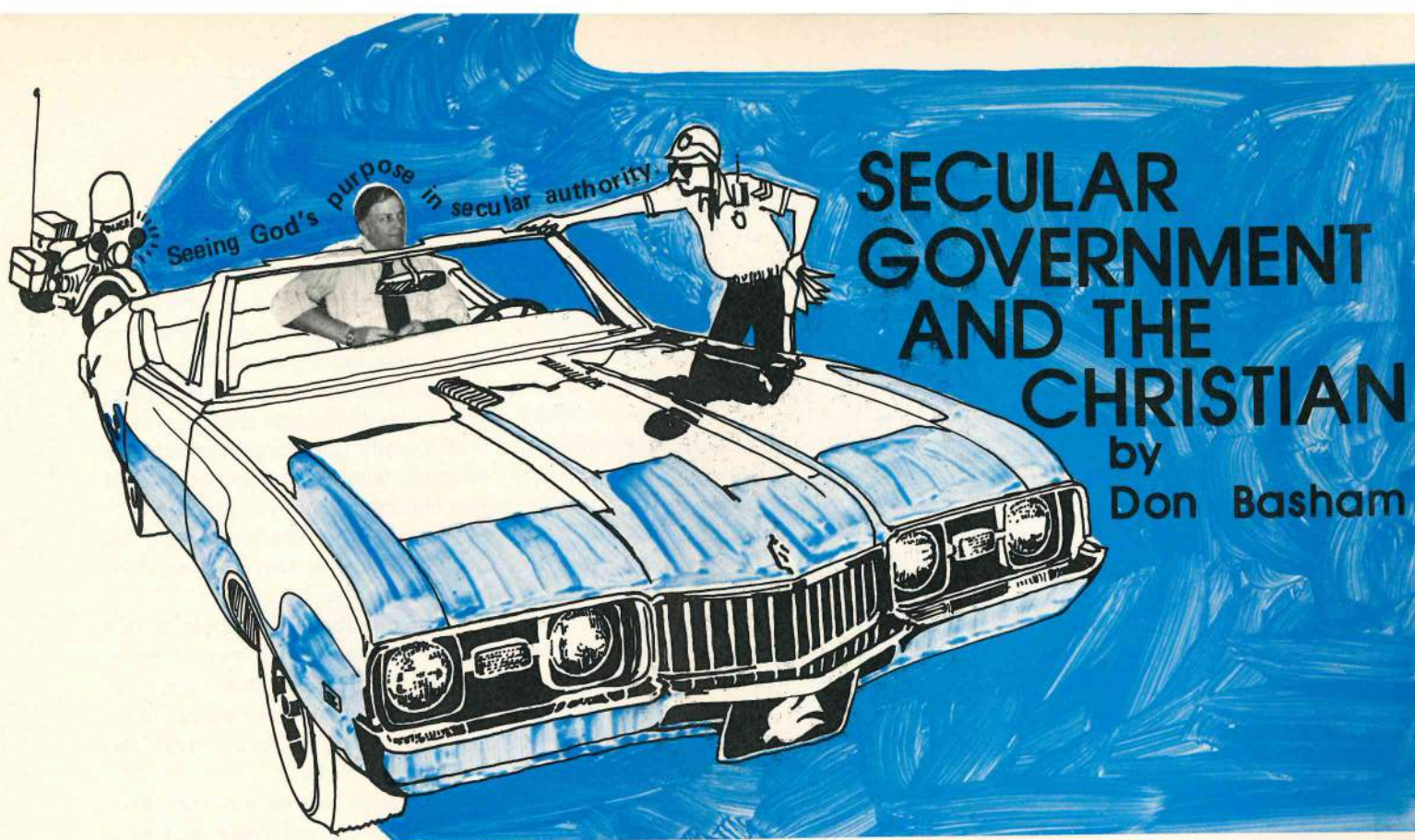
do as we are told.

Oh! What a loving Father, who creates purest gold;  
By using dross like me! — When

I do as I am told.

