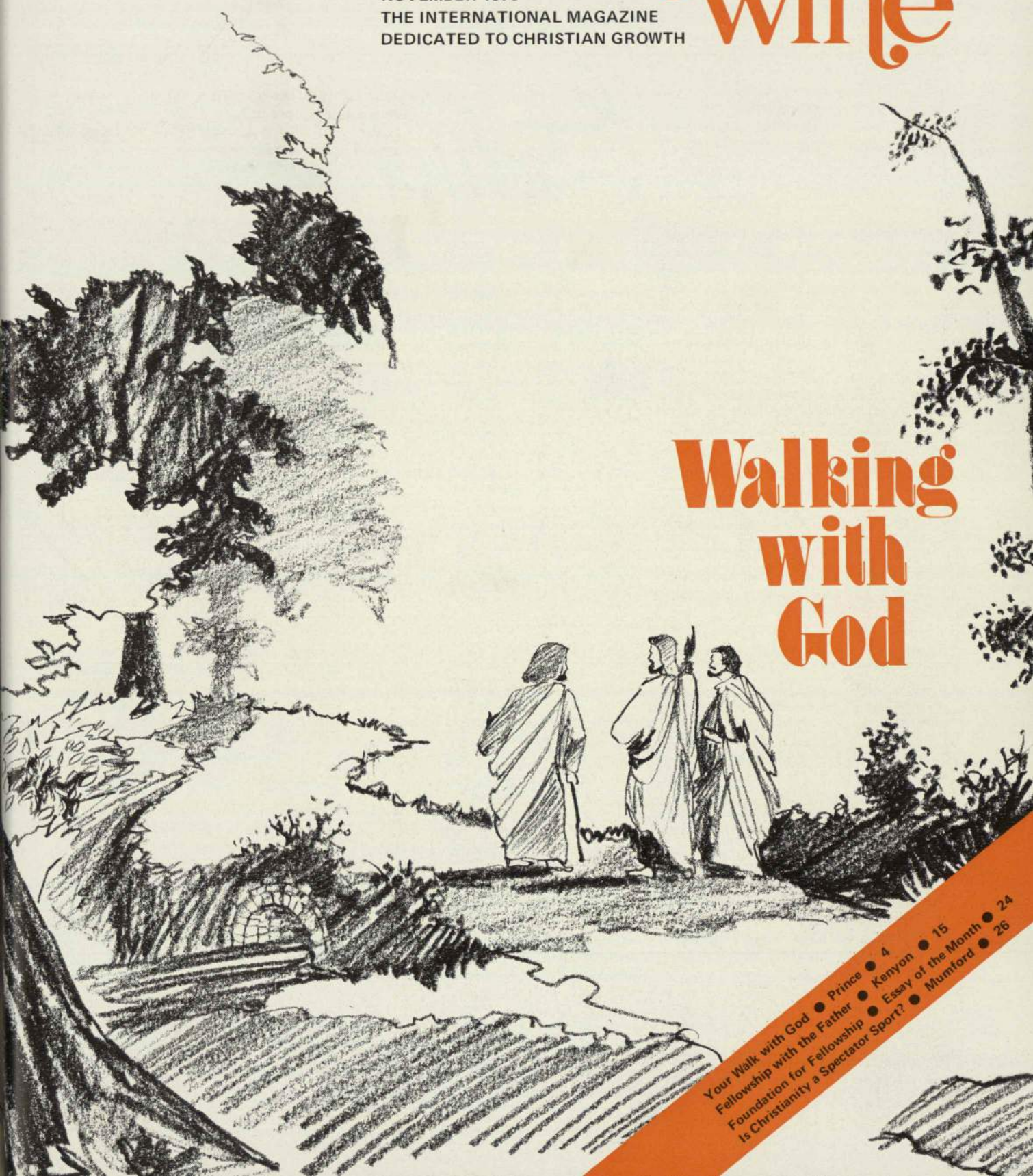




new wine

NOVEMBER 1975
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH



Walking with God

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I have, as many others, enjoyed the quality of teaching and spiritual insights presented in *New Wine*, but as of late, I have traveled across the country only to hear misunderstandings about your teachers.

It is apparent that the Lord God is doing a work in the Church universal, and for this work to be curtailed due to fears, bias and ignorance is very sad. We are all born of one Spirit and our different doctrines are in no way scriptural grounds for division! If our motives for fellowship are love and faith, and our basis, the Lord Jesus Christ, then we will become the people God desires us to be.

Eric Leaf
Evansville, Ind.

I am very much aware of a disturbance all over this nation among charismatic Christians concerning the differences of opinion of Christian Growth Ministries and other charismatic leaders over such issues as faith vs. presumption; healing and prosperity; woman's role in the Church; and submitted bodies.

My husband and I do travel considerably to speak and minister to FGBMFI and AGLOW groups and we find people in the process of choosing sides. We are praying and believing that charismatic Christians will not split into two or more camps as Satan is hoping and scheming.

Jo Jones
Indiana

Remove my name from your mailing list. I refuse to be bound by the bondage of the non-scriptural submission, covering, shepherdship and discipleship teachings you are putting forth. I believe in scriptural submission, covering of the blood of Jesus Christ (not man), the shepherdship of Jesus Christ (not man) and discipleship of Jesus Christ (not man).

Eugene May
Auburn, Ala.

Thank you for your *New Wine* ministry — it is revelatory. I have recently had some revelation on the subject of submission and obedience.

I have come to see that the concept of obedience and submission strikes at the very roots of pride and independence. Where pride has reigned we can expect deep opposition to the principles of submission, for pride fosters independence from other men and from God.

The arguments against submission run — "God gave me a brain to use," "I can't believe God wants me to automatically obey — what if my authority is wrong?" and that old standby, "I have a one-to-one relationship with God and I don't need anyone to

Letters to Editor

translate His will for me." But we are not alone, and we are surely not independent. If we insist on obeying only when we understand and are in agreement, we literally constrain God to our own paltry limitations. Whereas I cannot see ahead one minute, God has infinite understanding. This in a very real sense constitutes blind obedience, which is anathema to the proud.

My life is a monument of human weaknesses. In earnestly desiring the things of God I must prepare for change. Change is not easy, but I make my commitment in faith that God will hold up His end of the agreement. Therefore, I am prepared to submit even while in disagreement, faithfully trusting God to make my authority wise for me.

John E. Johnson
San Francisco, Ca.

ESCHATOLOGICAL NOTE MISSING

I greatly appreciate your fine magazine and am in deepest sympathy with all that appears in it. My only concern relates to what I have not yet seen in it.

The eschatological note is missing. I am not suggesting that *New Wine* should take a hard line on the order of future events or encourage a "hold-on-till-Jesus-comes" mentality. Jesus is already King. But the fact is, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the restoration of the Church to its original purity and power are end time events. You can't speak fully about the Bride of Christ without speaking of her blessed hope and her wedding day, however beautiful her engagement may be.

May I suggest that *New Wine* make room in its pages for a sane and balanced eschatological perspective.

Rev. Robert W. Mears
Laconia, N.H.

I found Jesus Christ in October of 1972 and walked in His light for about seven weeks. After that the wonder wore off and I started to run from God. I ran for about a year during which time I became heavily involved with the drug scene and one of my last attempts to find "another way" was to become a Buddhist.

On the first Friday of November 1973, I found myself tripping out in a parking lot with nothing else to try. I cried to Jesus from my heart and gave my life to Him. Now I know the peace and joy that comes from growing in His love.

During the time I was running from the Lord, a strange thing happened every month: *New Wine*. I would come home oppressed and stoned to find this crazy Christian magazine waiting for me. I didn't ever send a subscription so I didn't know why it kept coming, but there it was every month. A few months after I came back to Jesus I found out that a girl I knew had bought me a subscription and even had it renewed.

I just want to say thanks to the staff of *New Wine* and to the girl who "cared" enough about me to send this reminder every month.

William Radcliffe
El Paso, Tx.

PRESSING ON!

Your publication has been a great inspiration to me, as well as the flock I oversee. The Head of the Church has been showing us the same things that you teach. That couldn't be a coincidence with a continent separating us. We are with you — press on!

Pastor Robert Mueller
San Clemente, Cal.

We have enjoyed *New Wine* and its attempt to get at the heart of what the Lord is saying to the Body; yet, I feel lately a trend towards more legalism and restriction. I also feel that the articles are becoming more nebulous, abstract and self-consciously spiritual or religious. Perhaps more practical or testimonial articles would be beneficial.

Rick Dalbey
Beaverton, Ore.

Thank you, brothers, for your submission to God and to one another — for going into the land and returning with the evidential fruit. May He continue to bless and lead you.

Dean Nelson
Stanley, N.D.

Editorial

Just a month ago the Kingdom of God lost one of its greatest prayer warriors — Lydia Prince. The events of her life, recounted in the memorial service, revealed the countless people that had been touched by her life and her prayers. The question that emerged among some of us was: Who will fill the vacuum left by Lydia's passing?

When most people thought of Lydia, they thought of her prayer life. As Bob Mumford said of her, she seemed to have "special influence" with God. Although her death was a victory, it is also a loss to the Body of Christ. Her prayers will be missed.

The timing of the Lord is always perfect and unquestionable, and if Lydia has left a gap, it is because God's desire is that others in the Body of Christ now move into the prayer ministry that she so ably fulfilled.

Many of us who are in ministry have felt the impact of Lydia's prayers for us, and to a great degree the success of one's ministry for the Lord depends upon such prayers. We believe that Lydia's passing now will cause many others to make themselves available to follow her example. If so great an influence could be felt from the prayers of one woman, how great would be the impact of a number of prayer warriors. In these difficult times, the need for such prayer is more intense than ever.

We dedicate this issue of *New Wine* Magazine to Lydia's memory, and we issue the call to those in the Body of Christ who desire to inherit the "mantle" of prayer ministry that she carried and to wear it and exercise it faithfully, in order that God's purpose on the earth might be preserved and fulfilled in this generation.

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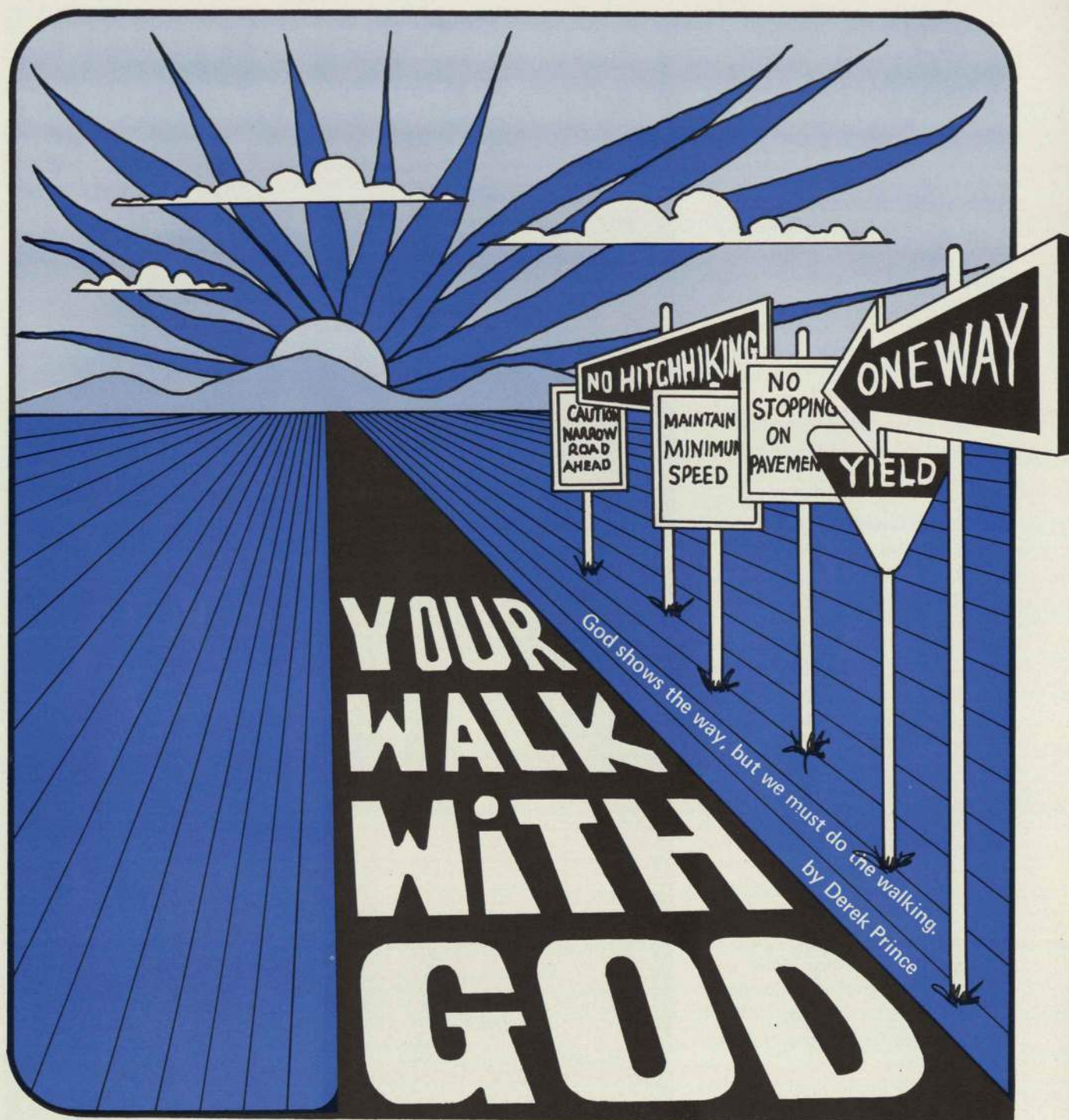
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Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. . . (Matt. 7:14).

Jesus here depicts the Christian life in two successive phases: first, a "strait gate" through which we must enter; second, a "narrow way" along which we must walk. The "gate" represents a single crisis experience — that which the Bible calls "being saved" or "being

born again." The "way" represents the new kind of life into which this crisis experience ushers us.

In effect, Jesus is warning us against trying to separate these two phases from one another. The only entrance into the "narrow way" is by the "strait gate." Without being "born again" we cannot even begin to lead the Christian life. On the other hand,

the purpose of entering through the "gate" is to walk in the "way." The fullness of "life" to which Jesus invites us comes not merely by entering the "gate," but by walking thereafter in the "way" to which the "gate" gives access.

It is most important that we do not view the Christian life as merely a static condition of "being saved" or

"being a Christian." In the early beginnings of the Church the word "Christianity" had not yet been coined. What we nowadays call "Christianity" was then referred to as "the Way." For instance, when Saul of Tarsus set out for Damascus, he "asked for letters . . . to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, . . . he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:2, NAS). Later, after Paul had preached for some time in Ephesus, two statements are made about the results: "Some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude . . .," and "There arose no small disturbance concerning the Way" (Acts 19:9,23, NAS). (For other instances where Christianity is described as "the Way," see Acts 22:4, 24:14,22, NAS.)

