

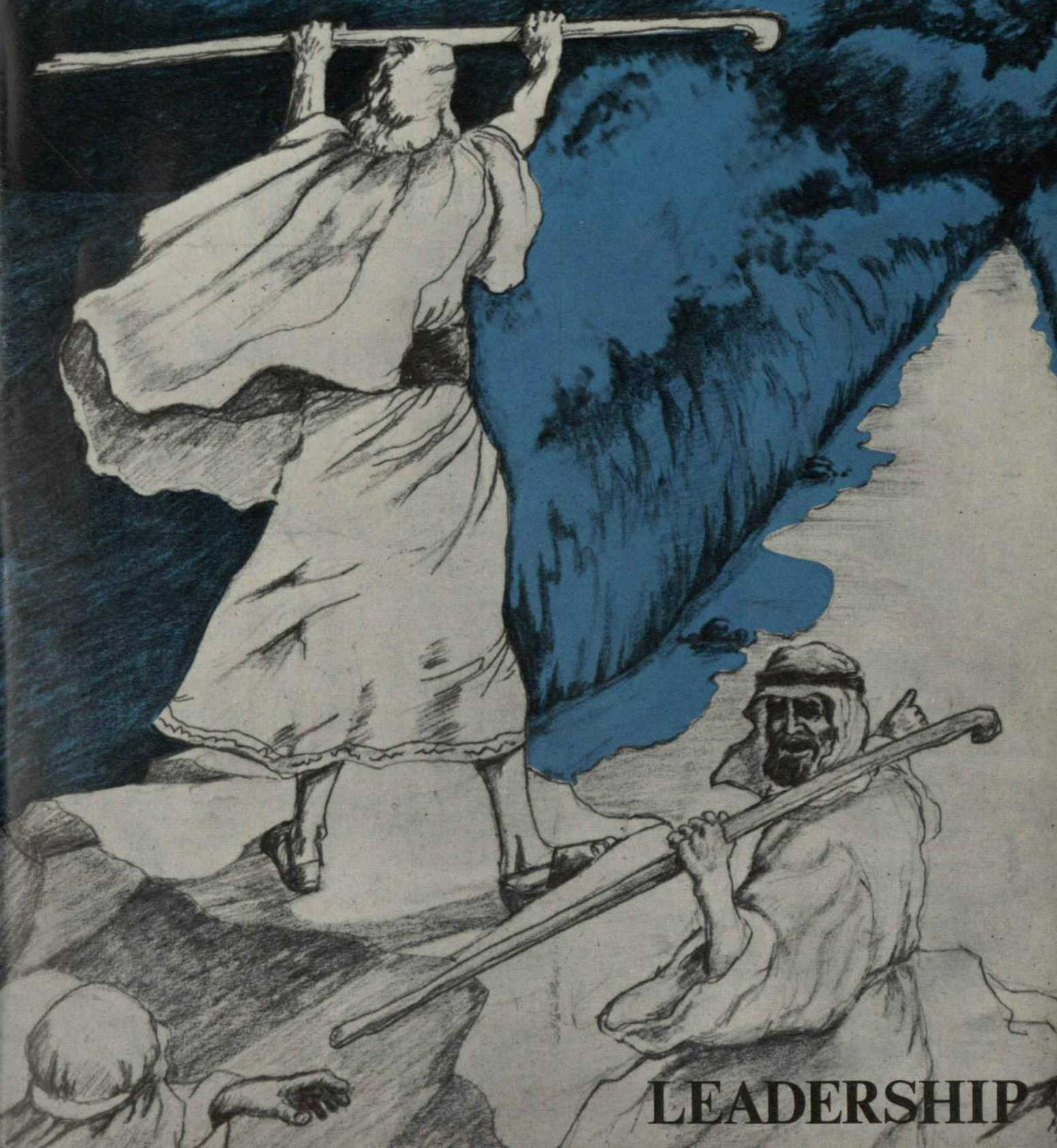


JUNE 1978

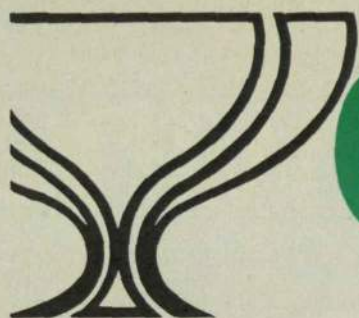
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

DEDICATED TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

new wine.



LEADERSHIP



editorial

There are many necessary qualities and talents which could properly be listed as essential for effective leadership. But for leadership in the Kingdom of God there is one unique qualification which no man can provide for himself. Without that qualification, no matter the other gifts or abilities, success is almost impossible. But with that qualification even the ordinary man can become almost invincible. That unique qualification is *calling*: God's sovereign choice.

It has been pointed out that the priests in Israel were so numerous in Jesus' day that they had to wait their turn for temple duty, yet not one of

them was numbered among the Lord's disciples. Was the omission divine neglect or divine choice? Significantly, not one of the twelve disciples volunteered for his job; every one of them was conscripted, even as Jesus Himself reminded them.

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

That is not to say the twelve didn't desire to be chosen; it simply means that no matter how great their desire may have been to be numbered among Jesus' closest associates, the choice was not theirs but His.

It is important to know there is the proper place of service in the Kingdom of God for every Christian. And as God continues to anoint new leadership to instruct, govern and shepherd His people, it is also important to know that leadership is determined not by personal merit or ability but by sovereign choice. To realize and accept that fact will encourage both humility among the leaders and confidence among those serving under their leadership. In other words, Kingdom leadership is recruited by God, not by man.

Don Basham

Don Basham
Editor

Thank you for your April issue of *New Wine*. The article on fatherhood and "Intercessors Report" were a special blessing. I'm an elementary teacher. I see so many children with problems—big problems—at such an early stage of their lives. Many of these children are without a father in their home or their home is without proper leadership.

The Lord has given me a real burden for prayer in this area and I pray that I'll be His willing servant to lift up the children (and their fathers) I deal with each day.

Margaret Kuhfeld
St. Paul, MN

I would like to paper the maternity wards with this issue on fatherhood! Please send me five copies as a start!

Mrs. J.T. O'Kelley
Tucker, GA

I have just read the new issue on fatherhood. If the Body of Christ has any doubt why it is sick today, they need to read these articles. If they don't see the answers here, then they are in trouble. I believe this is the most anointed issue yet, and it is *the* answer for today. Thanks.

Don Barnes
Tulsa, OK

Thank you for the April issue. I have been a Christian for four years and have never really understood my role as husband and father. This issue has given me clarity and direction. The articles were strong and to the point, not mincing words. The Spirit has convicted me to action. I am excited as I begin to accept my God-given and God-required responsibility, knowing "I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me."