—Carolyn Y. Wilson





In recent months *New Wine* has published a number of effective articles dealing with aspects of spiritual authority — husbands and wives, shepherds and sheep, teachers and disciples. Yet comparatively little has been shared concerning secular authority, and many Christians still have little understanding of what God requires of them regarding it. They maintain that since Christians live under grace, secular authority has no legitimate claim on them. "I've been freed from bondage to the law," they say, "I just do whatever the Lord tells me to do."

I suspect most of us — deep inside — often feel we should be exempt from secular authority; especially when we do not agree with it! Therefore, it may come as a shock to discover how clearly the Bible speaks to us about recognizing and obeying all civil authorities. Even though we are Christians, we still live in a worldly society. This makes it essential for us to be properly related to all the authorities in that society. To help us recognize this responsibility and to act on it is the purpose of this article. First, let us review the importance of the principle of authority.

### THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY

To be alive is to have a relationship to authority. The dictionary defines *authority* as "power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior." Without recognition of authority, there can be no responsible society or effective government. The presence of authority establishes order; lack of authority leads to anarchy.

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25).

Without the presence of authority every man becomes a law unto himself. Let me offer a simple illustration from my own childhood.

I was reared in a Christian family consisting of my father and mother and two older brothers. We three boys had our own private bedroom and bath at the back of the house. Access to our room was via a corridor leading from the kitchen. Left to our own room, the three of us occasionally fell into what psychologists refer to as "overt expressions of sibling rivalry." In plain talk that means we would get

into fights. The slugfests would begin between two of us and the third brother would inevitably be drawn in on one side or the other. As long as the conflict remained at a low noise level it would continue uninterrupted. But sooner or later one of us would yelp with pain, upset the furniture, or bump against the wall. Within seconds after the sounds of our altercation reached the front of the house, we would hear parental footsteps coming down the corridor. And when we heard those footsteps, all combat instantly ceased! Mother or Dad would enter the room with a stern, "What's going on in here?"

In innocent union we would chime, "Nothing!" Of course, by then the room was usually a shambles and one or more of us might be bleeding slightly, but at that particular moment, peace and order reigned.

One minute a raging battle; the next minute peace and order. What made the difference? *The appearance of authority on the scene.* For in spite of our superficial antagonisms toward one another, we brothers were united in our respect and recognition of parental authority. That authority provided the stability in our home



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which enabled us to grow to a satisfactory maturity.

I believe the same principle applies to God's family. Submission to authority is essential for us to grow to maturity in Christ. Actually, rebellion against authority is the basic problem of mankind. Since all authority originates in God, ultimately all rebellion against authority is rebellion against God.

The problem began even before man was placed on the earth. Lucifer's pride-filled heart led to his rebellion against God and his expulsion from heaven. ("I will exalt *my* throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High!" Isaiah 28:13-14). Later, the same tendency to rebellion flared in Eve at the suggestion of the now-fallen prince (Satan in the form of a serpent) when, in the garden of Eden, he tempted her to rebel against God's command and her husband's headship, and eat the forbidden fruit.

### EVEN SECULAR AUTHORITY ORIGINATES IN GOD

Let every soul be subject to the higher powers [authorities]. For there is no power [authority] but of God; the powers [authorities] that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good; and thou shalt have praise of the same.

For he is the minister of God to thee for good (Romans 13:1-4).

There may be no more revolutionary words in all Scripture than Paul's statement that there is no authority except of God, and that the authorities which exist are ordained of God.

From the context it is clear that Paul is speaking of secular law and government. This means that kings, presidents, governors, legislatures, tax collectors, policemen, school teachers . . . all those in authority, are where they are by the will of God. That statement is devastating in its implications. Merely to read it gives rise to our rebellious, independent nature.

"But not *this* president, or *that* governor; not *our* corrupt city council or police department, or tax laws or . . ." Rebellion insists we place ourselves outside authority we don't agree with. Thus we set ourselves up as authorities qualified to overrule the Word of God. "I know what the Bible says, *but . . .*"

We are like a certain prominent minister who was returning home from a midnight emergency call to the hospital. The city streets were almost deserted at the late hour and he was in a hurry to get home. The traffic policeman who pulled him over gave him a citation for going 55mph in a 25mph zone.