The same thought is presented in many other passages of Scripture. For instance, Paul said to the men of Athens, "In Him [God] we live and move and exist . . ." (Acts 17:28, NAS). If we "live," we will "move." Life is never static or motionless. It always implies growth, motion, development, progress. Proverbs 4:18 tells us, "But the path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." In this path of the Christian life we are continually moving forward to a fuller light. As we take each step along the path, the light becomes brighter. Yesterday's light is never enough for today. There is no room for standing still, much less for turning back. No matter how bright the past may have been, the future is brighter still.

Does this challenge to move continually forward along the Christian way sound difficult and demanding? Let me give you a word of blessed assurance. We are never asked to walk this path alone. The Lord Himself will be with us each step that we take. Under the Old Covenant He gave His people this solemn promise: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41:10). Under the

New Covenant the promise is confirmed to us by Christ Himself: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

CAN TWO WALK TOGETHER?

We must learn, then, to walk with God. This implies a continuing personal relationship with God. Amos 3:3 poses the question: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" By implication, the answer is "No." In order to walk with God, we must "agree" with Him.

By nature, however, we are not in agreement with God. On the contrary, Paul tells us in Romans 8:7 that "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The "carnal mind" denotes the thoughts and attitudes that are natural to all of us, before the grace of God begins to change us. These are in direct opposition to God, and no reconciliation is possible.

In Isaiah 55:8,9 God tells us plainly: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Furthermore, God will not change. In Malachi 3:6 He says, "For I am the Lord, I change not . . ."

Since God's ways and thoughts are quite different from ours, and since God will not change, there is only one possibility left: if we are to walk with God, it is we who must change. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts . . ." (Isa. 55:7). It is our ways and our thoughts that must be changed. This change requires a complete surrender and commitment of our whole being to God.

In the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul unfolds the complete provision of God for our redemption through faith in Christ. Then he opens chapter 12 with the words, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God . . ." What is implied by the "therefore"? It indicates the

response which is required of us in the light of all that God has done for us. What is this response? It is stated in the words that follow: ". . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The basic issue that Paul here deals with is that of ownership. As Christians, we can no longer claim to own ourselves. "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own. For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19,20, NAS). The "price" with which we have been bought is "the precious blood of Christ" (see 1 Pet. 1:18,19). Since God has bought us at such tremendous cost, we belong to Him, not to ourselves.

Although the legal right of ownership over our lives now belongs to God, He will not assert His right in opposition to our will. Rather, He waits until we see the logic of His claim and then voluntarily "present our bodies a living sacrifice." The word "living" points out the difference between the sacrifices of the Old Covenant and those of the New. Under the Old Covenant the bodies of the animals that were offered in sacrifice to God were killed. Under the New Covenant we offer our bodies to God still living. But in all other respects the handing over of our bodies to God is just as total and as final as it was with the animals offered under the Old Covenant.

This presenting of our bodies to God should be a definite, solemn transaction. We may make it in a prayer such as this: "Lord, in the light of the price that You paid to redeem me from sin, I see now that I no longer belong to myself but to You. I therefore now solemnly offer myself — my body and all that it contains — to You as a living sacrifice. From this moment

on, I ask You, and I trust You, to take complete ownership and control of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen."

THE RENEWING OF OUR MIND

Once we have thus acknowledged God's ownership of our lives, the way is opened for Him to make the needed changes in our ways and thoughts. We begin to experience the "renewing of our mind." Then, as our mind is renewed, we begin to "prove [to find out in experience] what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." We have already seen that our old, unrenewed mind "is enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7). God will never reveal His will for our lives to this mind which is at enmity with Him. But as our mind is progressively renewed and brought into agreement with God, we are enabled to perceive God's will and to walk in God's way.

The process of renewing our mind affects three main areas of our life: the *objectives* we pursue; the *motives* with which we pursue them; the *means* that we use to achieve them. By nature we are all basically self-centered. Each time we face a decision, we ask ourselves such questions as: How will this affect me? What will I get out of this? How can I achieve the result that I desire?

When we renounce control over our own lives and submit to the Lordship of Christ, all this begins to change. In Matthew 6:9-13 Jesus taught His disciples a pattern prayer which has become known as "the Lord's Prayer." In the opening section of this prayer there are two sentences that express God's ultimate objective for this earth: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." When we sincerely pray these words, we are saying in effect, "I accept the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth as the supreme objective to which my whole life should be directed, and I renounce any personal desire or ambition that would conflict with this objective."

At the end of the same prayer there is a phrase which defines what our *motive* should be: "For Thine is the

kingdom, and the power, and the glory" (Matt. 6:13). This last phrase provides the standard by which to test our motives: Am I doing this for my own glory, or for God's? In 1 Corinthians 10:31 Paul applies this standard even to such simple, everyday activities as eating and drinking: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Whatever I cannot do for God's glory, I am not free to do at all.

Once the questions of *objective* and *motive* are settled, we face the question of *means*: How can I live so as to promote God's Kingdom and God's glory? Scripture teaches, and our own experience confirms, that no effort or ability of our own is sufficient. We need some greater power. God's answer to this need is found in Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might, nor by power [not by natural strength or will power] but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The only power that will suffice is the power of the Holy Spirit.

This transition from self-reliance to dependence on the Holy Spirit is beautifully symbolized by Christian baptism. "Therefore we are buried with him [Christ] by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). First, we "bury" our own personal ambitions and self-centered motives. Then, we are raised up to "walk in newness of life" by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Here in Romans 6:4 Paul calls this power "the glory of the Father," but in Romans 1:4 he tells us explicitly that it was "the Spirit of holiness" or, in more normal terminology, "the Holy Spirit." Thus our baptism symbolizes a transition from self-seeking and self-reliance to seeking God's Kingdom and God's glory in dependence upon the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT

Early in human history we are presented with a picture of a man who learned how to walk with God: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was

not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). In this continuing walk Enoch developed such an intimacy with God that in the end it was more natural for him to maintain unbroken fellowship with God than to turn back to his own earthly home.

Hebrews 11:5,6 reveals the secret of Enoch's walk with God: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him . . ." The key word, repeated for emphasis, is "faith." Faith is the essential, basic requirement for a walk with God that pleases Him.

What is faith? Hebrews 11:1 tells us: "Now faith is the assurance [or underlying substance] of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (NAS). It is a spiritual "sense" by which we discern things that are not revealed to our natural senses. It relates us to two unseen realities: God Himself and God's word.

When God created Adam and placed him in the garden of Eden, he did not remain personally present with him the whole time to supervise his conduct, but He left with him the word that He had spoken: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it . . ." (Gen. 2:16,17). This word, spoken to Adam by God, was God's continuing representative with him. Adam related to God through His word. His attitude toward that word, was in fact, his attitude toward God Himself.

In bringing about the fall of Adam and Eve, Satan first undermined their confidence in God and His word (see Gen. 3:1-5). Then he appealed instead to that which their senses showed them. This is vividly brought out in Genesis 3:6: "When she [Eve] saw . . ." The word "saw" is decisive. Eve was more impressed by what she saw than by what God had said.

What did she see? ". . . that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be

desired to make one wise . . ." The tree as presented to her by Satan, appealed to two elements in Eve: her senses, and her desire to be equal with, and independent of, God. Under the pressure of this temptation she transferred her confidence from God and His unseen word to herself and her own senses. As a result, her fellowship with God was broken and she became the slave of her senses and of her desire for personal independence.

The Christian walk of faith reverses this process and thus undoes the effects of the fall. As Christians, Paul tells us, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). "Sight" here stands for sense knowledge generally. It is presented as the opposite of "faith." Faith renounces trust in the senses. Trust in the senses rejects faith. Thus each of us is faced with the question: Which is more real to me — God and His word, or my own soulish impressions and sense knowledge?

True faith clings unwaveringly to God and His word, rejecting the impressions of the senses whenever these disagree with God's word. The great scriptural pattern of this kind of faith is Abraham. Indeed, Abraham is called "the father of all them that believe," and we are challenged to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. 4:11,12). Paul's language here confirms what has already been said about the Christian life. It is not a static position, but a "walk" in which we continually progress by one step of faith after another.

A little further on, in Romans 4:17–21, Paul gives a specific example of Abraham's walking by faith. God had promised Abraham that he and Sarah would have a child who would become the ancestor of a great nation. Yet both of them reached an age where this was a physical impossibility, and the child had not come. Faced with this conflict between what God had promised and what his senses told him about his body and that of Sarah, Abraham chose to hold on to God's promise, rather than be limited by the physical condition of himself and Sarah. "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 was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20,21).

In this walk of faith, we are simultaneously in contact with two worlds. Through our senses we are in contact with the natural, physical world around us; through our faith we are in contact with the unseen, eternal world of God and His word. In 2 Corinthians 4:18 Paul sets these two worlds in contrast. He says that God's purposes are worked out in our lives, even through affliction, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." There is a deliberate paradox in the words which Paul here uses. How can we *look at* things which are not seen? The answer is: *by faith*. Faith is the spiritual "sense" by which we discern the realities of the unseen, eternal world.

It is important to evaluate correctly the evidence of our senses. God does not ask us to close our eyes and ears and walk about as though the physical, material world around us does not exist. Faith is not mysticism. We do not question the *reality* of what our senses reveal, but we do question its *finality*. Abraham is the perfect example of this. His senses told him that he was physically incapable of begetting a child. Yet God had promised him a son. Abraham did not pretend that what his senses revealed to him about his own body was not *real*. He simply refused to accept it as *final*. Where God's word promised him one thing and his senses told him another, he clung on tenaciously to God's promise, without letting his senses cause him to doubt that promise. Finally, after his faith had been tested, the physical condition of his body was brought into line with what God had promised, and he became actually, physically capable of begetting a child.

Faith in turn is closely related to humility. In Romans 3:27 Paul tells us that "boasting . . . is excluded . . .

by the law of faith." In Habakkuk 2:4 boastful self-confidence and humble faith are set forth as opposites that mutually exclude each other: "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." The "soul which is lifted up" describes the person who trusts in his own natural ability and sense knowledge. The "just" who "lives by his faith" is the person who, like Abraham, renounces confidence in his own ability and what his senses reveal, choosing rather to trust in the unseen, but eternal realities of God and His word.

In Micah 6:8 humility is presented as a *decision* which we are required to make in order to walk with God: "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love kindness and mercy, and to humble yourself and walk humbly with your God?" (Amplified). The phrase, "humble yourself," which accurately reflects the original Hebrew, indicates a decision which each of us needs to make: "Lord, I renounce confidence in my own ability and sense knowledge; I choose rather to trust in You and in Your word. By Your grace I will walk by faith, not by sight." This attitude of self-humbling dependence upon God opens the way for a close, continuing walk with Him.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Every close relationship between two persons requires regular, two-way communication between them. Without this, such a relationship cannot last. Marriage is a good example. A man and a woman may enter into marriage with a real love for each other and a sincere desire to make their marriage a success. But if they do not establish and maintain regular, free communication between themselves, their marriage will soon begin to break down. The same is true of the Christian's relationship to God. Without regular, open, two-way communication, it will never succeed. We must learn both to speak regularly to God and to let God speak regularly to us.

How does God speak to us? Primarily through His written Word — the Bible. The Bible is the basis of all that God has to say generally to all believers. Beyond this, God has specific things which He wishes to say to each of us individually. But we have no right to expect to hear from God in a special, individual way, if we do not carefully search out all that God has to say to all of us generally in the Bible. The Bible is both the basis of all true communication from God and the standard by which any other form of communication must be tested. However, merely reading the Bible by itself is not sufficient. In 2 Corinthians 3:6 Paul says, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Apart from the Holy Spirit, all that we see in front of our eyes on the pages of the Bible is "dead letters." But when these letters become the channel of the Holy Spirit, we no longer merely *see* them. We *hear* them in our heart as God's own voice, speaking to us directly and personally.

Many years ago I proved this dramatically in my own experience. As a professional philosopher, I set out to study the Bible in the same abstract, analytical way that I would have studied any work of philosophy. I found it to be a remote, dreary, unintelligible book. Only a sense of duty made me continue reading. Then, after about nine months, God revealed Jesus to me personally as the Son of God and filled me with the Holy Spirit. Next day when I opened my Bible once more to continue reading, I was amazed at the change. It was just as though there were only two persons in the universe — God and myself. Every word that I read was God speaking to me personally. This is how every Christian should read his Bible.

In order to hear the Holy Spirit speak to us through the Bible, there are certain important conditions that we have to fulfil.

First, we have to put away any wrong attitudes or relationships. James says, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word . . ." (James 1:21). "Filthiness" could be defined as unclean, unbridled

imaginings; "naughtiness" is the tendency to "argue" with God or to "answer back." It is the opposite of meekness. In a similar vein, Peter says, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hyprocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings . . . desire the sincere milk of the word . . ." (1 Pet. 2:1,2). Here, then, is a list of wrong attitudes that must be dealt with before we can hear God speak to us through the Bible as we should.

The laying aside of such wrong attitudes as these will enable us to approach the Bible with a meek, teachable spirit. In Mark 10:14,15 Jesus sets up a little child as a pattern of how to receive the truth of God's Kingdom. The essential feature of a child's response which Jesus here emphasizes is teachableness — an open willingness to learn, without prejudice or preconception. In Psalm 25:5 David utters a prayer that could well be a pattern for all of us as we open our Bibles: "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." The word "wait" suggests an attitude of quiet, patient expectancy. Hearing from God through His Word is so important that it demands a high place in the order of our personal priorities.

This is also well expressed in the prayer of another great man of God, Moses: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). In other words, Moses says, help us to arrange our activities and commitments each day so as to leave the time that is needed for hearing from God and receiving the true wisdom which comes only from Him. "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding" (Prov. 2:6).

However, it is not enough merely to "hear" God's word. James warns us, "But be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). He goes on to say that hearing God's word is like looking in a mirror. It shows us the areas in our lives which are not pleasing to God. But we only benefit from this practically when we make the

changes or adjustments which the mirror indicates to be needed. In John 7:17 Jesus gives us a promise which is the key to understanding scriptural doctrine: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God . . ." Knowledge of doctrine is granted only to those who are willing to do what they are taught. Obedience leads us on to further truth, but disobedience shuts off the truth and turns us aside into error.

Reading the Bible in this way we hear God's voice. But this is only one half of our communication with Him. The other half consists in prayer. In the Song of Solomon the bridegroom says to the bride: "Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely" (Song of Sol. 2:14). This expresses the attitude of Christ toward His believing people: He longs to hear our voice and to have intimate personal communion with us. As we come to God in prayer, we always need to bear in mind that He is not indifferent or inaccessible. On the contrary, He loves to hear and to answer our prayers.