Mike McGrath
Omaha, NB

I'm writing to comment on how much I enjoyed the article in your April selection entitled "Intercessors Report" by John Beckett. Being from the Northeast, I went through high school being taught how great the NOW organization is and the ERA. Reading this article really gave some much needed insight to the hangups and the problems that are being covered up.

I really enjoyed this article and intend to send it to some people from home.

Sharon V. Martin
Harlingen, TX

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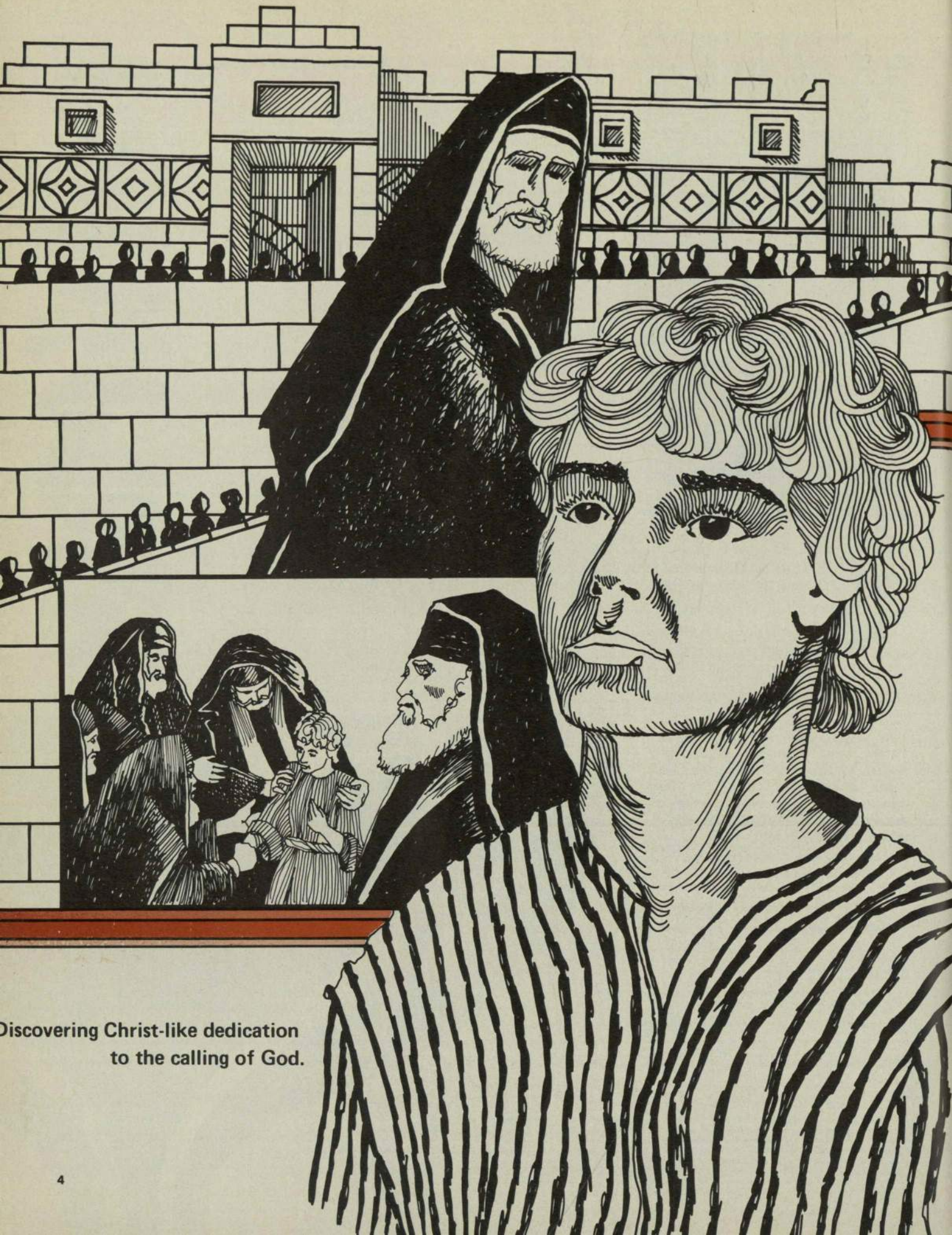
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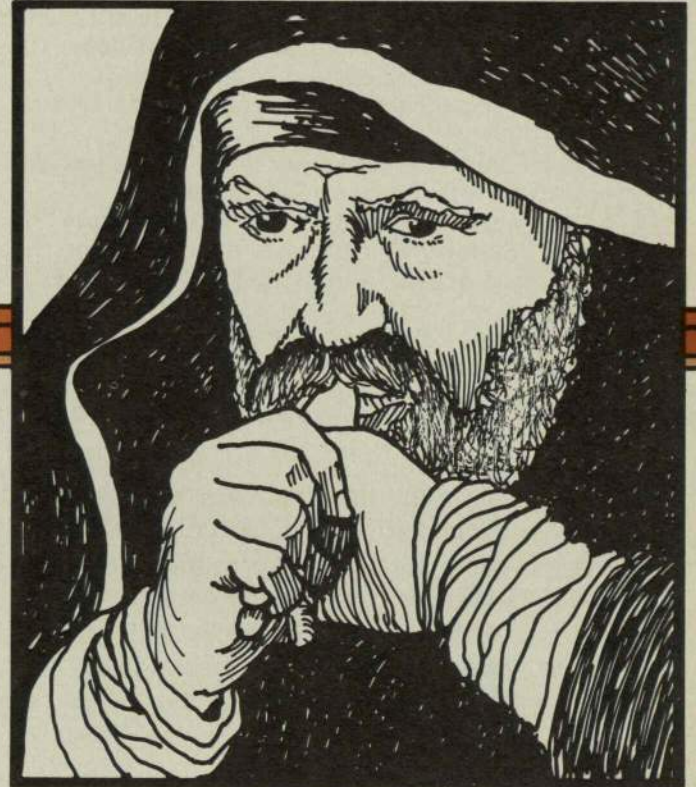


Discovering Christ-like dedication
to the calling of God.

COMMITMENT TO GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

So Jesus was dedicated to God; that is, He was entirely given over to God's purpose from before birth. When His parents dedicated Him, it wasn't a mere ritual or hollow ceremony of empty commitment. When Jesus was given to the Father, He was literally given over by the Father, by the Holy

by Charles Simpson



THERE ARE MANY REASONS why I like the title of this article, "Commitment to God and His People," but one of the main reasons is because it eliminates so much. I'm grateful not only for what I'm committed to, but I'm grateful for what I'm *not* committed to. I am not committed to a concept, to an idea, to a theology, to a philosophy, or to a method. I am committed to God and His people!