"But don't you know who I am?" the minister fumed in protest. "I'm Dr. Wellington Hastings, minister of Metropolitan Church on Main Street!" But he got the ticket anyway. There was a time when I would have sided with that minister, but not since God dealt with me personally in this area. Let me explain.

For many years I considered myself a better-than-average driver. In fact, it was only Christian modesty which prevented me from admitting I was an *excellent* driver. Twenty-five years without a traffic ticket! How about that? But like most Christian motorists, I continually broke the law; I just didn't get caught. I exceeded speed limits, cut corners, fudged on stop signs and bluffed my way through heavy traffic, expecting others to yield to my arrogance. I was a Christian living under grace and traffic regulations were meant for others!

Then three years ago (just about the time I began teaching regularly on the subject of submitting to authority) God decided to show me how I wasn't

merely living under His grace; I was flaunting it! Refusing to indulge my trespasses any longer, He gently removed his protective grace and allowed me to receive justice. In the space of a few months I was tagged not once, not twice, not three times, but *four* times for moving traffic violations.

I was outraged! Why were the local traffic authorities picking on good Christian citizens? Why weren't they out arresting real criminals? It didn't matter that I was actually guilty on all four counts! Finally, I calmed down enough to ask God what was going on, and He showed me: **REBELLION!** I was a rebel! I had consistently broken the law and finally I was receiving what I deserved. And among those just deserts were not only stiff fines and a court appearance, but also a thirty-day suspension of my driving privileges. Moreover, at the end of the month-long suspension they didn't simply return my license — I had to begin all over again and take the written examination and driver's test as any sixteen-year-old youngster just learning how to drive had to take!

With considerable embarrassment I acknowledged my rebellion against traffic laws as rebellion against God, asked His forgiveness, and attempted to submit to His chastening with humility.

Today, I obey traffic laws. Today, when I see a policeman or patrol car, even though I still may feel uncomfortable, I remind myself, "There goes God's minister to me for my good" (Romans 13:4). Through that experience I've come to see more vividly than ever how God uses secular authority to deal with the problem of rebellion in His children.

### EVEN UNJUST SECULAR AUTHORITY IS FROM GOD

Actually, the requirements of the Lord concerning submission to secular authority are even more demanding than my experience with the Pompano Beach Police Department would indicate. The Scriptures make this quite plain. For while Paul explains



that all secular authorities are ministers for our good and servants of God to punish us if we do evil, Peter takes the matter a giant step further. He not only echoes Paul's advice, but adds to it.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

*For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; . . .*

*Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward [wicked].*

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God (1 Peter 2:13-20).

In verse 18, in Peter's instructions to Christians concerning the relationship between servants and masters (in our society this would include employer-employee relationships) he insists on submission to authority *even when the authority over us is wicked*. The Greek word for "froward" is *skolois*, which is defined variously as "crooked, perverse, wicked, unfair or surly."

Our first reaction to Peter's demand is, "This is too much! Surely God does not expect us to obey wicked authorities!" But the solemn truth is, God does. *Here we come to the crux of the whole matter of submission to authority*. Understand this: Submission to authority is not based on the personal character of the man in authority, nor is it based on how justly or unjustly the authority is applied. Our submission is to God who gives the authority. The key is in Peter's words, "Submit yourself to *every* ordinance of man (whether you think the ordinance is fair or not!) *for the Lord's sake*." Remember Paul said, "There are no authorities but God,

and the authorities that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). By submitting to authority — even unjust authority — we submit to God. Conversely, by rebelling against authority (any authority) we rebel against God.

I can almost hear the cries of protest! Nevertheless, the scriptural principle is clear. Before we decide how impossible, immoral and un-American it is to obey; and before each of us comes with his own one-hundred-and-one objections and exceptions, let us try to see what God is after by placing what seems to be such unreasonable demands on us.

Actually, what He's after should be clear to us. He is out to crucify the rebel nature in each of us. That perverse, independent, self-willed nature does not die easily. But we must be honest and admit that *it would never die at all* if we lived only in cozy circumstances where everything went our way; where all rules and authorities were to our own liking.