"Prayer" includes much more than mere "petition" — that is, a list of requests that we present to God. If we look again at the pattern of "the Lord's Prayer," we see that the first half of this prayer serves to establish us in a right attitude toward God. Only after this are we encouraged to present our petitions. After all, Jesus reminds us, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:8). What matters in prayer is not so much to inform God of needs which He already knows, as to establish such a relationship with Him that we are confident of His supplying our needs.

If we depend merely on our own ability, none of us can pray as we should. Knowing this, God has made available to us the help that we need in prayer through the same Person whom He has appointed to interpret the Bible for us — the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8:26,27 Paul explains the part that the Holy Spirit plays in our prayers:

IN MEMORIAM

LYDIA PRINCE

(March 8, 1890 — October 5, 1975)

New Wine Magazine takes this opportunity to inform its readers of the passing of a great servant of God. On October 5 at 2:25 P.M., Lydia Prince went to be with her Lord Jesus Christ.

She was born in Denmark in 1890, and became a school teacher and a pioneer in the field of Home Economics. In 1926 Christ appeared to her in a vision and baptized her in the Holy Spirit. In 1928, at the age of 38, God called her to Jerusalem and led her to open a home for neglected children. During the next 20 years she cared for over 70 children, eight of whom remained with her as her adopted daughters. In 1943, Lydia met Derek Prince in Palestine, and they were married on February 16, 1946 in Jerusalem, where they lived until 1948, continuing their ministry in spite of the unrest and fighting that accompanied the birth of the State of Israel.

After pastoring in England from 1949 to 1956, Derek and Lydia left to do educational mission work in Kenya, and there in 1958, while Lydia was teaching Home Economics to African girls, they adopted an African baby girl. From Kenya, they moved to Canada, immigrated to the United States, and moved to Ft. Lauderdale in 1968 to become involved in the development of the Body of Christ there. In spite of physical difficulties which resulted from a minor stroke in 1973, Lydia continued as she had faithfully done for thirty years, to travel and minister with Derek, even on trips to England, New Zealand, Israel, Denmark, Sweden, and lastly to Jamaica.

At 4:00 A.M. on October 5, 1975 Lydia was unexpectedly admitted to the hospital, and later that afternoon, after praying for each member of her family and speaking with those gathered around her bed, she passed triumphantly into the presence of God. Just two days after her death, the book containing her life story, *Appointment in Jerusalem*, arrived from the publisher, and through this moving book, the words of Hebrews 11:4 are aptly fulfilled: "... she being dead yet speaketh."

At this time, *New Wine Magazine* wishes to give glory to God and honor to Lydia Prince, who faithfully served her Lord for 50 years, touching countless lives with the power and love of Jesus Christ.

(Continued from page 8)

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Paul speaks here of "infirmities." In this context he is not referring to any form of physical sickness, but rather to a weakness inherent in our carnal nature. This weakness is expressed in two ways. At times we know we ought to pray, but we do not know *what* to pray for. At other times we know what to pray for, but we do not know *how* to pray for it. According to our particular situation, the Holy Spirit supplies us with the help that we need, showing us both *how* to pray and *what* to pray for. The only acceptable prayer that we can offer to God is one which He Himself first gives us through the Holy Spirit.

LED BY THE SPIRIT

Our dependence upon the Holy Spirit goes further still. It is not limited just to understanding the Bible or knowing how to pray. The Holy Spirit is God's appointed guide to lead us in every phase of our Christian life. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Thus we find ourselves in a double relationship to the Holy Spirit, corresponding to the double figure of the "gate" and the "way" referred to at the beginning of this article. In order to *become* God's sons, we must be *born* of the Holy Spirit (see John 1:12,13; 3:1-8). This is entering the "gate." Thereafter, in order to *live* as God's sons, we must be *led* by the Holy Spirit. This is walking in the "way."

A subtle temptation which often confronts us after we have entered the gate of the new birth, is to substitute a set of religious rules for the personal guidance of the Holy Spirit. "If I pray and read my Bible an hour every day,"

we say to ourselves, "and if I attend church and pay my tithes regularly — and if I avoid certain forms of pleasure or entertainment — then I will lead a successful Christian life." But it does not work! Rules such as these — and as many more as we wish to add — may all be very good and desirable, but they are no substitute for the personal fellowship and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, by putting our trust in religious rules, we are actually dishonoring the Holy Spirit. If rules would do all that is needed, why should God give us His Holy Spirit? This is the mistake that the Galatians were making when Paul wrote to them, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). The work which the Holy Spirit begins in our lives He alone can complete.

Confronted by this need to be led by the Holy Spirit, Christians often respond, "But how can I be sure that it really is the Holy Spirit who is leading me? How can I recognize His

voice?" At times I meet this question by another question: "If the phone rings and I answer it, how do I know it is my wife at the other end? How do I recognize her voice?" The answer of course is that I recognize my wife's voice because I know my wife. Intimate acquaintance with my wife makes it easy for me to recognize her voice.

The same applies in our relationship with the Holy Spirit. In order to recognize the Spirit's voice, we must cultivate an intimate acquaintance with the Spirit Himself. Many Christians do not appreciate the *personality* of the Holy Spirit. They realize that God the Father is a person and that Christ the Son is a person, but they do not see that the same is true of the Spirit. Yet He is just as much a person as the Father and the Son. We need to know Him in the same direct personal way that we know the Father and the Son.

The better we come to know the Holy Spirit, the more clearly we will hear His voice and recognize His various forms of guidance. When a married couple have lived together long enough, they develop ways to communicate with each other that do not require expression in words. A silence, a frown, a gentle squeeze, a special look — these convey more than whole sentences could do. The same can happen in our relationship with the Holy Spirit. He does not always give verbal commands. He has various ways to influence or direct us: an inner check of warning; a silence of disapproval; a warm glow of encouragement; a nudge that prompts us to unpremeditated action. The more sensitive we become to the Holy Spirit's leading the better we are able to walk in the world with peace and assurance as true sons of God.

RIGHT AND WRONG FELLOWSHIP

The theme which has been emphasized throughout this article is the personal relationship of each believer to God. However, none of us lives his life merely in relation to God, isolated from all association with man. Our

Christian testimony requires that we be rightly related not only to God, but also to our fellow men. This is well symbolized by the two beams which together make up the cross. The vertical beam speaks of our relationship to God; the horizontal beam speaks of our relationship to man. The position of each beam affects that of the other. We cannot be rightly related to God, and at the same time wrongly related to our fellow men.

Walking in the light with God has two consequences, which are described in 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The first consequence is that "we have fellowship one with another" — that is, with all our fellow believers who are also walking in the light. The second consequence is that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses" and protects us from the defilement of sin.

Thus fellowship with our fellow believers is vitally important for two reasons. First, it is the evidence that we are walking in the light. Second, the blood of Jesus Christ only protects us while we are in fellowship. We may sum it up this way: If we are out of fellowship, we are out of the light; and if we are out of the light, the blood no longer protects us. Therefore we dare not neglect or omit fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Hebrews 10:24,25 the writer warns us that as the twilight of the present age deepens, our need for regular fellowship with each other will become increasingly urgent: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Surely these words apply to the time in which we are now living!

In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Paul points out a further, negative consequence of having fellowship with God and our fellow believers: we can no longer have the same sort of fellowship with unbelievers.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty (NAS).

The "separation" from unbelievers which Paul here speaks of is not primarily *physical*. We may find ourselves side by side with unbelievers every day — in our home, or our place of employment, or some other activity of normal life. In such situations our Christian testimony requires us to be friendly, courteous, helpful. But we are not free to share with unbelievers in things which are morally or spiritually impure or dishonoring to Christ. In this realm we must not "touch what is unclean." If we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will always warn us of these defiling contacts and show us how to protect ourselves from them.

However, the surest protection against wrong fellowship is right fellowship. As God's children, we are heirs to innumerable joys and blessings of which the world knows nothing. In fact, Paul tells us that our Father God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). As we regularly share these blessings with the rest of God's family, our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are no longer attracted by the tawdry, impure pleasures of a world that is walking in darkness.

WHAT IF WE STUMBLE?

Suppose that we stumble in our Christian walk — and even fall! Does that mean that we have failed and

there is nothing we can do about it? Certainly not! Here are words of encouragement from David: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand" (Ps. 37:23,24).

David wrote these words from personal experience. He knew what it was to fall. At one period he committed adultery with the wife of a friend; and then, to cover his guilt, he procured the death of the man whose wife he had seduced. For a time he tried to keep his sin hidden, but God in His mercy brought it all out into the light through the ministry of the prophet Nathan. Through confession and repentance David was finally forgiven and restored. (See 2 Samuel, chapters 11 and 12.)

The physical and emotional agony that David went through before he was willing to confess his sin is vividly described in Psalm 32:3-5:

When I kept silent about my sin,
my body wasted away through my

groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever-heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to Thee, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"; And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin (NAS).

Thank God for that last phrase, "Thou didst forgive . . .!" Never let the devil persuade you that you have gone too far or that your sin is too grievous for God to forgive. Remember, the devil is "the accuser" of all Christians (see Rev. 12:10). His aim is to keep us feeling guilty, unworthy, defeated. But God has made provision for our full forgiveness and restoration.

God's double provision for sin in the life of the believer is unfolded in 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write we unto you that ye sin not . . ." This is the first part of the provision, "that ye sin not." Through faith in God's grace and power it is possible for us to live free from the

dominion of sin (see Rom. 6:1-14).

However, John continues: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous . . ." This is the second part of God's provision: if we do commit sin, we need only turn in repentance and humility to our advocate, Jesus Christ. He will take up our case with God the Father and obtain for us complete forgiveness and cleansing. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Thus forgiven and cleansed, we can start out on our Christian walk once more without any lingering sense of guilt or unworthiness, conscious not so much of our faith as of God's faithfulness.

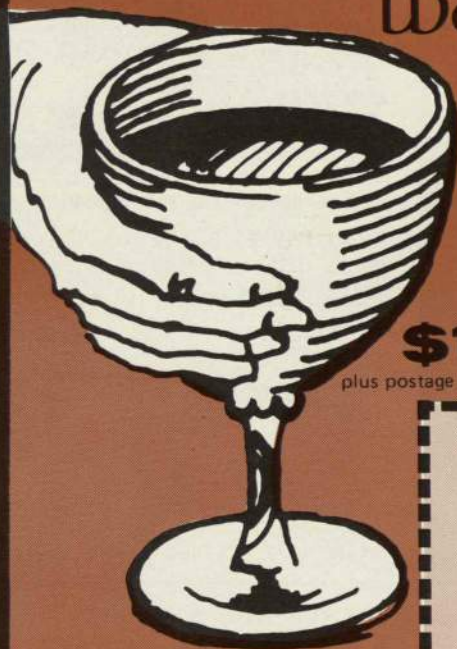
For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:6, NAS).

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass (1 Thess. 4:24, NAS). ▼

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ECHOES OF THE SPIRIT

A report on the recent National Men's Shepherds Conference in Kansas City.

Kansas City may never be the same again. The arrival of over 4,500 participants in the September 23-26 National Men's Shepherds Conference prompted its share of raised eyebrows and quizzical looks. Faced with a barrage of Shepherds Conference name tags, merchants in the downtown convention area began to wonder why a shepherd would be wearing a business suit, or stranger still, a clerical collar. Undoubtedly, they wondered why sheep raisers would choose (of all places!) Kansas City, one of the beef capitals of the United States, for their annual convention. And what aspect of sheep tending would be so exciting as to prompt these conventioners to voice an enthusiastic, "Praise the Lord," or "Glory to God?" Either sheep tending had changed radically over the years, or these "shepherds" were caretakers of something other than the wooly, bleating creatures

normally found in farm pastures.

What the employees of hotels, restaurants, and shops surrounding Kansas City Municipal Auditorium soon realized was that these "shepherds" were Christian leaders from all over the world who had gathered to consider the principles involved in leading and caring for God's people. All phases of Christianity were represented: Baptists, Presbyterians, Catholics, Messianic Jews, non-denominationalists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, . . . on and on.

Most of those who came were well aware that "shepherd" is a controversial term in Christian circles today. No doubt, some conference registrants came with reservations or disagreements concerning the principles under consideration. Others were coming simply to find out what all the commotion was about. But the majority of men came believing that God



would speak to the issue in this momentous conference and make known His direction to the leaders who gathered to seek Him. And that He did.

THE BEGINNING VISION

Larry Christenson, who welcomed the assembly, set the tone for the entire conference by sharing a vision received by a woman in his congregation. In the vision, she had seen logs of different varieties floating down a river, presumably drifting toward a sawmill. At a narrow place in the river, the logs were forced together, creating a log jam which interrupted their journey. The interpretation, as Larry

shared it, was that the various logs represented all the diverse Christian groups and denominations flowing in the river of God's purpose. The log jam represented the present controversy over discipleship, and realizing this in her vision, the woman was moved to ask, "Lord, what should be done about the log jam?"

The accepted method for dispersing log jams is by blasting them with dynamite, which splinters and destroys



Steve Clark (Wednesday morning): "How to Exercise Authority": Relating the use of authority practically to its use in a family setting, Steve emphasized that authority means *responsibility* for people, and is best exercised through practical teaching, honest communication and correction, and helpful training within the confines of a love relationship.

In the Wednesday afternoon panel discussion, the questions centered on



many valuable logs. And in the vision, it seemed that perhaps just such an explosion of radical confrontation in the midst of the "logs" might be necessary to resolve the controversy over discipleship.

But instead of blasting, God's reply and His solution to the question of the log jam came with these words: "*Pray for the level of the river to rise.*"

In other words, rather than letting controversy blast us into increased sectarianism, we were to pray for a higher tide of Christian love, that we might make room for one another in the stream of God's purpose for His Church.

With this vision, received with joy among those gathered at the confer-

ence, came the realization that God had no intention of letting His Body be split, but rather that His Spirit, in even greater measure, would unite and strengthen its various members.

With the stage thus set for teaching, the themes of unity, authority, covenant love and mutual acceptance began to pervade every aspect of the conference. As the rich teaching and anointed worship poured forth, and as love and fellowship immersed the sessions, it became evident that God's work on the log jam had begun in Kansas City.

CONFERENCE EVENTS

Here briefly is an itemized summary of the events and messages of the Kansas City conference.

Bob Mumford (Tuesday evening): "God's Purpose with His People Today": A look at God's intention and method in establishing His Kingdom in the earth. God's purpose is to have a mature people to call His own, who will be able to stand in the midst of a world that is being shaken. Bob ended his message by leading all the men in a verbal declaration of faithfulness to God's purpose and to each other.

Charles Simpson (Wednesday morning): "The Need for Shepherds": A very practical message stressing that people need to be cared for with genuine love, concern, and compassion, with clear guidelines to the way true shepherds best fulfill that need. Included in this message was an exhortation for all shepherds to honor and work together with other men who were pastoring God's people.



some of the controversial points of discipleship, with a number of practical questions concerning how to shepherd a flock.