Jesus is our example of commitment, and for us to understand this important principle, we need only look at commitment in the life of Jesus. Let's begin with Luke 2:21-23.

And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord").*

After He was called "Jesus" (meaning "Savior" or "Deliverer"), the name given Him by the Father at His annunciation, Jesus was presented to God as God's firstborn and Mary's firstborn. As was the custom for all firstborns, Joseph, His natural "step-father," presented Him before the Lord. Now to be presented before the Lord means to be literally given to God and to belong to Him from that moment on.

*All scriptures NAS.

Spirit, by Mary, by Joseph, and by the angels of God . . . given over entirely to the purpose of God.

As Jesus grew up, He was not double-minded. The day came when He could say, "The ruler of this world is coming and he has nothing in Me" (Jn. 14:30) because He belonged entirely to God and God's purpose. Whatever the Father wanted to do, whatever the Father had in mind, whatever the Father's purpose of the moment was, Jesus was dedicated to it.

He wasn't merely committed to a system of religion, or to a set of ethics, although He abode by those things. He was given over to the Father. Jesus belonged to the Father. He said, "I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (Jn. 8:28-29). His eye was on the Father and until the Father moved, He did not move. Until the Father spoke, Jesus didn't speak. There were no expedencies in Jesus' life except to do what the Father wanted Him to do. Jesus was totally

committed—spirit, soul and body—to the Father. That's the kind of dedication that He had.

It was so real that at Jesus' presentation Simeon spoke of it:

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God

And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and a sign to be opposed—

and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that the thoughts from many hearts may be revealed" (Lk. 2:25–35).

He said, "This is the Lord's salvation, and He's going to be a sign that will be opposed. His commitment to the Father is going to bring hurt." He spoke to Mary and said, "The commitment that you are making is even going to pierce your own soul." Commitment often brings hurt because it brings a rending of priorities. "But," Simeon said, "His commitment is going to reveal the hearts of people . . . it will disclose what's in the hearts of others."

Commitment brings involvement. It also brings exposure. Whenever we see Jesus and the totality and perfection of His commitment to the Father, our own double-mindedness comes under the judgment of God, and conviction begins to work in our hearts.

ENVIRONMENT FOR COMMITMENT

We have every evidence that Jesus' family was devoted to helping Him carry out His commitment and that Mary and Joseph, as well as the community, gave themselves to properly instilling in Jesus the truths that had been handed to them. Jesus was instructed in the synagogue as He grew up, just as all little boys were instructed. We have every evidence that Jesus' parents were very devout, because they annually went up to the Passover. At all the proper times they were involved in their Jewish faith and religion. They were quite dedicated to God as they understood Him. Jesus belonged to the Father, to the family, to the community, and to the temple. All

these elements reinforced His commitment.

Look at Luke 2:41–47:

And His parents used to go to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast:

and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. And His parents were unaware of it,

but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

And when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him.

And it came about that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them, and asking them questions.

And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

When Jesus reached twelve years of age, as was the custom among the Jewish people, He made His first pilgrimage to Jerusalem. When Passover time came, He went up to be presented again before the Lord as a firstborn Hebrew and as a male member of His family. He presented Himself to God as a member of the adult community.

It must have been a very exciting experience . . . a difficult two or three day journey over hot and rocky territory. But it was a sign of growing up, and I imagine that every Jewish child looked forward—just as any fourteen or fifteen year old today looks forward to learning to drive at age sixteen—to the day when he could make the first pilgrimage.

Every year when Jesus' parents came home from the pilgrimage, Jesus would hear about the masses of people that came to the Passover from all over that part of the world. He also would hear about the temple itself and all its glories. He'd probably hear about the great walls of Jerusalem and the great stones that surrounded it, and there must have been a beating in His young heart, and a yearning to see the capital, the Zion of God.

But more deeply than that in Jesus was stirring an eternal nature that was drawn and attracted as if by a magnet to Jerusalem and to the will of God. I assume as Jesus went for the first time into the court of the men, where women and Gentiles were not privileged to go, and as He stood there with His father and with His family, something happened to Him. And the Father began to awaken the eternal nature that was in Him. As others moved out of the court to look around the city and to join the festivities, Jesus hung around the temple. He was attracted, like an arrow, to the center of the system.

INSTRUMENT OF THE FATHER

While other young people did things young people do, Jesus listened to the teachers. He couldn't dismiss what was going on in His spirit. He went right to the teachers, the theologians, those who shaped that system. He found Himself listening to them with deep intensity. Then, at some point, He heard a voice inside of Him saying, "I have business here." It was the voice that He belonged to. It was the voice that He had been given to.

I'm not at all sure that in those days Jesus understood the fullness of the Father speaking to Him, or the fullness of the Father's purpose, but much like us when we're first born of the Spirit of God, He began to give Himself over to that inner voice. He heard the Father say, "I have business in this place."

I don't know exactly how long Jesus was there, but

"A commitment
to God will
plunder your
ambition, and will
play havoc with
your privacy."

the longer He stayed, the more involved He became. He couldn't detach Himself from the teachers, the Pharisees, the scribes, the theologians—those who were speaking profoundly in that hour to those people. As He listened, His mind became a channel for the wisdom of God, and His tongue became an oracle of God. He began to get into conversation with them.

At that moment Jesus was in the center of God's purpose—asking questions. Now most of you know the average twelve year old can ask questions, some that you can't even answer. I imagine that Jesus, at twelve years and with the help of the Father, was asking those Pharisees some pretty embarrassing questions! The Father was thinking up questions, and Jesus was asking them, and I imagine they both were

enjoying it. The Father was enjoying stumping the Pharisees and the "wisdom of the wise" through a babe, and Jesus was enjoying the eternal nature that was blossoming inside of Him. Jesus' questions to the Pharisees probably went something like this:

"Aren't we Jews?"

"Yes."

"Why then is Herod our king?"

"Well, son, you just have to get a little older to understand that."

"Isn't Herod a son of Esau, an Edomite? The Bible says that Jacob should rule over Esau."

"Well, you just haven't read the commentaries on that subject."

Maybe Jesus asked them the question Gideon asked the angel, "If God is with us, then where are the miracles that He did in the days of our fathers? And what are these Romans doing among us?"

"Shhhh! You don't want to ask that too loud, son. Now we can explain that to you."

Maybe He'd say, "Let me ask you about Psalm 110. What does it mean when it said, 'The Lord says to my Lord'? Are there two Lords? Our God is one."

Those theologians must have been mesmerized! They must have literally been entranced. They couldn't get away. They must have been thinking, "Just one more question, and we'll catch this kid yet." It was like a world match chess tournament. Jesus kept checkmating them, and they kept saying, "Let's play one more game!"