According to Peter, God is not impressed with our performance when things are easy. He's not even impressed with our taking patiently the punishment for our sins (as I tried to do during my driving suspension). Remember what Peter said?

For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God.

What is acceptable with God? What is thankworthy with Him? To submit, even to unjust authorities. I agree that every self-righteous bone in our body protests such a course of action. It's positively un-American! It seems cowardly, impractical, unreasonable and unjust, at least to the carnal nature. But remember, God isn't out to please or appease our feelings of self-righteousness. He's out to crucify that carnal nature and bring us to the point where we can see how obedience to His authority is required, even when we don't approve of that particular authority. He is out to get unqualified obedience, and that requires suffering

for Jesus' sake.

## SUFFERING UNJUSTLY IS A PART OF OBEDIENCE

Don't forget that in laying such requirements upon us, Peter is really doing nothing more than reminding us of the full nature of our calling in Jesus Christ. Granted, it's not a part of the calling we like to be reminded of. We'd rather remember how we've been called to be saved, healed, delivered, baptized with power, blessed, prospered and protected; how we have been called to share the riches of our inheritance in Christ.

And we are indeed called to all those things. That's all true; but it's not *all* the truth. Peter also says we are called to suffer as Christ suffered, reminding us that as Christ's disciples we are not to defend ourselves because He didn't; we are not to lash out at unjust authority over us because He didn't. Rather, we are to commit ourselves and our cause to God, who judges all things righteously, because that's what Jesus did.

Our tendency to take matters into our own hands when things don't go to suit us; our tendency to submit to authority only insofar as we agree with it (which in truth is no submission at all!) is really an indication of how little faith and trust we have in God. We act as if He doesn't know or care about what we are enduring. We refuse to acknowledge that His purposes are being worked out in us when we are placed in situations where "for conscience toward God" we must "endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

*The measure of our submission to God, then, is not expressed when we submit to just authority, but when we submit to unjust authority.*

If we insist on judging for ourselves which authorities are good and which are evil; which we shall obey and which we shall not obey, we become partakers in the original sin of Adam and Eve, who forsook their primary responsibility to obey God and embraced Satan's rebellious way of the knowledge of good and evil.

Without realizing it, we are falling



prey to the spirit of rebellion and lawlessness which is sweeping our world. In describing the last days, Jesus predicted that just such a fate awaited many Christians.

And because iniquity [rebellion and lawlessness] shall abound, the love [agape] of many [Christians] shall wax cold (Matt. 24:12).

Christians shall lose their love for God because they have become caught up in a spirit of rebellion. No wonder Satan continually goads us to rebel against authority; the result serves his purposes more effectively than more obvious forms of sin.

Today, God is persistently calling our attention to the principle of obedience to authority to show us how far we have fallen from the place of genuine obedience. I agree with Derek Prince who has wryly commented, "Most of God's children act like unruly brats." By revealing in His Word the many levels of authority to which we are to submit, God is showing us that however we may have already met Him, few of us have fully met Him as the Source of all authority. But once we see this truth and yield to it, we will have little difficulty in yielding to authority, wherever we find it.

### IT TAKES THE GRACE OF GOD TO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY

To receive a revelation of the nature of authority would be terrifying except for one thing — God never reveals His will to us except He also makes available the grace to embrace it and fulfill it. By the strength of the natural man, submission to secular authority is impossible. But by grace, "all things are possible." While total success may yet seem beyond our achieving, thank God He hasn't called us to be successful; He's called us to be faithful. On that basis, let us suggest three practical steps toward complete submission to secular authority.

(1) *Cultivate a mental awareness that secular authorities are ordained of God.* They are there because He wants them there. They are there for our

good. Christians should know and believe some basic scriptures on authority (such as Romans 13:1 and 1 Peter 2:13-14) as surely as they know and believe John 3:16.

Practice recognizing secular authorities as "ministers of God." The President of the United States is a minister; congressmen are ministers, governors, state legislators, mayors, policemen, tax collectors and school teachers are all ministers of God. Not because they are honest or competent, but because the authority vested in them is from God. His authority makes them ministers.