Kevin Ranaghan (Wednesday evening): "Covenant Love": An in-depth scriptural study, beginning with Psalm 89, of God's faithfulness and covenant love in action in our lives.

John Poole (Thursday morning): "How Shepherds Relate in a Local Body": John described the local assembly as the focal point of what God does, since it is where spiritual principles are practically worked out. He spoke in definitive terms of the goals for a local body and the necessity for a plurality of leadership.

Don Basham (Thursday morning):

"How Ministries Relate Beyond the Local Body": Dealing with the controversial issue of trans-local authority, Don provided scriptural validations of trans-local authority, and then suggested some reasons for and solutions to the present problems in this realm. Through trans-local relationships, God is building a "network" of responsible relationships across the entire Body of Christ which will be strong enough to contain and sustain the purposes of God as He works to restore and unite His people.

On Thursday afternoon, each of the major denominations represented in the conference met in their particular groups to evaluate the significance of discipleship and to share among themselves what God was doing in their denomination. When spokesmen for each group reported back to the assembly, almost all expressed confidence in the principles taught at the conference, and an eagerness to contribute to the unity and ongoing function of the Body of Christ.

Derek Prince (Thursday evening): "Vision of the Completed Body": Derek gave a presentation of God's desire and plan for the Body of Christ to be glorious, holy, and without blemish, perfectly united by joints and ligaments of covenant love, maintaining a diversity of gifts and ministries in healthy balance.

Ralph Martin (Friday morning): "The Church: A Counter Culture": Beginning with an exciting account of the movement of the Holy Spirit among Catholic clergy and laymen, Ralph detailed some of the grave problems facing our American culture. As with the Church in Acts, God desires that the Body of Christ offer an alternative to the world system, speaking to our society and ministering to one another as a community of love.

THE FINAL SESSION

The climax of the conference came Friday night at the last session. As praise and worship poured forth with increasing and deepening quality, the presence of God filled the entire audi-

torium. As the worship heightened, the word of the Lord came forth in a scriptural exhortation from Joshua 5:13-15, the story of Joshua's encounter with the Captain of the Lord's host. When His command to Joshua was read, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy," all present simultaneously removed their shoes, moving even further into worship. Next, as prophecy came forth directing the men to bow down in the presence of God, 4,500 men went prostrate before the Lord, initiating an awesome period of deep intercession. At intervals throughout the worship, intercessory prayer was offered for the



government, for God's sovereign movement in America, and for the realization of maturity in the Body of Christ throughout the world.

Against this backdrop of worship, Ern Baxter came forward to speak on the theme, "Thy Kingdom Come." As Ern portrayed the majesty and Lordship of Christ throughout eternity, and the inevitability of Jesus' victory, both now and at the close of the age, the men repeatedly came to their feet in spontaneous worship, acknowledging the King of Kings and rejoicing at the end result of Jesus' Lordship, the establishment of His Kingdom by His supreme authority.

At the close of his message, Ern instructed the gathering to greet each

other, embracing and praying for one another in a spirit of love. As his request was carried out all over the auditorium, the Spirit of God moved among the men, breaking down barriers, dissolving suspicions, and healing relationships.

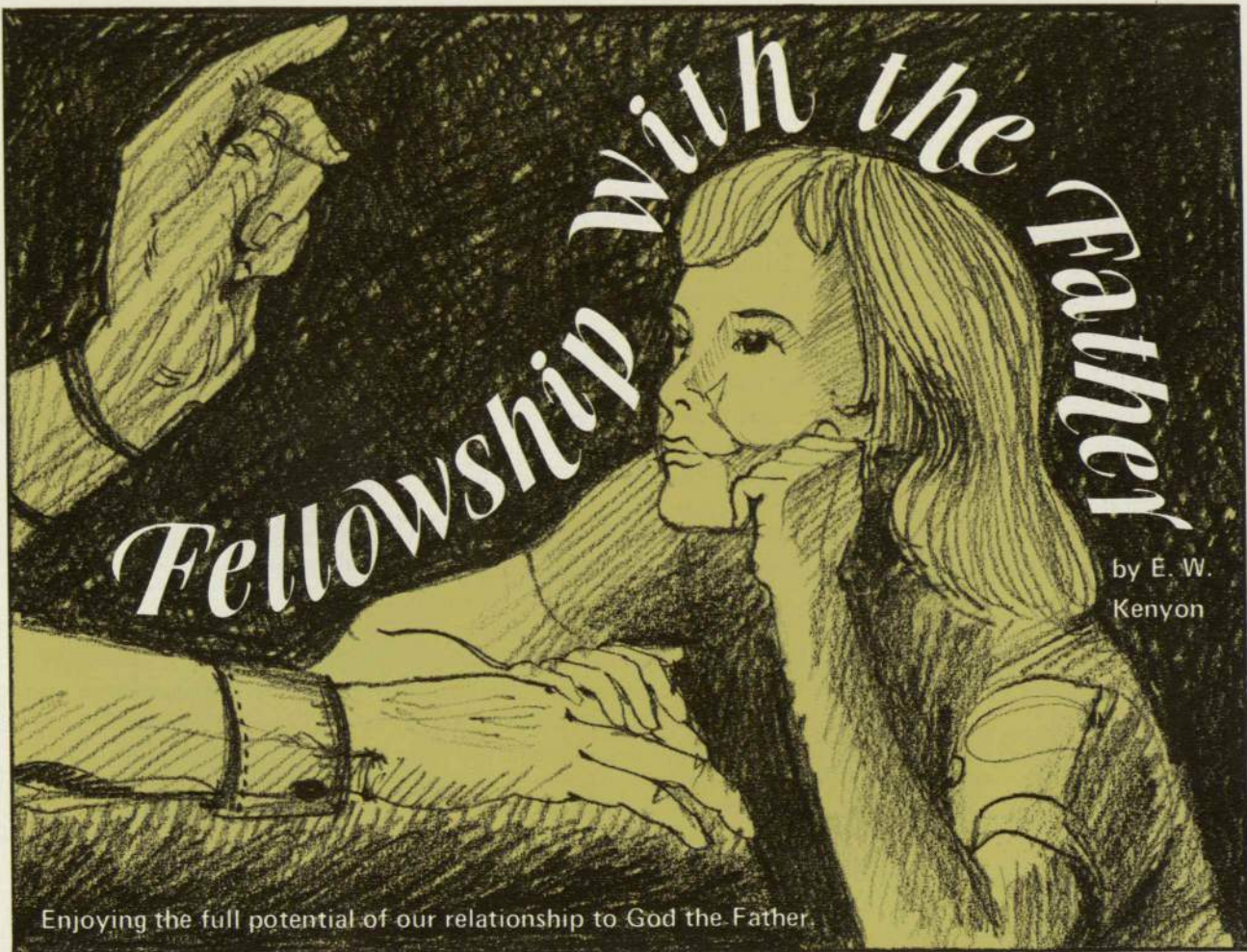
And that was how the conference ended — with brothers in Christ affirming and blessing one another, pledging love and faithfulness, leaving the auditorium united in the love of Jesus Christ.

A FRESH VISION

More could be said concerning the powerful prophetic utterances at each of the meetings, the quality of excellence in the worship, the high degree of unity in the leadership of the conference and in the meetings, and the richness of fellowship among the 4,500. Of the fellowship and openness, Ern Baxter observed, "We seemed to be witnessing God's kind of ecumenism, which is first that of the Holy Spirit, and then of 'the faith.'"

It is too soon to project the long-range effects of the conference, but the more immediate results were obvious: an increase in understanding, a lessening of suspicions, a widening of acceptance among Christian brothers, and a deepening commitment to the purposes of God. Don Basham stated one of the benefits he could foresee: "Distribution of the conference messages will allay many of the suspicions of people who have been subjected to grossly distorted views of discipleship and shepherding."

Whatever the ultimate results, one thing is evident: God chose September 23rd through 26th in Kansas City, Missouri as His appointed time to instill in 4,500 Christian leaders a fresh vision of the Kingdom of God, and of the Body of Christ, joined together by covenant love, functioning in a balance of diversity and authority. May the same cry that was formed on the lips of the shepherds who gathered in Kansas City be transported into the hearts of all those who seek Jesus' Lordship: "Thy Kingdom Come." ♣



*A transcription of a meaningful chapter of the book, **In His Presence** – (chapter 7, Relationship and Fellowship).*

We have found that sonship without fellowship would neither satisfy the heart of the Father nor the heart of His Child.

Fellowship must be based upon absolutely sure grounds so the child may know that he can go into the Father's presence with the same freedom that your child enters your presence.

It must not be based upon grounds of pity or sufferance, but on the ground of love's own relationship.

The old idea of prayer doesn't fit into this new unveiling of love's ground work in redemption.

The Father is love, and He has given us His love nature, so fellowship is as

natural as breathing.

The Word teaches us how to maintain our fellowship and how to regain it if we should lose it.

Fellowship with the Father is the very heart of a prayer life.

There can be no vigorous faith exercised without a rich fellowship existing between the two.

We may know that we are His children. We may know our legal rights, but if our fellowship has been broken it shatters our faith, and fills us with fear and dread.

Then maintaining our fellowship is one of the most important facts of this spiritual life.

RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

There are two great objectives in Redemption. The first is relationship. God is working to the end that man may legally become His child, a par-

taker of His very nature, so that he will be a genuine heir and joint-heir with Jesus.

The second objective is to restore to man his lost Fellowship.

This can only come as Righteousness is restored to him. Job 33:26: "He restoreth unto man his righteousness."

There can be no fellowship unless man can stand in the presence of God the Father without the consciousness of guilt, of sin, or of inferiority.

There can be no fellowship of the type that the Father craves unless man is utterly free from sin consciousness and free from the fear of Satan's dominion.

So the whole Redemptive processes have been to the end that He might have children, and that these children should live in the closest fellowship of love and freedom with Himself.

Sonship, then, must be based upon

legal grounds. There must be no question as to man's legal standing in the family of God.

The sin problem must be settled on legal grounds so that God will have a perfect right to impart to man His own nature, thereby making this man an absolute New Creation.

The sin in his nature must be driven out by the nature of God coming in.

His spirit must be in perfect harmony with the Father. Man is a spirit. The part of man that had to be recreated was the spirit of man.

His mind is renewed and his body brought into subjection to the Word.

That constitutes the first phase of a perfect Redemption.

Man must become an actual child of God, as truly as was Jesus in His earth walk.

This can only come by a re-birth of his spirit, a real New Creation of which Jesus speaks in Jn. 3:3-8.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above."

Jas. 1:18 tells us that we are begotten of the will of the Father. "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

Two facts are shown here: We are born of His will. We are born of His Word. It is all of God.

Eph. 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

That New Creation is all of God, wrought through the Word and of the Holy Spirit.

It is a God-planned and a God-executed relationship.

That New Creation is all of God. Man is actually a child of God, as that boy is a child of that man and woman.

A RENEWED MIND

As soon as he is Recreated, the

Father begins the beautiful process of Renewing his mind.

Rom. 12:2: "And be not fashioned according to this age: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

That word "transformed" comes from the same Greek word from which the word "transfigured" comes in speaking of Jesus' transfiguration on the Mount.

The renewing of the mind will be a transfiguration of our minds.

No one can overestimate this wonderful fact.

These minds of ours have been dominated by the Senses, so that all the knowledge that we have has been Sense Knowledge.

This mind is going to be renewed by the Spirit, and by our meditation in the Word and practicing of the Word, until our mind is in perfect fellowship with our recreated spirit and with the Word.

Few believers have a renewed mind.

Consequently, only a few of them ever get into the deep things of God, and their prayer life seldom becomes a reality.

Only a few of them know the riches of His grace.

1 Cor. 2:10-13 tells how the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God, so that we may know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit alone can give.

The renewed mind, coming into this deep, rich fellowship with the Father through the Word, is able to appreciate and understand the wealth of the Redemptive work that was wrought in Christ.

Eph. 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who

The late E. W. Kenyon, noted Bible scholar, teacher and writer left a mark upon the Christian community that continues to bear fruit through the ongoing ministry of Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society.

hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

That falls dead upon the ears of the average believer; and yet, that average believer is a possessor of all the things that Christ wrought in his Redemption.

He has been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Christianity is the Life of God imparted to a man, plus the wealth of the riches of God's nature which is imparted to us, and the Spirit's unveiling of the wealth of God that was revealed in Christ in His Redemptive work.

It was a faith-provoking thing, a love-stimulating thing.

It revolutionizes the intellect; it thrills the spirit.

It lifts a man out of the natural into the supernatural.

When his mind is renewed on the basis of his sonship rights, he can take his place as a son.

He can enjoy a son's rights and privileges. He can assume a son's responsibility and step into all the riches of the grace of God.

This comes when man loses his sin consciousness, his sense of inferiority.

He never does this until he knows about Righteousness.

THE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The church is so woefully ignorant of Righteousness today. She thinks Righteousness only means doing right deeds.

But in the Revelation He gave to Paul, Righteousness means the ability to stand in the Father's presence without a sense of guilt, inferiority, or sin, just as free in the Father's presence as was Jesus.