In the meantime, while Jesus was stumping the Pharisees, His parents, who were veteran Passover attenders, went about their normal routine. They had been going to Passovers for so long that they had become old hands at Passovers. Don't you know that the more often you do religious things, the easier it becomes to take some things for granted? The Bible says they *assumed* that Jesus was in their midst. Habit will make you presumptuous. The more often you do something, the more likely you are to assume that you know what's going on. But just because you've done a thing a hundred or a thousand times doesn't guarantee that you understand it any better. As a matter of fact, the process is likely to condition you to do it simply out of *habit* rather than out of *understanding*.

I believe this happened to Mary and Joseph. The Passover week had gone by, and they were on their way home, already having traveled a full day's journey. Meanwhile Jesus is back in Jerusalem, warming Himself to the Father's business.

Now I don't believe it was a mistake that Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. I believe the Father had Him stay there. As a matter of fact, the Father might have

blinded Mary's and Joseph's eyes to the fact that Jesus was where He was.

COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WILL

We must see that our commitment is not simply to be good. Our commitment is far more than that. It's to do the will of God in the earth, whatever that will is.

Scripture says in Luke 2:52, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Jesus' commitment to the Father was one factor in His growing up into the image of the Father. What you're committed to will shape your maturity.

To put it another way, you become like what you follow. Jesus' commitment to the Father caused Him to always behold the face of the Father. He grew up being able to say, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

Jesus had no "Plan B." He had no options. If what He had before Him failed, then all failed. He was not double-minded. He never put His hand to the plow and looked back. He set His face, the Bible says, as a flint (see Is. 50:7).

If there's anything the Church of our generation needs, it is a single-minded commitment to God our Father and to Jesus our Lord. Jesus is our example of commitment to the Father and to God's people.

When you commit yourself to the Lord Jesus to do His will and to do His business, one of the first discoveries you make is that you can't do God's business *alone*. You can't do God's business by yourself. If you haven't found that out, you probably haven't gotten very far into God's business. Anyone who handles great campaigns or crusades knows all too well that your success is predicated on the loyalty of those who work around you. God's business is a corporate business. There may be a name. There may be some image that's projected. People may identify with some person or some ministry, but the truth is that it's a corporate business. And if it doesn't serve God or God's people, we really shouldn't be committed to it.

A commitment to God will plunder your ambition, and will play havoc with your privacy. A genuine commitment to the Lord will destroy what you had in mind for your life and will invade the privacy of your life. The first thirty years of Jesus' life are so private that there's hardly anything written about them. There's a little excerpt about His birth, another brief excerpt when He was twelve years old, and then for eighteen years we don't hear anything about Him. Then He's baptized and His life becomes public. Three and a half years later, He's hanging naked on a cross.

A commitment to God will destroy the privacy of your life to a great degree. When you commit

And when they [Mary and Joseph] saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

And they did not understand the statement which He had made to them (Lk. 2:48-50).

When Mary and Joseph came on the scene, they experienced something most parents have experienced. *They were mad!* "Why have you treated us like this?"

Did your child ever get lost from you? You think, "Oh, he's over there." You go over there, and he's not there. You say, "Well, I know he's over here." But he's not "over here." Then you begin to think he's been hit by a car, or he fell in the ditch. "Oh, if I had just treated Junior with more kindness. How many times have I fussed at the poor boy, and he's only eight!" You go through all this guilt and condemnation. Then you find him and you say, "You rascal, you! I ought to tan your hide!" So Mary and Joseph probably experienced this same ambivalence—trying to do right and doing wrong.

I believe the Holy Spirit had hold of Jesus and He said something that was a gentle rebuke: "Why were you anxious?" That was God's way of saying to Mary and Joseph through Jesus, "Don't you remember what Gabriel said? Don't you believe the prophecy that Elizabeth gave when you went to see her? Don't you remember what Simeon said? Don't you remember what Anna said? Don't you remember, Joseph, the dream when you were wondering whether you should marry Mary or not? Why are you anxious?" Then He said something else: "Don't you know that I must be about My Father's business?" His Father had business there.

Out of Jesus' mouth came an issue that was settled. Jesus said: "My commitment to the Father is a commitment to His business, and that supercedes every other commitment." A commitment to God is a commitment to His business. Wherever God has business for you, that's where you belong. *Whenever, wherever, however*—that's what your commitment is. Jesus' commitment wasn't simply to some code of ethics, or some theological position: it was a commitment to be where the Father wanted Him, doing what the Father wanted Him to do.

yourself to God, you are no longer a private person—you are part of a purpose. Wherever that purpose carries you, it will plunder your own ambition and your own self-interest.

A commitment to God will bring you in touch with people. We cannot withdraw. I want to just add a little side note. There has been some concern about small committed groups being isolated. There are times when isolation is a necessary thing for a time. But I don't believe that God's people are going to be isolated in the earth. God's people are going to be *involved* in the earth. The world might as well get ready because it's going to be confronted with what God's doing.

COMMITMENT TO GOD'S PEOPLE

A commitment to people must be based on a commitment to God first. When we are presented to the Lord, we henceforth belong to the Lord, and every other relationship must be under the Lord's jurisdiction. When Jesus was presented to the Lord, it was then the Lord's responsibility to determine His relationships. The Scripture refers in John 17:6 to, "Those whom *Thou* gavest Me."

Jesus committed Himself to men. The Scripture says that at first He wouldn't commit Himself to any man because He knew what was in men (see Jn. 2:24). But when He found the men the Father pointed out, the Scripture says that they became His friends, and He laid His life down for them.

Commitment is not a humanistic ideal. You don't commit yourself to people because it's a good idea. If you hear that God is building relationships, you don't run out and try to build some just because you heard God was doing it. If you hear God is building relationships, go to the Lord and find out what relationships the Lord has in store for you. Following

a humanistic ideal is not a living sacrifice—it's suicide.

A relationship that is established by the Lord, where we give our lives for people, is a living, acceptable sacrifice. When we run around in our own strength to build relationships, it's just plain suicide. Relationships that are not God-ordained will bring a death.

I'll never forget several years ago, how overburdened I became. I was taught that any opportunity to minister was a call from God. Have you found out that God doesn't want you to go through every open door?

Maybe being a Baptist had something to do with it because we were very active. Some people are not Baptists because they're not healthy enough to be Baptists! We had two meetings Sunday morning, two meetings Sunday evening, two meetings Wednesday night. Then there were all the auxiliaries. Then when you become a charismatic you do more of what you were doing before.