Recognize all posted laws and regulations as representing the authority of God. Signs and rules like: "Speed limit 55mph," "No parking," "Yield right-of-way," "Keep off the grass," "No trespassing," "Do not write in this space."

(2) *Recognize that both submission and rebellion are essentially attitudes rather than acts.* Don't concentrate first on outward behavior. It's possible to do a lot of "obeying" with gritted teeth and a rebellious heart. Rather, believe God to change your attitude from one of rebellion to one of submission. Once heart attitude experiences transformation, many of the outward restrictions laid on us by authority no longer seem so formidable.

(3) *Trust God to change those authorities which are not right.* There are many unjust governments, officials, administrations, laws, rules, ordinances, and restrictions in our land. And God knows every last one of them. They exist with his permission to accomplish His purpose. As His purposes are served, they can and will be changed.

This does not mean we are not to work for improved justice and social betterment. There are legitimate Christian activities *provided we can engage in them by lawful means with a submissive spirit.* Nevertheless, the most significant contribution for any Christian wanting to strike a blow for justice may be to make certain in his own heart that he is not a rebel!

As we learn to submit and obey we

have the privilege of praying for God to change and adjust the authorities over us. "He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). Our responsibility as Christians is to live quietly and obediently under whatever secular authority is over us, even while we trust God to work His purpose in us.

### THE LORD COMMENDS THOSE WHO KNOW THEY ARE UNDER AUTHORITY

To receive the praise and commendation of the Lord, we need to learn what it is to be submitted to authority. Luke chapter 7 tells us about a man who came to Jesus for help. He was a man caught in the most rigid and brutal authoritative system in the world at that time — the Roman army. In that system he had learned the principle of authority well. And the conditioning of that system enabled him to rise to a faith greater than that of any man in Israel. When he sought Jesus for the healing of his servant, Jesus volunteered to come to his house and minister, but the centurion told him that wasn't necessary.

*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 (Luke 7:8).*

Because he was a man *under* authority he could recognize Jesus as one *having* authority. Therefore, he could say with confidence, "But say in a word, and my servant shall be healed."

Jesus' astonishing comment to those who were following him was, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

The centurion's submission to authority was not incidental to his great faith, it was central to it. Is it any wonder then, that the Lord seeks to bring each of us to that point where he can truthfully say, "I also, am a man set under authority." And this cannot be accomplished until we learn to live in proper submission to secular authority. ♣



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Changing History Through Prayer  
and Fasting — Derek Prince

Invisible Warfare — The Battle of  
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Call to Prayer and Fasting

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### NOVEMBER

Provision for the Body  
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Deception and Guidance  
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### DECEMBER: Best of New Wine '73

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Understanding Spiritual Authority  
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When God Answered  
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Thank You, Jesus  
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Imperfection Only Is Intolerant  
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Bob Mumford

The First Mile  
Derek Prince

A New Center  
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The Gospel of God's Government  
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Howard Coffey

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Edwin R. Jones

The Vulnerability of Leadership  
Mark O. Hatfield

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### FEBRUARY

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John M. Poole

The Sound of a Heart  
Donald Grey Barnhouse

Thou Shalt Not Steal  
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Orville Swindoll

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One City, One Church  
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### MARCH

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Charles Simpson

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Herbert J. Miles

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Richard Shelley Taylor

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### APRIL

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George D. Watson

These Two Shall Become One Flesh  
Dick and Lydia Key

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Facing the Past  
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### MAY

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from His Sheep  
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What A Sheep Can Expect  
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James L. Beall

From Adullum to Hebron  
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The Eternal Childhood of the Believer  
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### JUNE

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City Government — Can It Work?  
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H. L. Roush

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### JULY/AUGUST

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The First Commandment With Promise  
Esther Bristol

An Assignment in Amsterdam  
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### SEPTEMBER

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Charisma Chapel  
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Community in Delicate Balance  
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Learning a New Way to Live  
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### OCTOBER

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God's Holy Household  
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Nancy Clark

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Establishing the Kingdom  
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### NOVEMBER

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Gifts or Fruit?  
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The Mighty Stream of God  
Ralph Martin

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Expressions of Divine Life  
George D. Watson

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