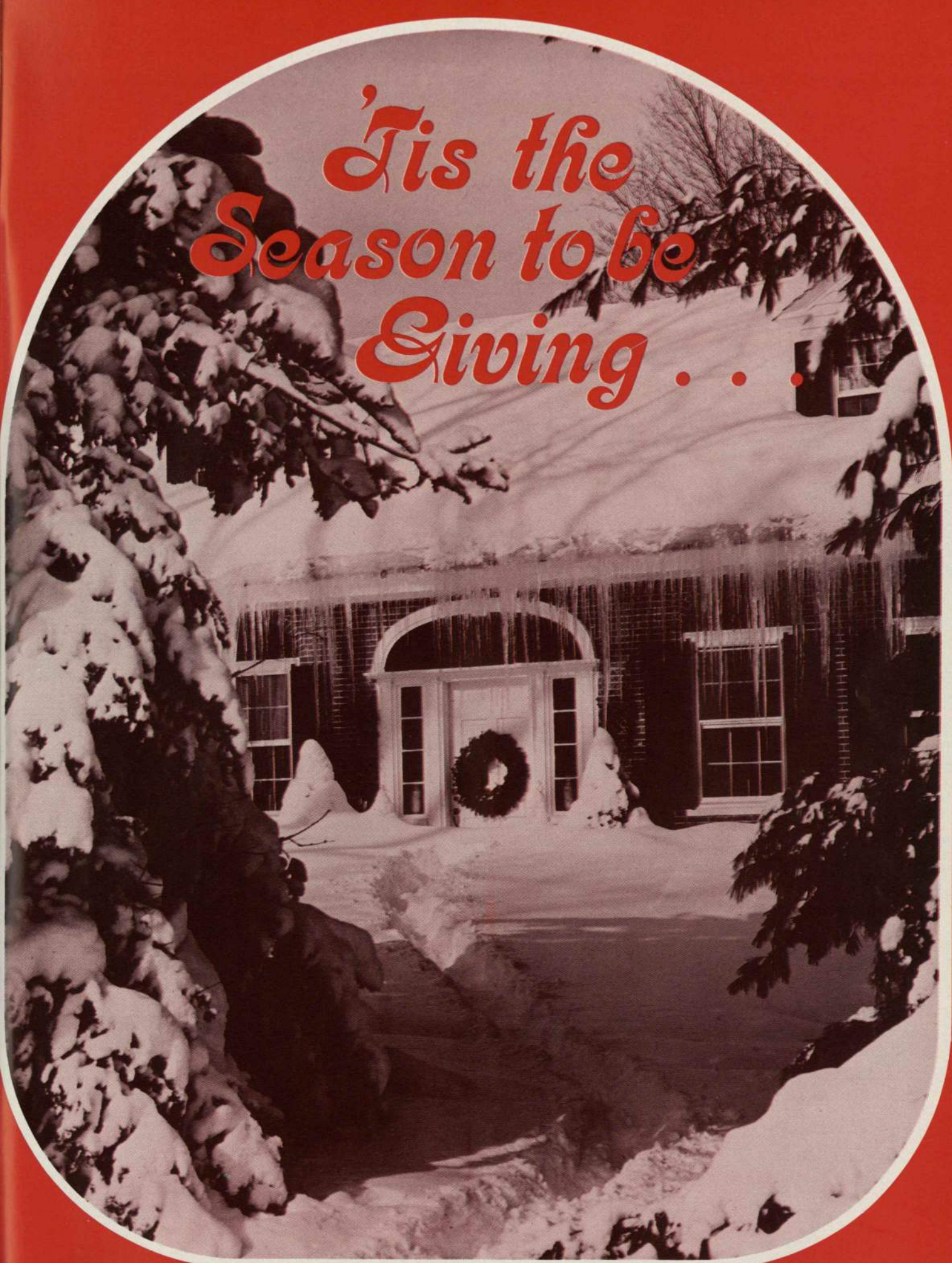
She thinks we will have to wait until we die before this is possible.

It is ours now, in this present, evil world.

Right here now we may have as sweet fellowship and communion with the Father as Jesus had in His earth walk.

Heb. 9:9, speaking of the gifts and sacrifices under the First Covenant

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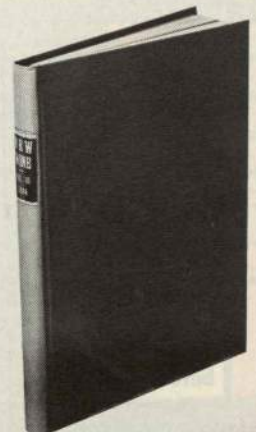


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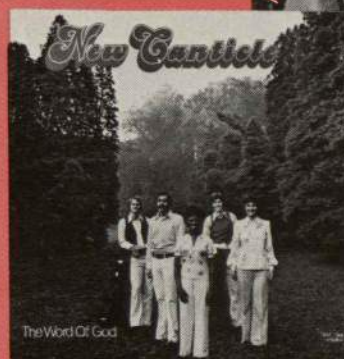
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says, "That cannot as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect."

The blood of bulls and goats could only cover sin, and the scape goat could only bear sins away typically.

But when the fulness of time came, and Jesus put sin away by the sacrifice of Himself, then Heb. 9:14 became a reality: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Heb. 10:1-3, speaking of the First Covenant, says: "The law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered? Because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, must have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins year by year."

There was nothing perfect about the Old Covenant.

When He came, He made one sacrifice for sins forever. (Heb. 9:26) Then He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

He had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He had made the New Creation possible.

He made Remission of Sins possible. All the sins we committed were remitted, wiped out as though they never were.

That New Creation is to be free from sin consciousness so that the believer is no longer held in bondage to Satan's condemnation.

Rom. 8:1 becomes a reality: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Rom. 8:33: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It is God who has declared them Righteous.

God Himself has done it.

2 Cor. 5:21: "Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

We not only have Righteousness reckoned to us, and Righteousness imputed to us, but we have had Righteousness imparted to us in the New Creation.

Eph. 4:24: "And put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." We have been created out of Righteousness and holiness of truth.

That thrills the heart.

The very fact of a New Creation and of sonship demands a perfect Righteousness.

Could you think of a son who could not stand in his Father's presence? Sonship would have no meaning, no significance whatever.

We have now a perfect relationship. God is our very Father; we are his very sons and daughters.

Our relationship cannot be challenged because it is based upon the finished work of Christ.

God has wrought it Himself.

When we accepted Christ as our Savior and confessed Him as our Lord, then God Himself, through the Word, by the Holy Spirit's energy Recreated us, imparting to us His own nature, Eternal Life.

Jn. 6:47: "He that believeth hath eternal life."

1 Jn. 5:13: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God."

Jn. 5:24: "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

The death out of which he has passed is spiritual death, union with Satan.

He has passed out of that, by being born out of it.

Now he is in the realm of supernatural Life.

Rom. 5:17, (Weymouth's trans.): "For if, through the transgression of the one individual, Death made use of the one individual to seize the sovereignty, all the more shall those who receive God's overflowing grace and gift of righteousness reign as kings in

Life through the one individual, Jesus Christ."

Here we get the whole picture: Through the abundance of grace and the gift of Righteousness we reign as Kings in the realm of Life — as conquerors, as overcomers.

That is a triumphant strain right from the heart of the Father, not to become a fact only in Heaven, but right here and now.

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is based upon Righteousness. Fellowship means "sharing together."

Marriage is a good illustration. It is partnership. It is getting under the burden as one.

It is an equal exchange, both giving of their best. Another word that it suggests is "communion."

That means "The two are pouring into the same cup," and they become perfectly one in the blending just as God says, "The two shall become one flesh."

That is fellowship. Jesus said, "I am the vine; ye are the branches."

Our fellowship with the Father is based upon relationship.

Fellowship between husband and wife is based upon relationship.

Fellowship is the one thing that makes married life beautiful.

The law that binds the man or woman together does not make fellowship.

It is not the fact that the woman is a good cook and housekeeper, or that the man is a splendid provider and a gentleman at all times.

It is when that man and woman are blended together into one, spiritually, physically, and mentally.

That is communion. That is real fellowship.

We often have in our home life a limited fellowship. In the church we have a limited fellowship with the brethren; that means we also have limited fellowship with the Father.

It is unlimited fellowship that brings happiness into the home. It is unlimited fellowship with the Father and with one another that brings the

richest, deepest joy into the believer's life.

1 Cor. 1:9: "God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

We were called into fellowship with His son.

This is a heavenly calling.

We are to bear the burdens of Jesus, in bringing a lost world to the knowledge of the truth.

We are fellowshiping Jesus when we go to Africa, or India, or China as a missionary.

We are fellowshiping Jesus when we fellowship the missionary who goes with our money and prayers.

Fellowshipping means giving.

I fellowship the missionary by sending him my offerings.

I have been called into this fellowship of Jesus, and now I am fellowshiping the Master and carrying out His will in the world.

The New Birth and Righteousness are to one end: That we may enjoy the sweetest fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Fellowship is the parent of Real Faith. If you find someone whose Faith is weak, you may know that his fellowship has been broken, or it is of a low type.

Fellowship between a husband and wife can be easily broken. The marriage is not broken. It takes the court that married them to do that.

This broken fellowship does not break your relationship, but it mars it and robs that relationship of its richest blessings and benefits.

All low grade faith comes from a low grade of fellowship.

Most Christians have lost their fellowship and are putting duty in the place of it.

They are like a husband and wife whose fellowship has been broken.

The husband brings home presents that only bring tears to the eyes of his wife.

She does not want the presents. She wants fellowship restored.

Broken fellowship is one of the saddest facts of human experience.

Here is a couple who have lived in

absolute heaven. Then an unkind word or a thoughtless act has marred their lives.

They are both too proud to acknowledge the fault, and the gulf between them becomes almost impassable because they are unwilling to ask each other's forgiveness.

RESTORING BROKEN FELLOWSHIP

The Holy Spirit has given us the way to restore broken fellowship in the epistle of John.

This short epistle was written to tell us how to maintain our fellowship and how to restore it when it is broken.

1 Jn. 1:3-4: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that your joy may be made full."

Joy cannot be made full without full fellowship.

"And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 Jn. 1:5-6.

God is light, and as long as you are in fellowship with Him, you are in the light.

But the instant your fellowship is broken, you go into the dark.

Hatred is darkness. That hatred has blinded our eyes. 1 Jn. 2:11: "But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes."

This man is out of fellowship. He is walking in darkness. He does not know where he is going.

How many Christians are like that! They refuse to walk in the light of the Word.

That means walking in love. Every step out of love is a step into the dark.

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with

Essay of the Month

We again invite our readers to submit articles on the theme of the month. One essay per theme will be selected by our editorial staff for publication.

Listed below are the themes for the upcoming issues and the deadline by which they must be received in our *New Wine* office.

February — "The Body of Christ" DUE: November 7

March — "Youth" DUE: December 15

April — "National Renewal" DUE: January 12

Essays should be written from the writer's own experience and observation (preferably in the form of a testimony) and should be 1500 to 2000 words (or 4-6 typewritten, double-spaced pages). Please include a photograph and short biography of yourself.

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another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 Jn. 1:7.

As long as we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses all the blunders and mistakes that we make.

"But if we say we have no sin—" when we have broken fellowship, and are walking in the darkness, "we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 Jn. 1:8-9.

This scripture is not written to the world. It is written to the church, the family of God.

It has to do with broken fellowship.

The instant that you confess your sins, that instant He is faithful and Righteous to forgive you.

Now you are to forgive yourself and forget your sins and go on in love with Him.

For you to continually remind yourself of your past errors and sins is to deny the efficacy of His forgiveness and the value of His Word.

1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Jesus is the Righteous Advocate. He can go into the Father's presence when we are under condemnation and shrink from meeting Him.

He is always Righteous. He can always plead our case.

The instant we ask the Father's forgiveness, Jesus takes up our case before the Father and our fellowship is restored.

There is no need of walking in broken fellowship a minute after you have committed sin.

The Devil is the author of that sin.

Then to walk on in broken fellowship, grieving over your blunder, is only adding joy and glory to the Devil.

The instant you have done wrong and your fellowship is impaired, ask the Father's forgiveness and go on in fellowship with Him. 1 Jn. 1:9, 2:1-2.

Restoring fellowship is restoring joy, restoring power with God.

The richer the fellowship, the deeper one gets into the Word.

Deep, rich fellowship means that we go far below the surface in this mine of wealth.

You cannot walk in love without fellowship.

To walk in love is to walk in fellowship.

To live the love life is to live the fellowship life.

It is bringing joy to the heart of the Father.

It is the sweetest, biggest, richest thing the world ever knew, this fellowship life with Him.

The church knows very little about it. Almost no one ever preaches about it, yet it is the heart of the whole thing.

There can be no growth in faith, or growth in grace, or growth in knowledge, or growth in joy, with broken fellowship.

Every person that has lost power with God has lost it through loss of fellowship.

If their faith has been impaired so their prayer life is but a form, it is because fellowship has been broken.

If their joy has all seeped out, it is because the vessel that held it has been cracked; their usefulness and testimony has lost its grip and power, it is mere empty words; it is because fellowship has been broken.

If you want your testimony rich and full, then you must have fellowship that is rich and full.

FULL FELLOWSHIP

There are three things that characterize fellowship. You are taking advantage of your Righteousness.

You are, bearing the fruits of Righteousness.

What are those fruits? You are now able to pray with the sick, cast out demons, open the scriptures, lead lost men to Christ with unspeakable freedom.

There is joy in this life in Christ.

When you are walking in Righteousness, you are walking as Jesus walked when He was on earth.

There is fulness of joy. It is the joy

of Christianity that makes Christianity the most attractive thing in the world.

When joy goes, the Word loses its power, its freshness and richness.

It is only when fellowship is at flood tide, and we are walking in the fulness of Righteousness, that God is honored and souls are saved.

A third thing, there will be no development of faith. There is the Word: it is just as rich and full today as it ever was, but somehow or other the lips seem paralyzed.

There is no longer light on the Word. The sick cry for help, but find no release because fellowship is broken and faith is slowly ebbing away.

Fellowship in its fulness is the joy life with the throttle wide open on a down grade.

Fellowship in its fulness is the soil out of which living faith grows to fruition.

Faith dies on a low type of fellowship.

It shrivels up.

It is like a desert plant.

By taking your place in Righteousness, you will find joy in the Word, freedom to use the Name of Jesus, and conquering faith will master every circumstance that confronts you.

Then the maintaining of a rich, full fellowship is vastly important.

Col. 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."

That is the key. It is the Word dwelling in us in all its fulness, its variety, its beauty, its graciousness that produces a rich type of fellowship.

It will give place to love. It will produce all the fruits of Righteousness. Faith cannot grow rich on any other soil.

A rich prayer life depends on your Fellowship.

You must be in Fellowship or you can't enjoy the throne of grace.

If your Fellowship is broken, you know what to do to have it restored.