So I became so immersed in ministry that I could not extricate myself. I was in a spiritual whirlpool, going from meeting to meeting, trying to share what I believed God wanted me to share with people.

I went to minister in a church that had been praying for a pastor. I didn't know what was going on. The pastor had just resigned, and he had told the people that he thought I was the man God wanted to pastor that church. Some sister in the church had even prophesied that I was the man. (The minor part of the story is that they owed over a million dollars.)

But nobody had said anything to me about it; they were all very nice, and they just smiled at me a lot. About the third day I said to the pastor, who was still at the church, "What's going on around here? There's something I don't know about."

He said, "Well, we believe you ought to be the next pastor of this church."

It's hard to resist when somebody tells you that



"What you're committed to will shape your maturity. You become like what you follow."

you're the answer to the problem! You think, "How can I turn this down? After all, they recognize the wisdom God has given to me—and the gifts!"

I *tried* to be humble. I said, "Well, I know God is talking to me and er . . . ah . . . er . . . I'll let you know."

As a matter of formality I thought I probably ought to call the men I'm committed to—Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, and Don Basham. (I had just come into a committed relationship with them.) So I made a long distance call to them and laid out the whole situation. They said, "Don't say anything. As soon as the meeting is over, say the closing prayer and get yourself on the airplane and come home. We want to talk to you." You know, things look different at home! I praise God for committed brothers and sisters!

GUIDELINES FOR COMMITMENT

Commitment is not a reckless or random act. The Bible teaches us not to make an oath lightly. The Bible says it's better not to vow a vow than to vow it and not pay it (see Eccl. 5:5). As committed as Jesus was to God and to His disciples, His commitments were not random or reckless. The Bible says the night before He chose the twelve, He prayed all night long. He fasted. He sought the Lord.

Don't enter into relationship lightly. When you make covenant, it's like getting married. Whenever you enter into any covenant, you need to take all your prior commitments into account. The nature of covenant is life for life. It's sharing in successes and defeats together.

There are three important things about commitment that I want to share with you. First of all, be sure when you make any commitment that it's the Lord's will—because you belong to the Lord. Now I believe in shepherds over God's flock, but they are

under-shepherds. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd who owns all the sheep. God warns that when we make a commitment to a shepherd or to another Christian or to a marriage partner that we shouldn't be unequally yoked together (see 2 Cor. 6:14). So bear in mind, every commitment you make needs to be under the Lord's jurisdiction.

Secondly, make sure the commitment is mutual. Covenantal relationships are mutual relationships. Unless the other person feels the same way you do, it's a presumptuous relationship. Any relationship that is not reciprocal is dangerous. One-sided relationships will drain you.

Thirdly, *if* it's the will of God, and *if* it's mutual, *then* make your commitment total. Give yourself to it, as unto the Lord. Don't do it halfway.

A COMMITMENT TO LOVE

Present conditions in the Church and in the world indicate great dissolution and alienation in society. Crime and divorce are only surface symptoms. I once heard Father Terry Fullam, an Episcopal minister in Connecticut, say, "The Church in our day is like Noah's ark with all the animals: if it weren't for the storm outside, you couldn't stand the smell inside!" Some of the things we Christians do to each other, sinners don't even do to us yet! Many of us have come out of the world and into the Church without the world coming out of us. We're still walking in old ways. We haven't learned to walk together in love. But we're learning.

Several months ago I was in a mall in our area with my five-year-old son, and they had a petting zoo there in the mall. I was raised in the country, and we had goats and cows and pigs and chickens and ducks and all that, but my son hasn't had that kind of upbringing. So I like to take every opportunity to show my children animals and God's creation. So he and I went over to this petting zoo.

On the way in there was a little sign that said, "We are not responsible for your clothes." I didn't know what they meant, but I thought, "I'm going to watch out for my clothes." So Jonathan and I were walking through, petting the animals, when all of a sudden I felt something tug on my coat. I turned around and there was a goat, trying to eat my coat. I slapped him and said, "You crazy goat, leave my clothes alone!"

In the zoo there was also a beautiful Dalmatian, the same size as the goats. As I continued to walk around, I felt another tug on my coat. I turned around expecting to see that goat again, but this time it was the Dalmatian trying to eat my coat! I said, "I

can understand a goat trying to eat my coat, but not a dog."

I had some corn that the goats were eating, and there was that Dalmatian eating corn just like a goat! I said, "You don't understand, dog. You don't eat corn!"

I went across to some of the other animals, but this dog was still trying to chew on my coat. I looked at him and said, "You crazy dog, you're not a goat. You're a *dog*!" He had never heard that before. He cocked his head sideways and backed off and looked at me the whole time. If he could have talked, he might have said, "You mean I'm not a goat? I'm almost the same color. I smell like a goat, I eat like a goat. But I'm not a goat?"

We tend to adopt the ways of the people we are with. Sometimes we've run with the goats so long, we act like goats. Well, we're not goats; we're *sheep*! God's people need to learn God's ways.

WALKING IN COMMITMENT

I want to close with Matthew 7:12: "Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them; for this is the Law and the Prophets." Most of us know it this way: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Commitment to one another means that we treat each other the way we would like to be treated.

Relationship to other Christians is not just abstaining from the wrong things. It doesn't just mean that because you don't want anybody to steal from you, you don't steal. Or because you don't want anybody to lie about you, you don't lie about anybody. Or you don't want anybody to covet what you've earned, so you don't covet what anybody else has earned. Those are all "don'ts"!

Listen, relationship is a lot more than *not* doing. Relationship is *doing*. Jesus didn't just come and *not* curse, *not* steal, *not* lie, *not* commit adultery. He didn't simply *not* mistreat people; He treated them with the grace of God. Jesus came and laid down His life for us. He gave Himself because He belonged to God and He belonged to those God gave Him. Commitment is *doing*.

At the same cross where Jesus manifested His commitment to God, He also manifested His commitment to man. The same covenant blood brings man and God into common relationship. The same body is a temple that houses man and God. The same faith that the Father gave to Jesus He gives to us. The same Spirit that was on Jesus is on us. The same quickening that was on Him will quicken our mortal bodies. The same resurrection that He shared, we will share. His crown has become our crown. His victory has become our victory. His family has become our family. His Father has become our Father. His brothers are our brothers. His business is our business. We are His, and we are each other's forevermore. 🍷

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Follow the Leader

by Jim Moore

"You also became imitators of us and of the Lord..." (1 Thess. 1:6).

GOD IS TEACHING us how to walk as men of God. One way He's doing that is by raising up godly men to lead us. I really thank God that we have come to a time when we can openly say, "I'm a follower of this man in the Lord." I pastored a church where a brother would always pray, "Lord, hide the pastor behind the cross, so we can't see anyone but You." Well, sure enough, they never did see me, and I'm not sure they saw the Lord either. We both were hidden. They didn't follow me, and they didn't follow Him!

I must admit, I contributed to the problem. Whenever anybody came to me for leadership or looked to me as an example to follow, I would tell them, "Don't follow me. Follow the Lord!" Although my reasons were scriptural, based on Ephesians 5:1, "Be imitators of God," I'm sure my instruction to "just follow the Lord" frustrated and confused many people who were seeking the tangible spiritual leadership that I should have provided as their pastor.

The dilemma illustrated here is one that faces every Christian—where do we draw the line between following the leadership of men and following the leadership of God? For although many Spirit-baptized Christians are afraid to admit they follow men and would rather say, "I follow no one but the Lord," the truth is that, to some degree, we *all* follow men who lead us in the ways of God.

In this article, I want to shed some light on the dilemma we face by looking at two seemingly opposite statements that Paul made: "Be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 11:1) and "Be imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1). The point I hope to make is that Paul was not contradicting himself. Properly understood, these two statements say the same thing and ultimately produce identical results. Or, as Paul summed it up in 1 Thessalonians 1:6, "Ye also became imitators of *us* and *the Lord*" (NAS). To follow the man of God is to follow God. To follow God is to follow the man of God. There is no difference because the results will be the same.

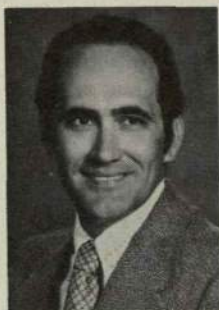
THE NEED FOR AN EXAMPLE

Paul says, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Paraphrased, this could be said, "Follow me. If you don't know how to act like the Lord wants you to, then just watch me, and you'll learn how." That sounds boastful at first, but it really isn't. In fact, most of us who are in some capacity of leadership don't *want* to say that. God has to put pressure on us before we'll finally take the position that, with God's help, we will try to be an example to those seeking our leadership.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:16: "I exhort you therefore, be imitators of *me*" (NAS). He didn't say, "Look, *you* follow the Lord." There are times when we can't follow the Lord because we don't know the ways of God well enough to follow Him.

One of the real disadvantages in my own life for years was that I never had a pastor. At seventeen years of age, I was called by the Lord into the ministry. Through ten years of college, seminary, and pastoral duty, there was no personal oversight of my life by an older man of God. While the classroom lecture was good, it was no substitute for the Timothy-Paul relationship that I needed. As a young pastor, it was difficult—learning alone the pastoral duties of conducting worship, weddings, funerals, and counseling. But even more difficult, if not impossible without personal oversight and an example to follow, was developing the inward character of a man of God.

After those ten struggling years, God graciously baptized me in the Holy Spirit and gave me a man to watch and learn from. He brought a brother into my life who became like a father in the Lord to me. This man had a desire for me to mature. He taught me the Bible while sitting around my kitchen table and would take me with him when he ministered. I would watch and listen to him preach. Then I would study his teachings, and preach the same message he had preached. I didn't know how to pray for the sick or to cast out a demon, but I'd watch this man. He would see to it that I was close by to watch and learn,



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He is presently an elder in Fountain of Life Fellowship in Ruston, Louisiana, where he lives with his wife, Dottie, and two children, Eric and Kay.

and he'd say, "Jimmy, come over here and let's pray for this fellow." And he would pray for him. Then after a while he began to say, "Now, I want you to pray this time. First, anoint him with oil, and then pray for him." And I learned. I became an imitator of that man.

It's good when we can begin to see that it's all right for a godly leader to say, "Be ye followers of me. Just do what I do." None of us know how to follow God when we haven't walked with God, so we need somebody who can show us how to walk.

MOVING TOWARD MATURITY

The word that Paul gave to the Ephesians was different than what he said to the Corinthians. To the Corinthians he had said, "Follow me," but to the Ephesians he was now saying, "Therefore be imitators of *God*, as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1, NAS).

Paul could speak to the Ephesian people in a way that he wasn't able to speak to the Corinthian people. Why? What I understand as the reason was that the Ephesians had moved farther up the road in their journey towards maturity than the Corinthians.

To move from immaturity to maturity is quite a spiritual journey. It takes much time and experience. I remember one particular lesson in my own journey when God taught me the importance of learning before doing. To teach me the lesson, He gave me a series of opportunities to learn from watching other men of God. Unfortunately I didn't want to just watch and learn—I wanted to *do*. I had "preacher's itch"! I was on fire with the Word of God, and I kept trying to force doors open, while God kept slamming them closed.

I'll never forget the first home Bible Study where I was finally going to get the opportunity to preach. Having been out of the pastoral position for three months, suffering from a severe case of "preacher's itch," I could hardly wait. As it happened though, a preacher I had recently met dropped in on the meeting unexpectedly. As a polite gesture, I asked him if he would like to share a word with us. When I made the offer, I had meant just a short word or two, not a whole message.

Well, this preacher got up and shared for an hour and a half. When he got through, I was too intimidated to say anything. He spoke of things I had never heard of. Seldom had I heard such wisdom and seen such anointing. I had begun the meeting thinking, "This will be a real opportunity for this man to learn a few things from me," and God, chuckling at my brash pride, responded, "No, Jim. This will be a real

opportunity to learn a few things from him." So, I didn't get to preach that day—I got to listen!

A few days later I was asked to teach a home Bible class in Shreveport. I was ready! I had been wanting to teach for three months. But another brother who had just been baptized in the Holy Spirit was there and was asked to give his testimony. After a two-hour testimony, it was so late that everybody was ready to go home. Again, I had to listen!

A few weeks after that I was in Waco, Texas, attending a Bible conference. One of the leaders came up and said, "Would you speak this afternoon to the group?" I got all prayed up in preparation for the meeting, but God moved in another way, and I didn't get to speak.

Shortly after this, I was in a church in Baton Rouge. The pastor said, "Jimmy, I want you to preach this afternoon." I went to the motel and put on my suit. Finally, I was to get my opportunity. Well, God moved supernaturally that afternoon—healing people, delivering people, doing all kinds of things—and again, I didn't get to preach.

Then came that proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Two other men and myself were to share preaching responsibilities at a youth conference in Mobile. I was to speak twice during the conference. The first time, a brother who had just come back from Africa happened to walk into the meeting just as it came my time to speak. He was going to have to leave right after the meeting, so they said, "Jimmy, would you mind if he just filled your slot?"

I said, "Well, I guess I . . . uh. No, I don't mind."

When my second time came, Ken Sumrall, a pastor from Pensacola walked in. He was on his way back to his church after a time of ministry and was really on fire. It's only proper to let a man of his stature speak if he's there, but it just so happened he came in at my turn. So again, I didn't get to speak.