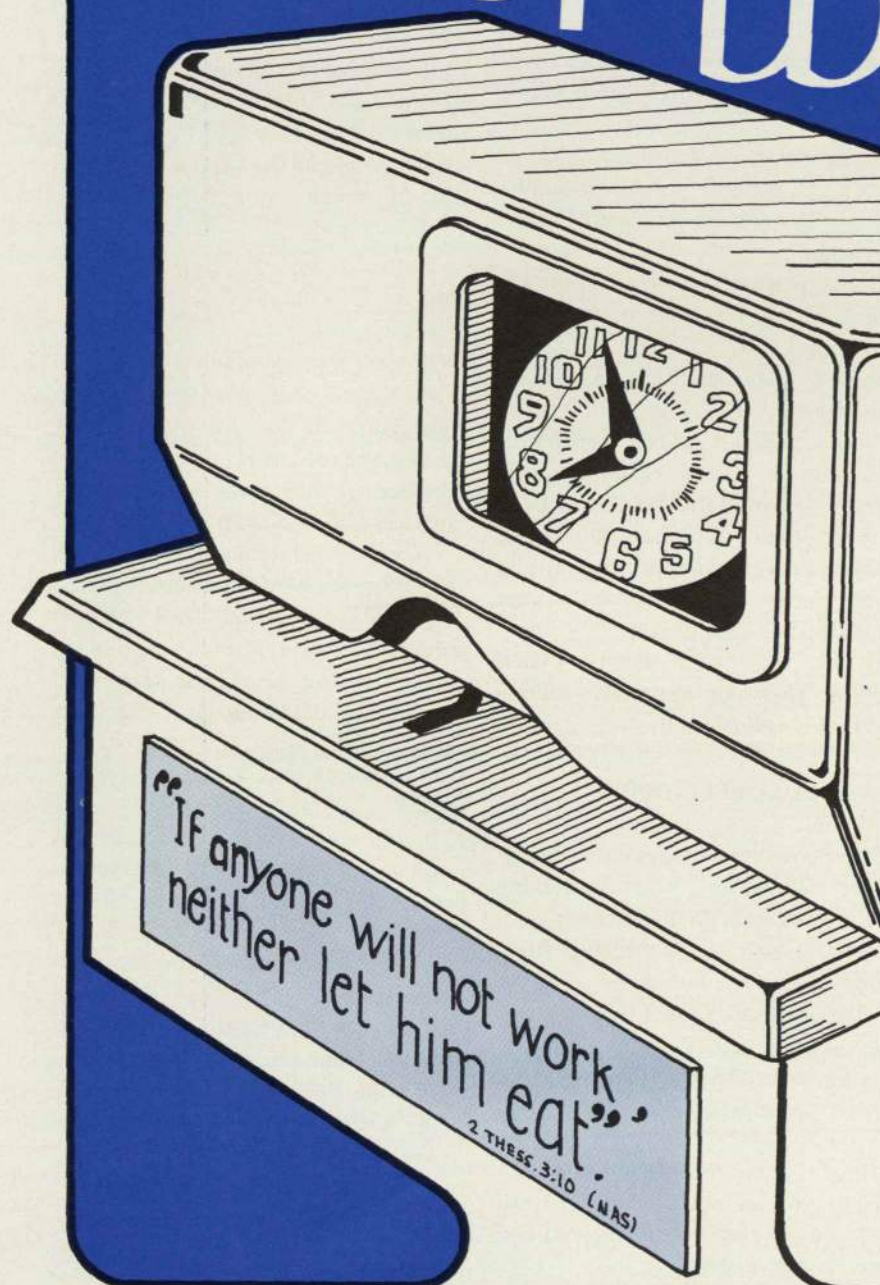
You can't afford to stay in the dark; too many issues are at stake. ♡

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THE NECESSITY OF WORK

God's call to work is a command,
not an option.

by Barry Frost



Often we as Christians tend to think of our function in the Body of Christ in terms of some lofty realm of super-spirituality. But at this hour, the Holy Spirit is prompting us to get our feet back on the ground in the practical walk of Christian discipleship. As a shepherd in a local fellowship, I have considered, as have the other shepherds in our fellowship, the practical application of God's purposes for the Body of Christ. Together, we have come to the realization that to function spiritually as Christ's Body, we must first assume practical responsibilities as individual members of that Body. One of those individual responsibilities is "work."

GOD HAS DESIGNED WORK

In the book of Genesis we find that work was instituted by God in His creative purposes for man. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him in the garden to dress and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Adam wasn't just sitting around being "spiritual" — he was

serving the Lord by carrying out his divinely-appointed responsibilities, which were part of his fellowship experience with God.

In Psalm 104 David refers to work as part of God's creative wisdom: "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches (vs. 23,24).

Turning over to the New Testament, Jesus has much to say about work. In Mark 13:34 we read: "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch." Our Lord Jesus has not made anyone exempt from responsibility in His Kingdom, for He has given "to every man his work." In the Kingdom there is no "higher calling" which negates work. With the exception of married women (for they truly have a task) all members of the Body of Christ are called to a job of some nature.

WHY WORK?

(1) *Work is the means whereby we provide for ourselves, our family and the Body of Christ.* In working we not only are able to give to the Lord what is due Him, but we are also able to provide for our necessities and give to others who have need. (See 1 Thess. 4:11,12; Eph. 4:28; Gal. 6:10.)

Recently, while presenting teaching on our financial responsibilities, I realized that our individual work responsibilities have a far-reaching effect in the Kingdom of God. Without first fulfilling our job obligations, it would be easy to exempt ourselves from the financial area of discipleship. In so doing, we not only rob God (Mal. 3:8) and His servants (1 Cor. 9:13,14), but we become burdensome to our brothers and sisters, hinder the building up of the Body of Christ, and consequently, the return of our Lord Jesus!

When the Lord directed us into fellowship, we found that just a few brothers and their families were carry-

ing the financial responsibilities, while the majority of the group seemed unaware of their duties in this area. We began to realize the need for equality in our finances, so that a few members would not be overburdened. As we entered into committed relationships, this area became a wonderful opportunity to prove our commitment and love for one another.

Having a number of full-time students also proved to be a challenge in the area of work and finance. In light of God's Word regarding priorities — "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33) — we have maintained that Christian concerns and commitments should come first, and then educational pursuits will line up accordingly. Many students in our fellowship maintain a part-time job which enables them to fulfill their financial responsibilities toward God and cover their physical necessities so that the Body of Christ is not overburdened. Those brothers and sisters who have acted on this priority have been reaping tremendously in the Lord, both in fellowship and in their studies.

(2) *Work provides an opportunity in learning how to serve, which is the basis for all spiritual ministry.*

"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28). From this passage we find that true ministry is *serving*, and serving is a characteristic of ministry which must be learned.

BARRY FROST is one of the ruling elders and a Bible teacher in the Shiloh Fellowship in East Lansing, Michigan. He is married and has three children.

Many Christians are so concerned about finding their "ministry" that they overlook God's calling and purpose in work. We must understand that work is the normal, preparatory channel for ministry. In my own Christian experience, the two main channels which God has used to prepare me for service are *work* and *marriage*. Being faithful in the domestic areas opens the door for service to the Body of Christ. "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 have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust true riches?" (Luke 16:10,11). Marriage may not be a channel of training for all, but for most Christians, job responsibilities *will be* such a channel. These are two of the more practical areas wherein serving can be experientially learned, for through serving, ministry finds its definition; and ministry, motivated by love, brings increase to the Body of Christ (See Eph. 4:15,16).

SOME BARRIERS TO OVERCOME

(1) **LIVING BY FAITH** — This frequently used, but often nebulous term, has kept many aspiring disciples from moving on into a more responsible relationship to the Lord and His Kingdom. Some Christians have taken the position that work is "unspiritual," disregarding God's call to work.

We find that the New Testament does not *primarily* teach us to pray in food, clothes, and shelter for ourselves and our families "by faith"; but rather, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10). "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" (1 Tim. 5:8).

In Romans 14:23 we are told that "... whatsoever is not of faith is sin." A Christian must live by faith in all that he does, and that includes work. In a job that means he depends upon the Lord Jesus for strength, wisdom and grace to perform the task

to which he has been called.

While most people are called to work at some secular job — manual labor, a profession, some skill — some are called to labor in the gospel on a full-time basis. This would include primarily the main ministries given to build up the Lord's Kingdom (Eph. 4:11–13). There are also various service and musical ministries which, if functioning under proper authority and covering, would constitute a vital work in the gospel, and by the Lord's ordination (1 Cor. 9:14) would have the right to live off the gospel.

Valid ministry should always be recognized and endorsed in a person's local area of fellowship. The best illustration of this principle is found in Acts 13:1–4. Paul and Barnabas were set apart for the work of the gospel by their brethren in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

The leadership in our area invites proven, fruitful ministry to serve the Body of Christ on a full-time basis. These ministries are supported through the tithes and offerings of our community. This invitation is given on the basis of a calling and an equipping received from the Lord; a recognition of that ministry over a period of time in fellowship; and most important, fruitful Christian character in evidence in the home and other areas of social discourse.

Full-time ministry under such covering represents a sharp contrast to self-styled apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers who refuse to work and demand remuneration from the Body. Proper covering and local recognition protects the Body of Christ from such ministries that could be harmful to it.

(2) IDLENESS — This is a most lethal menace which the Church of Jesus Christ must overcome. There is a generation coming into the Lord's Kingdom by vast numbers who, in shunning the materialistic world and its values in favor of individual liberty, spiritual identity, and reality, have dismissed our God-given responsibility to work. (I speak from experience, formerly being a part of that generation.) This trend is often carried over

into Christian experience and breeds idleness and spiritual passivity.

Proverbs has much to say about the slothful man. "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not" (21:25,26). We are also told that the slothful man or sluggard will not work because of such excuses as the weather (Prov. 20:4) and external circumstances such as fellow workers, job location, etc. (Prov. 22:13). Slothfulness is a condition which no Christian can afford to entertain. This is nothing short of sin.

In 1 Timothy chapter 5, there is sound advice for women regarding idleness. This passage is most appropriate for younger widows and single women. Notice in verses 13 and 14 that idleness breeds other forms of sin and can actually bring reproach upon the Body of Christ.

Finally, "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through the idleness of the hands the house droppeth through" (Eccles. 10:18). Not only do households of men decay because of idleness, but the house or temple of God is hindered from being built up and kept in order by the slothfulness of the individual members of Christ's Body.

(3) SELFISHNESS — This is the last, but most subtle, barrier which we will consider in the area of Christian work responsibilities. Jesus made this statement: "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it" (Luke 17:33). Selfishness keeps many from work and disorients a number of Christians in their motives for working.

God's Word instructs us to work that we no longer steal and also that we might have something to give to others in need. When a person is capable of work and has the opportunity put before him but refuses to work, he is stealing. The early Church refused the right of fellowship to Christians who behaved themselves in this fashion (2 Thess. 3:10–15). Remember, the call to work is a command, not a prerogative.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

In closing, I offer two examples of diligent disciples who left a godly impression upon the Body of Christ. They are commended for their works and their giving.

"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36). It is interesting to note that Tabitha was referred to as a disciple — one who is under authority and instruction.

Peter was in the vicinity when Tabitha was stricken with illness and died, and he was sent for by Tabitha's companions. "Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them" (vs. 39). She had left her companions a sweet-smelling savor of works and service. Reading the entire account of Tabitha's resurrection, we find that her work and almsgiving precipitated her visitation from God.

In Acts chapter 10, we see a mighty visitation of God upon the Gentiles. The home where this transpired was the house of Cornelius. What kind of man was Cornelius? The first thing we find about Cornelius was that he worked in the military as a centurion. He is described as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:2).

Both Tabitha and Cornelius had learned the major lessons of work responsibility and giving in the fear of the Lord before they received their visitation from God. Likewise, each of us who is attempting to live in the Kingdom of God and grow up spiritually, has a definite, practical responsibility in the realm of "work." Let us not despise the means God has ordained to provide our material goods and to teach us how to faithfully serve Him and our fellow man. ♣

BIBLE STUDY

WALK WITH GOD

Over and over again in Scripture God uses one phrase to summarize the whole course of a man's life. It is said of a man that he either "walked with God" or "walked not with God." In the following word study we will see that our "walk" with God refers to our behavior, and that there are specific promises given to us if we walk with God, and staggering consequences if we do not.

(Bible Study answers are found on page 25.)

1. The Scriptures describe a man as being "blessed" if he walks in a certain way. What is that way?

- Ps. 1:1* _____
- Ps. 119:1* _____
- Ps. 128:1* _____

2. God calls those who do not walk after Him *fools, rebellious people, and evil people*. From the following scriptures describe how they walk.

- Eccles. 2:14* _____
- Is. 65:2* _____
- Jer. 13:10* _____

3. The following scriptures detail several ways in which we are to walk with God. What are they?

- Mic. 6:8* _____
- Neh. 5:9* _____
- Ps. 86:11* _____
- Ps. 101:2* _____
- 2 Chron. 17:4* _____

4. In Leviticus 26 God states the consequences of His people choosing to walk after Him or refusing to walk after Him.

- If they walk after Him, He will (*v. 12*) _____
- If they do not walk after Him, He will (*vv. 24,28*) _____

5. Read the following scriptures and list some of the specific blessings God promises to those who walk in His ways:

- Ps. 84:11* _____
- Is. 57:2* _____
- Lev. 26:9* _____
- Deut. 5:33* _____
- Ps. 1:3* _____
- Prov. 28:18* _____

- Prov. 28:26* _____
- Ps. 15:1-2* _____

6. Read the following scriptures and list some of the specific consequences of not walking in God's way:

- Deut. 8:19* _____
- Lev. 26:25* _____
- Lev. 26:26* _____
- Lev. 26:31-32* _____
- Lev. 26:36* _____

7. Romans 6:4 reminds us that since we have been buried with Christ and risen with Him, we should walk: _____

8. Ephesians 4:1-3 and Colossians 1:10 exhort believers to walk worthy of their calling in God, suggesting definite attitudes and actions for doing so. List these below.

- Eph. 4:1-3* a. _____
- _____
- _____
- Col. 1:10* d. _____
- _____

9. The following scriptures present a contrast of how we *are not* to walk and how we *are* to walk. In the space below first list the "how not to" portion and then the "how to" portion.

- Rom. 13:13* Not: _____
But: _____
- Eph. 5:15* Not: _____
But: _____
- Eph. 4:17,23* Not: _____
But: _____
- Rom. 8:1* Not: _____
But: _____
- 2 Cor. 5:7* Not: _____
But: _____

10. a. In John 8:12 Jesus promises those who follow Him that they will not walk _____

b. Ephesians 5:8 commands us to walk as _____

c. 1 Jn. 1:7 promises us that if we walk in the light _____

11. Deuteronomy 13:4 summarizes for us the actions of those who walk with God after His laws. They:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

FOUNDATION FOR FELLOWSHIP

by
Randy
Peters

The wealth and strength of covenant.

The following essay on "Covenant" was chosen as the Essay of the Month for November.

In the past seven years the Lord has been doing a work of restoration in the community which includes the University of Mississippi. Unlike many universities, the charismatic renewal began here among faculty rather than students; and preparatory to the involvement of students, the Holy Spirit began to establish a solid authoritative foundation for the fellowship. Included in our numbers are educators in physics, pharmacology, psychology, engineering, and sociology. Because of their close ties with the university, some of our people have encountered difficulties accepting the Bible as the Word of God. By His grace, however, most have come to a place of believing that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . . That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As we acknowledged this truth and began to walk in the Spirit, we finally crossed the threshold into a place where the Holy Spirit could lead us into righteousness, peace, and joy.

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

As the Lord has been leading us into this realm, He often exhorts us with scriptures. One of these is Philippians 2:14-15: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be 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, holding

fast the word of life . . ." (NAS). The word "lights" describes one of the functions of a Christian. In looking back over my own Christian life, I realized that when I accepted Jesus as my Savior, the light of God's glory became somewhat evident, at least sporadically, to people around me. Then when I was baptized in the Holy Spirit several years ago, it was as though the Lord turned up the power to my lamp, but it still was not enough to effectively illumine the environment around me. I was like the firefly that can itself be seen from a considerable distance, but which is not sufficiently luminous to make the non-radiant objects around it visible. Then as I began to relate to some of my brothers and sisters in the Lord, together we started heading toward this goal — that His glory in us would be sufficient, both in individual intensities and in collective radiance, to dispel the darkness around us. But that goal was not reached just by our coming together. We discovered that we were still like a bunch of fireflies in a bottle which, when used as a lamp, might at best keep one from stepping in a big hole.

What was the problem? We began to realize that our difficulties stemmed primarily from past teachings which, for the most part, ignored relationships between individuals. We had a limited understanding of the Body of Christ. We did not see that the Lord was preparing a Body that would ultimately function in a precision that would match the healthy human body.

Another analogy we might use to describe what the Lord is after in His people is found in the comparison

between ordinary light and laser light, which is used in welding, cutting and surgery. There is one really profound difference between ordinary light and laser light — in the ordinary source the atoms shine randomly ("doing their own thing") whereas in the laser source the atoms are stimulated to shine "together." When the Lord's people "get it all together" in covenant, by the grace of God, our impact upon the world will be as different from our present influence as laser light is from ordinary light!

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

The Holy Spirit has ways of getting people to where He wants them, many times without their realizing what is happening. Such was the case with us. The initial fellowship of our group was exceedingly blessed of God. Signs and wonders of many types were commonplace beyond what we had ever thought possible. Gradually, however, the anointing was withdrawn to demonstrate the fact that the Lord was not blessing us because we were doing things right but rather because He is gracious. He wanted us to progress beyond "tongues" and "deliverance," to a whole new area of spiritual reality (where our rebellion is dealt with) in which the key word is "submission."

For some time the men of our group recognized the need for the wives to submit to their own husbands, but we did not recognize that the Lord was calling us to a similar place — submission to one another and to those that the Lord had placed over us. As we began to yield to this aspect



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of the Spirit's leading, the anointing was once again upon our fellowship, but this time in a more satisfying way. Much of what the Lord had temporarily granted us by way of gifts of the Spirit was beginning to be made permanent by the ripening of fruit of the Spirit. The group was beginning to mature through a process of becoming strengthened and established as set forth in 1 Peter 5:10: the process of suffering.

In most cases the suffering resulted when the Holy Spirit began to expose unwholesome attitudes — attitudes that we had covered over for years because we had neglected the Lord's will concerning sanctification. These rude awakenings were similar to what happens when one engages in strenuous physical activity to which he is not accustomed: the sore muscles of the next few days bear witness that they have been neglected.

COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS

A passage of scripture which reveals many of the ways the Lord has dealt with us is Ephesians 5, where Paul describes a great mystery, comparing Christ and the Church to husband and wife. In considering the process by which casual courtship between a man and woman develops into marriage (the unity of spirit, soul, and body) we see that the initial period of association is one in which each person must

"count the cost" of the total commitment of marriage. Then a decision to make the relationship binding is climaxed by the paying of vows to each other before witnesses (including God). That which follows is beautiful beyond description if the marriage is truly ordained of God in His perfect will, and if each partner is willing to make the adjustments necessary for him to fulfill his responsibilities to the Lord and to his spouse.

In the same way, we discovered that we must count the cost of involving ourselves with Christians in a covenant relationship. We must not rashly pay vows that we do not intend to keep. However, we saw that if we are to enjoy the blessings of covenant union there must be the paying of vows lest we be guilty of spiritual fornication. God does not allow "common law" marriage, because without covenant commitment, it is impossible to endure the God-appointed sufferings that are a part of reaching spiritual maturity. Without covenant one avoids the conflicts by simple dissolution of the relationship.

Hebrews 10:16 tells us, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." And in chapter 8, verse 10, of the same book we are told that He will be to us a God, and we shall be to Him a people. Although this refers to the covenant that is between God and us, it also is the essence of the covenant that is being established between His people.

If such a covenant relationship is to develop we must be willing to "be ourselves" with one another. There is no place for wearing the impenetrable facade which we all wear out of fear of becoming known by others. To take down this facade requires the establishment of mutual trust, and we have found that time spent together — not just in meetings; but in getting to know one another — is indispensable to the building of this trust. All spiritual fellowship begins as people come together.

We have also found that as individuals come together and "the honeymoon wears off" there comes a need, as never before, for forgiveness. The above passage from Hebrews reminds us that when God forgives, He forgets, and no less is expected of us. This has been made abundantly clear as we have come into covenant union. As that union began to mature, the peculiar idiosyncrasies of each person began to grate on others, but the diversity of the group began to be recognized as a source of spiritual strength and wealth, both in the physical and in the spiritual. As we have willed to love one another and give of ourselves to one another, we have found new meaning in our lives and greater clarity of vision, and there has come a sense of fulfillment that none of us have previously known. The road has not been easy but, as in the marriage covenant, we are committed to God's purpose in each other's lives and to God's purpose in making us, together, a viable part of the Body of Christ. ♥

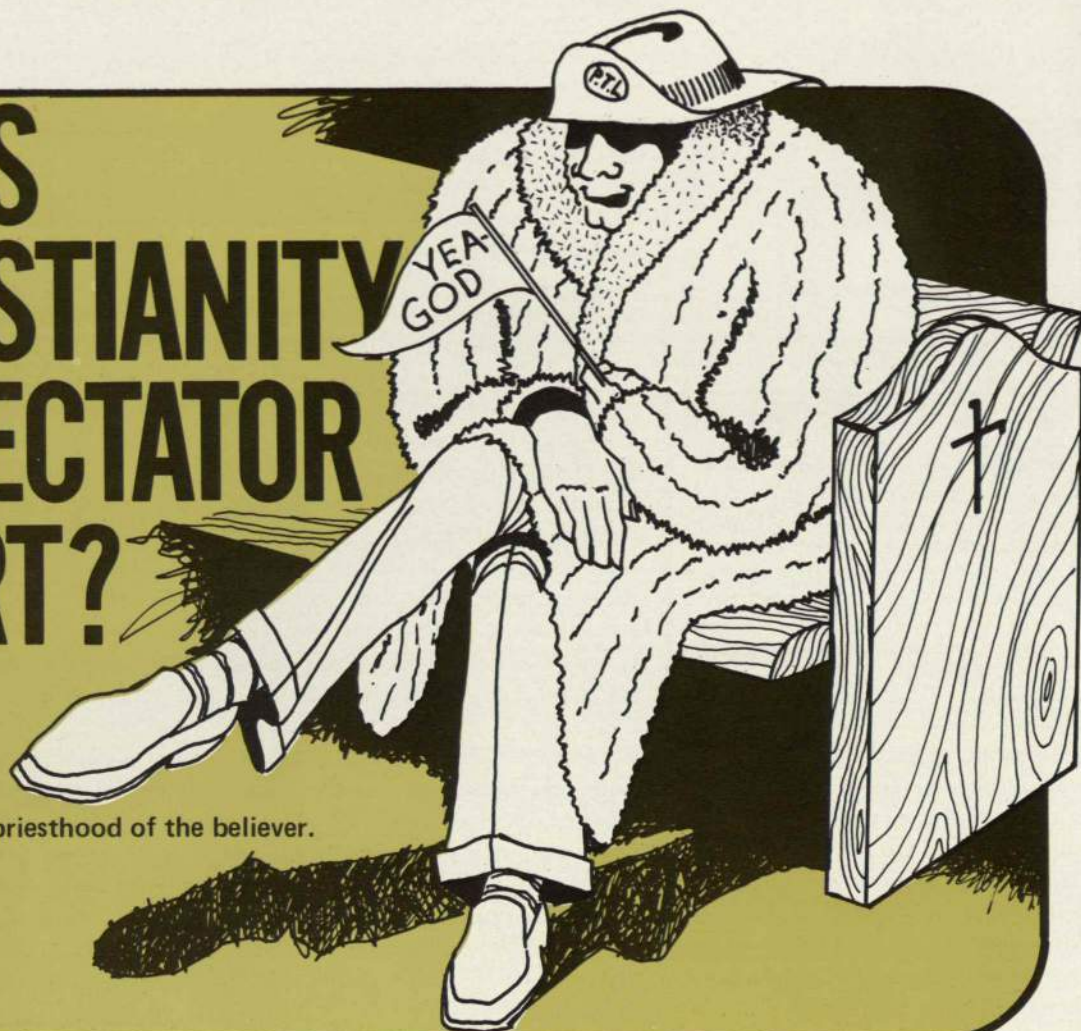
BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

1. a. Not in the way of sinners; b. In the laws of God; c. In His ways. 2. a. The fool walketh in darkness; b. A rebellious people, which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts; c. Evil people . . . which walk in the imaginations of their hearts, and walk after other gods. 3. a. Humbly; b. In fear; c. In truth; d. With a perfect heart; e. In obedience to His commands. 4. a. walk among them and be their God and they shall be His people; b. walk contrary unto them and punish them seven times for their sins. 5. a. No good thing will be withheld from them; b. Peace and rest; c. Fruitfulness; d. Long life; e. All he does shall prosper; f. He shall be saved; g. He shall be delivered; h. He shall abide in His tabernacle. 6. a. They would perish; b. Enemies, pestilence; c. Hunger; d. Desolation; e. Faintness of heart. 7. In newness of life. 8. a. With lowliness and meekness; b. With longsuffering, forbearing one another; c. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit; d. Being fruitful in every good work; e. Increasing in the knowledge of God. 9. a. *Not*: in rioting, drunkenness, chambering, wantonness, strife, envying, *But*: honestly; b. *Not*: as fools, *But*: circumspectly, wisely; c. *Not*: as the Gentiles in the vanity of their minds, *But*: renewed in the spirit of our mind; d. *Not*: after the flesh, *But*: after the Spirit; e. *Not*: by sight, *But*: by faith. 10. a. in darkness; b. as children of light; c. we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin. 11. a. Fear Him; b. Keep His commandments; c. Obey His voice; d. Serve Him; e. Cleave to Him.

IS CHRISTIANITY A SPECTATOR SPORT?

by Bob Mumford

A current
perspective of the priesthood of the believer.



Without question, the Bible stands as the “best seller” of all books ever published. For as long as records have been kept on who is buying what, it has reigned supreme. We would also venture to say that the Bible has been the most widely read and quoted book ever published, although these figures would be more difficult to document. Why is this true? The most obvious reply to that question is the origin of the Book. Its divine authorship sets it apart from all other books ever written. With foundations in eternity and expectations without parallel, the Bible speaks to all men of all time in every geographical location. All readers may not agree with its message, but men continue to turn to it in their search for answers to life’s questions and problems.

May we make one simple deduction about the general appeal of the Bible. It is a book about *me*. Humanity is basically interested in itself — the *who*, *what*, *when*, *why* and *how* of life. This

is just what God is interested in and what He wrote about. God is presented throughout Scripture as being the seeker . . . searching for men and women to whom He can reveal Himself and with whom He can fellowship. This search is continuous — generation to generation — and the call goes out to all men. Although universal in scope, the invitation to walk with God is individualized and tailored to meet the recipient just where and how he is.

The Book of Genesis, the first recorded activities of God, presents Him as Creator. We follow His dealings with men and women — the highest order of His creation. Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph — these and others came to know God through His gracious revealing of Himself and His desires for them.

PRESENTATIONS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Yes, God has made a way for man

to walk with Him in fellowship. He has been extremely careful to point out the way and to protect the way into His presence. Three portions of Scripture will help us to see how God presents “the way” to His people. There are many other references throughout the Word, but these will center our thoughts upon what we might term “the burden of the Lord,” — to bring to Himself a people with whom He can fellowship and share His glory.

Following the experiences of the men and women who walked with God during the very early days of His created earth, we come to the Book of Exodus. Here we find God preparing for Himself a *people*, delivering the children of Israel from the bondage of Egyptian slavery and welding them into a nation. Through this avenue, God chose to continue revealing Himself as a covenant-making and -keeping God. Moses was called out to

be the mouthpiece for God, the leader of the people during their forty years of wilderness wandering. During this period, many lessons were brought to bear upon the former slaves, fitting them to become His instrument for further revelations of Himself to mankind.

It was the *people* of Israel whom God called — the whole nation. He did not choose them to be His people because they were more numerous or better than any other people, but because He loved them and wanted to make them His. Hear His words from Exodus 19:3–6:

(3) And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

(4) Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you *unto myself*.

(5) Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure *unto me* above all people; for all the earth is mine.

(6) And ye shall be *unto me* a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Three times God's purpose is expressed — “unto myself . . . unto me . . . unto me . . .” He is seeking for a people He can call His very own. Note, also, the conditional covenant — “. . . if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.” These are the only two requirements God has ever asked from people. It has never changed — obey His voice and keep His covenant; then, and only then, can people experience to the fullest becoming the peculiar treasure which God desires that they be.

Going to the New Testament, we find God still seeking a people. In the processes of Israel's nationhood, they rejected *the purpose of God*: that they become a people whom He could call His own and fellowship with, and to whom He could reveal Himself. Therefore, God instituted a new Priest and a new priesthood — after the order of Melchizedek of the tribe of Judah.

Listen as the apostle Peter explains the new priesthood and the new holy nation God plans to use in carrying out His purpose to have Himself a people:

(1) Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

(2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

(3) If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

(4) To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

(5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

(6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

(7) Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

(8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.

(9) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

(10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Pet. 2:1–10).

Again, we find God calling a *nation with a priesthood*; and, again, we find *God's purpose* . . . “*unto myself*.” These “peculiar” people are a special treasure to God, made acceptable to Him by His Son Jesus Christ. They are made into a spiritual house, offering up spiritual sacrifices. Also, we again see a conditional clause . . . “He that believeth on Him [Jesus Christ].”

Turning to the final book in Scripture we find still being proclaimed this

consistent burden of the Lord — a people, a nation of priests called *unto Himself*. Revelation 5:9 & 10 express it this way:

(9) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

(10) And hast made us *unto our God* kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

The Greek text phrases that last verse, “And hast made us *unto our God* a kingdom of priests.” Jesus Christ, that One who is worthy, is the King in the Kingdom; and all believers are the priests. We are a royal priesthood, reigning — where? On the earth! We are all priests, whether we have become aware of our holy privilege or not. As priests, there are certain preparations which must be made . . . we must become acquainted with the altar, the sacrifices, and the duties expected of us as this holy nation of priests.

PREPARATION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

During the formation of the people of Israel into a nation, God had to deal with them very specifically in every area of their walk with Him. It was a new way for the people. God gave specific instructions through Moses, their leader, as to the building of the tabernacle, that portable place of worship where God planned to fellowship with this new holy nation. The tribe of Levi was called upon to furnish the priests who were to be charged with carrying out the sacrifices. However, it ever remained God's purpose to fellowship on an individual basis; and each individual was charged with certain responsibilities before his worship and sacrifice was acceptable to God. Right spirit and right attitude were primary — and this was where Israel failed. The people wanted to go their own ways rather than adhere to the covenant God had made with them as a nation.