Well, as I was driving home from those meetings in Mobile, I had a lot of time to think. I got in the car and started that three-hundred-mile trip back to Ruston, Louisiana, and God began to deal with me. I was so angry I was weeping. I was angry at God. I was angry at all the people who had prevented me from speaking. But at some point in those frustrating moments, God spoke to me. He said, "If you will be quiet long enough to learn, I'll give you the opportunity to speak." Those words healed my "preacher's itch."

I was taught an important lesson that would often help on my journey toward maturity: *learning precedes doing*. Only later did I realize what I had missed. Being so consumed with ambition to speak, I had not taken care to observe the conduct of men

who knew how to follow God. Gradually, I realized even clearer that on this journey toward maturity (a journey still far from finished), to be an imitator of God requires first being an imitator of the man of God.

To be an imitator involves more than a casual relationship. You need to know the inward attitudes as well as the outward forms of the one you are imitating. Your knowing must be the knowledge of experience. Paul said to Timothy, "But you, Timothy, have known intimately both what I have taught and how I have lived. My purpose and my faith are no secrets to you. You saw my endurance and love and patience as I met all those persecutions and difficulties . . . And you know how the Lord brought me safely through them all" (1 Tim. 3:10, JBP).

To imitate a man's purpose, we would of necessity need to walk with him closely and for a long period of time. We do not learn this by hearing a sermon on

"After those ten
struggling years,
God... gave me a
man to watch and
learn from."

Sunday, hearing a tape, or reading a book. It comes from a committed relationship. As we walk through many situations together, we learn to imitate the conduct, faith, and love of the man of God.

The objective of imitating our leaders is for us to grow up into maturity so that we can follow God. What God wants is to bring us to the place that when people see us, they'll know God. When they get into our presence, they'll know we speak for God Himself.

THE CORINTHIAN PROBLEM

Are there not dangers in following men? Yes, there are many. But the Corinthian problem did not come from following men, but from not knowing how to follow.

Though the Corinthians claimed to be followers of

Paul, or Peter, or Apollos, and even Christ (1 Cor. 1:12), in reality, they weren't. They had not received their divisive attitudes and sectarian spirit from any of these men or Christ. They were conducting themselves as the mere men they had been, rather than as the new men they were becoming (1 Cor. 3:3). By imitating Paul's teachings and actions, as Paul did Christ's (1 Cor. 11:1), the Corinthians could have been delivered from their sectarian attitudes.

How can we know if we are afflicted by the same spiritual weaknesses of the Corinthians? Let me suggest three symptoms that identify the immature understanding that caused the Corinthian problem:

(1) The Corinthians saw their relationships to the men they followed as a means of *dividing*, rather than *joining* the Body of Christ. It is a subtle form of unhealthy individualism. "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I am of Peter, and I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12, NAS). Following Peter does not separate you from Paul. It *joins* you with him. Paul and Peter are not in disagreement, and Christ is not divided. Therefore, to follow one is to recognize the other. Being a hand does not separate you from the foot. In fact, for the hand to be joined to the foot, it must be attached to the body.

Following Paul, a dynamic teacher, should not cause you to despise Peter, a rugged preacher. The Body of Christ is being joined together by *relationships*. As we are joined, so the Church will become a functioning, growing Body.

(2) The Corinthians were using their relationships as *ego-builders*. This was reflected in the way they spoke and acted. The Corinthians were arrogant (1 Cor. 4:6,18). They were saying, "I am of Paul," rather than, "Paul is the man God has blessed me with."

Name-dropping in the Kingdom of God is prohibited. We should be careful not to exploit our relationships to gain position. Relationships with men should give us *life*, not position and influence.

When Paul was blinded on the road to Damascus, Jesus sent him to an unknown disciple, Ananias. Later, Paul was closely related to Barnabas. Neither of these men added position or influence to Paul. They brought *life* to Paul. If you are looking for life in the Kingdom, and not position, there are many little-known but godly men that can help you. If you are looking for position, no one can help.

(3) The Corinthians were blinded to God's larger

purpose. They had not come to see that God's priority was to build a temple, not a pile of individual stones. The temple is the corporate structure of God's people as they are built together. Each person was a living stone in that corporate structure. "Do you not know you [plural] are a temple of God?" (1 Cor. 3:16, NAS). Now, that doesn't mean, "You are *individually* a temple." Rather, Paul is saying, "Don't you know that God is building a mighty building, His Church—and if you divide it up into little segments, you've done something awful and terrible to that building?"

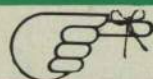
The temple of God can be destroyed in two ways. If we refuse to be fitted into the place God has for us, and remain an individual stone, we destroy the temple. Or, if when fitted in, we use that relationship to separate us from functioning with the other stones, we destroy the temple. "If any man destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him" (1 Cor. 3:17, NAS).

Our relationships with men of God should strengthen and support other living stones. The attitude of *selfishness* that came from a lack of vision that God was building a whole temple cropped up often among Jesus' disciples. "Lord, what are we to get from following you?" Peter implied (Lk. 18:28). "Can we sit on the right hand and left hand in the Kingdom?" asked James and John (Mt. 20:21). Jesus even had to rebuke the disciples when they wanted to call down fire on a whole city (Lk. 9:54). They were engrossed with, "What do I get?" and "What position can I have?" If our relationships with men of God are motivated by a desire to *get*, rather than *give*, we will destroy the temple of God.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Using God-given relationships to propagate division, to build ego-kingdoms, and to meet selfish ambitions while missing God's complete purpose is symptomatic of the problem that has plagued Christians for centuries. We can call it the "Corinthian syndrome," but the symptoms are no strangers to us. So let me give *three steps* from Scripture and personal experience that will help us to imitate the man of God in a way that will bring glory to God.

(1) To imitate the man of God, we need to *recognize and submit to one who has a father-*



Don't forget: June 2 is a national day of prayer and fasting.

-*authority in our lives.* "You have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I exhort you therefore, be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 4:15-16, NAS). Whether it is a nation, a family, or the church, we all need to have a father-authority in our lives.

My son may have many teachers, but I am his father. This gives me authority and responsibility far beyond that of his teachers. Paul could speak to the Corinthians as a father as no other teacher could. His was an authority based on spiritual principle. Out of this authority, Paul could correct, discipline, exhort, and love in a way that would bring deep change in the lives of the Corinthians.

Recognizing father-authority in our lives will allow us to learn his ways that are in Christ. Paul says, "I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved son in the Lord, and he will remind you of *my ways* which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17). Paul knew that by learning *his ways*, the Corinthians would learn the ways of God.