God also gave to Moses the joy of experiencing His glory, for when the tabernacle was completed according to God's instructions, God's glory came upon the tabernacle and people. Read Exodus 40:34,35. The Book of Leviticus tells of the priestly duties and the established sacrifices. We are apt to think all sacrifices were made for the atonement of the sins of the people. But this is not so. Some were sacrifices related to peace offerings, some were worship sacrifices. Regardless of their various purposes, that one basic purpose remained: establishment of communication lines between God and His people — an avenue for revelation of Himself — resulting in a closer walk with the One who had called them out of slavery to become His people.

What about the kingdom of priests that God established under the New Covenant after the failure of the Israelites to respond to His loving concern? Hebrews 13:10–16 reveals to us that the early church took seriously their charge to the priesthood.

(10) We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

(11) For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

(12) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

(13) Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

(14) For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

(15) By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

(16) But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians brings us further preparations which God made for securing for himself a nation which would testify to His goodness before the world. Chapter 2 tells of God taking both Jew and Gentile and

making of them one new man. He "birthed" the people of this new nation; for we are told we are born, not by blood or by the will of man, but born into the Kingdom by the will of God. Ephesians, chapter 4, continues with God's preparation to order a kingdom of priests. Verses 11, 12, and 13 tell us of some of His provisions toward maturing His people:

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

(12) for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

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

With all of this work by God in behalf of believers to help them become the priests and make the sacrifices pleasing to Him, what has happened throughout the centuries to obstruct the fulfilment of God's desires and purpose? Let's take a brief look at the story history relates in this regard.

PREVENTIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

After the apostolic age, there arose men who assumed priestly roles, assigning to the masses of believers merely the acceptance of being spectators rather than participators. Thus, God's primary purpose — to have a nation of priests — was once again pushed aside by men having their own ways. Tradition prevailed and believers continued to come to "church" and "watch" while their religious leaders offered the sacrifices. This was against the principle of the individual believer taking his place as a priest and offering the sacrifice of praise to His God.

During the period of the Reformation, Martin Luther brought to light basic tenets of the Christian faith. One of these was "the priesthood of the believer." It was his desire to restore to the masses the individual relation-

ship which had become obscured during the Dark Ages. This should have brought about the desired change, but, as always, tradition proved a tremendous barrier. Today, four hundred years later, we are still facing some of the problems resulting from the sad state of reducing believers to spectators rather than encouraging them to take their places as priests.

At one time during my years in the pastorate, I asked the Lord, "Why is my church so stunted . . . why are the believers so immature?" This was His reply: "Because you did it. You preach, pray, prophesy, take up the offering. How can they grow?" It was then I became convicted that I was not "perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry," but was actually standing in the way of their development.

Physicians bemoan the fact that in the arena of life men and women have adopted spectator roles to the detriment of their health. People sit before the television, or in stadiums, and cheer the activities of golfers, tennis players, football, baseball, and hockey teams. The majority do not take part in sports — they just sit and cheer the participants on to greater goals and accomplishments.

This same condition prevails in our churches. Believers sit on the sidelines — padded pews — and cheer on their minister. They watch him perform, and usually regulate his salary by the acceptability of the performance. We hear complaints — too loud, too long, too dry, too almost anything. Every Sunday morning the judging goes on and all too often that is the end of the "service" until the following Sunday.

This condition is a direct reversal of roles in the pattern ordained by God for His people. Where are the priests? Where are the praises? Where are the sacrifices? Many pastors and leaders are quite satisfied with the status quo. They have no desire to initiate any activity that might rock the boat they have set afloat in the name of religion. However, as God restores truth to His people, many are coming to have a new vision of the Church — that Body of Christ which has so long remained

comfortably sleeping, oblivious to its divine calling — a priesthood of believers. Many are hearing for the first time God's call, "I will make of you a kingdom of priests to rule on the earth." After our long hibernation, we need some preparing to take our rightful places before God. Let us consider some of the steps in preparation for assuming our high priestly role.

PERSONAL PROVISIONS FOR OUR TASK

In making ourselves ready to become a member of the royal priesthood, our first step is to meet our great High Priest, Jesus, as the Lamb of God. John the Baptist introduced Him to the society of his day with these words, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). We meet Jesus as the Lamb of God which was slain before the foundation of the world. He is our sacrificial Lamb.

The reason the Lamb was slain is that His blood might cleanse the temple — and we know that each individual believer is a temple holy unto God. As we accept His sacrifice, we are cleansed and prepared to become the dwelling place of His Spirit.

Just as God's glory filled the tabernacle once it was built according to His specifications; and just as God's glory came upon the temple which Solomon erected in compliance with God's instructions; so it is when we follow God's Word, accept the sacrifice of His Son, become cleansed in His blood and baptized into His Body, the Holy Spirit comes upon us. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the glory of God coming into an individual temple. It is God's approval showing that the temple has been erected in accordance with His specifications.

Then follows the anointing for the priesthood. Samuel anointed David the young shepherd lad to become the chosen leader of Israel. We read of this anointing for service throughout all of the phases of Israel's history. It set aside the one whom God had called to his particular function. As His anoint-

ing comes upon us, we stand and take our place before Him as priest. This is God's purpose in calling us "unto Himself."

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR TASK

As a priest, what are my duties? What is expected of me now that I have been apprehended by His love, cleansed in His blood, filled with His Spirit and anointed for my task? One verse in particular will serve to outline our primary duty. Hebrews 13:15 tells us: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Verse 16 adds, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Permit me to ask you: What were the sacrifices of the Old Testament? The young bullock, the doves, the peace offering, the trespass offering. All of these were offered to the Lord under the sacrificial system by the priests. We are the priests of the New Covenant — what are our sacrifices? They have changed, yes, but the system remains the same. Hosea 14:1 and 2 will help us here:

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: *so will we render the calves of our lips.*

The sacrifice of praise continually . . . the fruit of our lips giving thanks . . . words . . . the calves of our lips. Are these injunctions from God's Word speaking to you in regard to your responsibilities as a priest? Are you seeing the concept of the individual believer emerging from that of spectator to that of participator? God wants to bring you "unto Himself" and one of the primary ways which He has chosen to accomplish this purpose of His is through the priestly responsibility of offering sacrifice — spiritual sacrifice — which is praise.

Under the Old Covenant when an acceptable offering was made, God made it known that He was pleased —

the fire fell. It is important for you to know that as you step into God's presence and offer sacrifice according to God's command, that He will meet you, the fire will fall, and you will know satisfactions and benefits from your obedience in bringing your sacrifice — your words, the calves of your lips.

Here are four rewarding benefits awaiting the believer as he performs his priestly duties:

(1) *It takes us out of ourselves into God.*

I find myself being lifted above all of the circumstances and situations of life and assured of His goodness and greatness.

(2) *It purifies us as we worship in His Presence.*

As we stand offering the sacrifice and the fire falls, our eyes and ears are opened. God reveals Himself, along with His desires for our conformity to the image of His Son.

(3) *It works out in practicality the words which Paul left us in Philippians 4:19:*

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Our sacrifice to Him releases to us both spiritual and practical benefits.

(4) *It opens the avenue for service and ministry to others.*

The priesthood of the believer! For too many centuries this truth has been concealed behind the spectator syndrome. As it comes into the light of restoration, vistas open to us for growth, ministry, and joy never before experienced. God has always provided a way to release to His children the blessings He wishes them to have. His burden has always been to have a people with whom He could share His life, His glory and His power. Open the sluice gates and permit these blessings to flow into your life — and through you to the hungry and needy of the world. Become a priest . . . offer your sacrifices . . . morning, evening, continually! ♥

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

This month's answers by Don Basham



Can you give any guidelines for distinguishing between conviction and condemnation, and properly handling each situation?



Basically, *conviction* is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring us to repentance and correction while *condemnation* is the work of the devil to bring us to despair and hopelessness. Many sensitive Christians mistakenly receive the abuse and condemnation heaped upon them by the devil who is the "accuser of our brethren" (See Rev. 12:10) as if it were God trying to straighten them out. I formerly battled that problem myself. When I would fall short in some endeavor or give in to some temptation, the devil would attack. "You fool! You've goofed again! You'll never make good! Why don't you just give up?" More times than not, I would buy his accusation. "You're right. I am no good. Maybe I should just give up!" And I'd wallow in self-pity for days on end.

But experience in spiritual warfare has gradually sharpened my discernment concerning the voice of the accuser and the voice of the Comforter. The Holy Spirit will convict and correct, but not condemn me. His dealings are firm and sometimes painful. But at the end there is the inner assurance and comfort that God loves me still, and that with His help I can and will do better.

The devil brings hidden things to light, not to help but to hinder. To accuse and condemn. The Holy Spirit brings hidden things to light not to hinder but to help. To convict and correct; then comfort and encourage. We can expedite our own spiritual

growth by quickly and humbly confessing our sins, with a readiness to receive God's loving correction, and then continue walking in the light. Paul reminds us, "There is therefore now no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

In this day of intensifying spiritual warfare, all of us must guard against the rage of the "accuser" who has launched a major campaign to bring God's people under condemnation.



Matthew 12:31,32 and Mark 3:29 talk about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit being an unforgivable sin? What exactly constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and is forgiveness available to those who commit this sin in ignorance or unintentionally?



It is a favorite tactic of Satan to play on our scriptural ignorance. Most Christians know there is an "unpardonable sin" called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, most Christians do not have a clear understanding of what that sin is; hence they are open to Satan's accusations. Over the years I've encountered dozens of Christians who were afraid they had committed the unpardonable sin, that they had blasphemed against the Holy Spirit. None of them had.

Some had been guilty of gross lying, some had committed adultery, some had cursed God in a moment of anger, some had prayed to the devil and some had become involved in witchcraft. While all these sins are serious, not one of them meets the biblical definition

of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. We need to examine the biblical context in which Jesus cautions against the unpardonable sin. In Matthew 12:22-32 the Pharisees accuse Jesus, after he has cast demons out of a blind and dumb man, of casting them out by the power of Beelzebub, prince of demons (See verses 22-24). On the basis of their accusation Jesus says, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven . . ." (verse 31).

In other words, in response to the deliberate, lying accusation of the Pharisees that Jesus was using the power of Satan to cast out demons, Jesus identified that very accusation as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. So then, what, precisely, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is to deliberately and knowingly attribute the power of the Holy Spirit to the devil. That sin, and no other, qualifies as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It is *not* lying, it is *not* adultery, it is *not* cursing God, it is *not* witchcraft. It is deliberately, with malice intended, to attribute the redemptive work of God to Satan.

Any man whose heart has become so filled with hatred for God that he could make such a statement has put himself beyond the reach of repentance and forgiveness. Therefore, the sin is unpardonable.

The promises of God for forgiveness for all who repent and confess their sin are so numerous in Scripture that there can be no question that every sin we confess is forgiven. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Essentially, then, if you are able to confess and repent of your sin; if you are sorry and regret what you've done,

INSIGHTS

"Our union with one another is not some pious emotion that we can add as an afterthought to our idea of Christianity; it is the only means we have to save the world, and ourselves from disaster."

— Fr. Francis Martin

"What the world requires of the Christians is that they should continue to be Christians."

— Albert Camus

"It is foolish to underestimate the power of Satan, but it is fatal to overestimate it."

— Corrie ten Boom

"Brokenness in daily experience is simply the response of humility to the conviction of God."

— Roy Hession

you *cannot* have committed the unpardonable sin. In fact, one sure sign that you have *not* committed the unpardonable sin is your fear and sorrow that you may have! So, if you feel you may have committed the unpardonable sin, whatever the sin; repent, ask forgiveness, by faith receive God's pardon, and get on with your Christian walk. You've listened to the devil's lie long enough.



In seeking personal spiritual covering, how do you determine who your shepherd is?



This is a crucial question which requires a careful answer. The factors involved can be complex so a simple answer is difficult. However, if we remember one simple principle some hasty and unwise decisions may be avoided. The principle is this: *Don't organize; recognize.* In other words, don't attempt to organize or elect spiritual authority; instead try to recognize authority God has already raised up.

For many Christians seeking personal spiritual covering, all that is

required is that they *recognize* whom God has already placed over them. For those in denominational churches, therefore, it may simply be a matter of fully acknowledging the authority of their pastor or church elders and verbally submitting to that authority.

For those "shepherd-seekers" in denominational churches who are also active in interdenominational charismatic fellowships things can be more complicated. Their pastor may not believe it possible or desirable to provide the degree of personal spiritual oversight some of his members are seeking. Under those frustrating circumstances, the ones seeking adequate spiritual covering may have to resort temporarily to a kind of "dual headship" which, at best, can present real problems. Here again, the principle of recognition helps. Such Christians should recognize and submit to the authority of their church pastor *in every way that is open to them.* They should acknowledge their pastor as God's shepherd over his congregation and should respect and honor him as such. Any additional covering or authority needed could then be sought from the leadership of the charismatic fellowship from which these Christians

are already receiving additional life and teaching. Just as they receive additional spiritual nurture from the charismatic fellowship, so then they can also find additional spiritual covering.

But any Christian seeking additional spiritual covering beyond the pastor of his church should first clear the matter with his pastor and with the charismatic elder so that there is no abuse or neglect of existing lines of spiritual authority.

For the Christian who currently has no acknowledged pastor or shepherd, the principle of recognition is easier to apply. When someone asks, "How do I find my shepherd? How can I recognize my spiritual covering?" a good clue is, "Whom would you seek out if you need personal spiritual advice and counsel?" This single question may lead to a recognition of spiritual authority which already exists, even though it had not been previously acknowledged.

To be effective, submission to a shepherd should be verbalized both by the one submitting and the one accepting responsibility for oversight. It is also important, if you are seeking spiritual covering, to find a shepherd who also has clearly acknowledged authority over him. It is also important to submit to one who is more spiritually mature than you are. Some people who claim to want authority over their lives are seeking a shepherd who will make few if any real demands on them. In other words, they want the benefits of spiritual authority but are reluctant to pay the price of those benefits.

Much more needs to be shared on this important subject. And, as we faithfully walk out the principles of sheep/shepherd relationships, I'm sure we will gain increased insight in how to be obedient sheep and obedient shepherds. 🍷

Each month *New Wine* receives questions from our readers covering a variety of topics and issues. If you have questions for this feature, send them to Questions and Answers, c/o *New Wine* Magazine, P.O. Box 22888, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33315.

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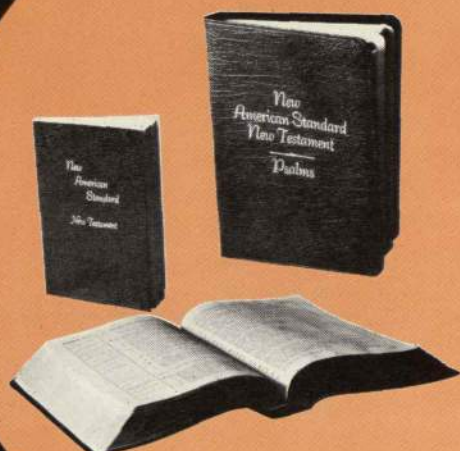
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