(2) To imitate the man of God, *we must develop a growing personal relationship with God.* Some think that imitating men will weaken our relationship with God. The opposite is true. The Ephesians' love and devotion to Paul is evident in the moving event recorded in Acts 20 when they wept over his departure. They loved and honored Paul. This did not hinder, but enhanced their relationship with God.

On the other hand, the Corinthians, with all their clamor about leadership, seemed to be lacking in a close relationship to God. They were not "God-conscious." So Paul has to remind them in his letters that it is, "God who is faithful," "God causes growth," "we are God's fellow-workers, God's field, God's building," "you are not your own but God's."

The only thing that will ultimately keep us in covenant is knowing and seeking God. We build *His* Kingdom. It is *His* Church that is involved. It is *His* Name and *His* honor that are at stake.

It is out of commitment to God that we follow and imitate the man of God. A beautiful example of this is found in King David in the Old Testament. At first people came to him out of their need. They were distressed, in debt, and discontented (1 Sam. 22:2). But later people came out of vision. They had seen God. The Scripture says, "For day by day men came to David to help him, until there was a great army like the army of God . . . men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do" (1 Chron. 12:22, 32, NAS). They said, "Behold we are

of your bone and your flesh . . . for the Lord has said to you [David], 'You shall shepherd my people Israel' " (1 Chron. 11:1-2, NAS). Their commitment to follow David came out of a very deep relationship with God. As we imitate the man of God, we should not allow our prayer life and devotional experience to wane. We should grow in our personal relationship to God.

(3) To imitate the man of God, *we need to enlarge our vision of God's complete purpose.* One translation of Proverbs 29:18 states, "Without a progressive vision we will dwell carelessly." It is difficult to have the Corinthian attitude of selfishness and self-seeking when we see the fullness of God's plan.

We must see beyond "*my ministry*," "*my needs*," and "*my desires*." Just as men came to David out of vision, so we need to come to our relationships out of a larger vision of God's purpose. As Paul exhorts in 1 Corinthians 3:9, "We are God's fellow-workers, you are God's field, God's building," he was enlarging their vision of God's purpose.

Jesus did the same thing by pointing out, "The fields are white unto harvest." He prayed, "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word . . . that the world may believe that Thou didst send me" (Jn. 17:20-21, NAS).

In conclusion, people of God who have *father-authority* in their lives, who walk in a deep *commitment to God*, and who seek to be a part of *God's whole purpose* can be exhorted to be imitators of God. But even if they are told to be "imitators of me" by the man of God, the results will be the same.

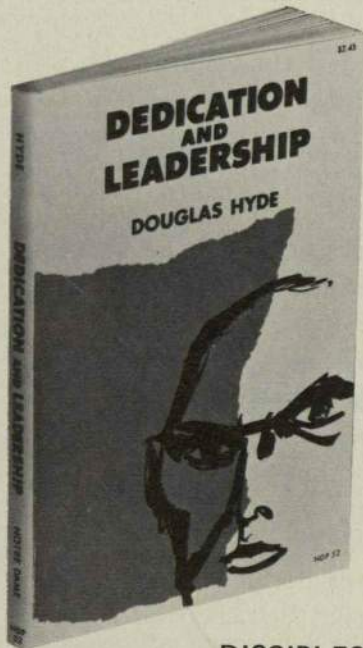
Maturing Christians will honor the man of God. They will seek to be builders of the whole temple. They will see to it that they are joined to their brothers in a way that will not divide, but will strengthen the Body of Christ. Of such a people it can be said, "You became followers of me and the Lord" (1 Thess. 1:6). ♡

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The next issue of *New Wine* will offer a pleasant mixture of practical teaching and inspirational sharing from Ern Baxter and Don Basham. In addition it will carry the usual monthly features, as well as other articles.

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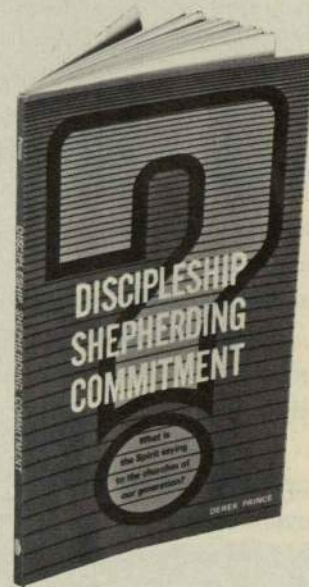
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A Word of Prophetic Instruction

The following prophecy concerning leadership was given by Charles Simpson at a recent men's conference.

“WHO IS THIS who comes from Bozrah with his garments died red? He comes from treading the fierceness of the winepress of the wrath of the Almighty God. And the grapes of wrath have been crushed and the blood is on His garments. Who is this who stands with a sword drawn over against Jericho? The Lord of Hosts is His name, and the Captain of the Lord's host. It is He.”

“And who is it that stands with His feet burnished like brass over the waters? Who is it that the servant Daniel saw?” saith the Lord. “Yea, the Lord of Hosts is His name. Who is it that stands with His feet burnished like brass and His hair white and His countenance radiant? Who is it that John saw there in the day of his tribulation and the hour of his testing? It is the Lord of Hosts. Yea, the Lord is His name.”

“And who is it that came to His hour and said to the enemy and the prince of this world, ‘You have nothing in me’? Who is it that triumphed over him? Yea, the Lord is His name.”

“Be not hasty therefore to enter into war. Neither go ye forth into battle with a sword you cannot wield. Be not as a comic soldier who dives over his horse and falls on his face. Be not as a man with untried weapons,” saith the Lord. “For the Lord came in fulness of time, prepared of the Father. For He was not premature nor unprepared, but the Lord formed Him before the foundations of the world. Yea, He was perfect in His countenance; He was radiant in His glory, powerful in His majesty, and formed fully unto every good work. And when He said unto His enemy, ‘You have nothing in me,’ hell *shook*,” saith the Lord, “for it was true. There was nothing in Him that was imperfect. There was nothing of the enemy.”

I say unto you, “You shall know Him as your Captain. You shall see Him and His salvation. You shall understand Him and His feet that are burnished with brass, that tread forth the judgment of God. And He shall cause you to be able to say, ‘The enemy comes, but he has nothing in me.’”

“Shall the Lord give victory to them who have the enemy in them? Shall those who have adultery triumph over adultery? Shall those who worship idols destroy those who worship idols?”

I say unto you, “Shall those who have gone after the gods of this world have triumph over them who worship the gods of this world? Nay,” I say unto you, “shall rebels triumph over rebels?”

But I say unto you, “God has sent your Captain. He has raised up leadership over you that the enemy shall be gotten out from within thee, that thou shalt have nothing within you that should cause you to be defeated.”

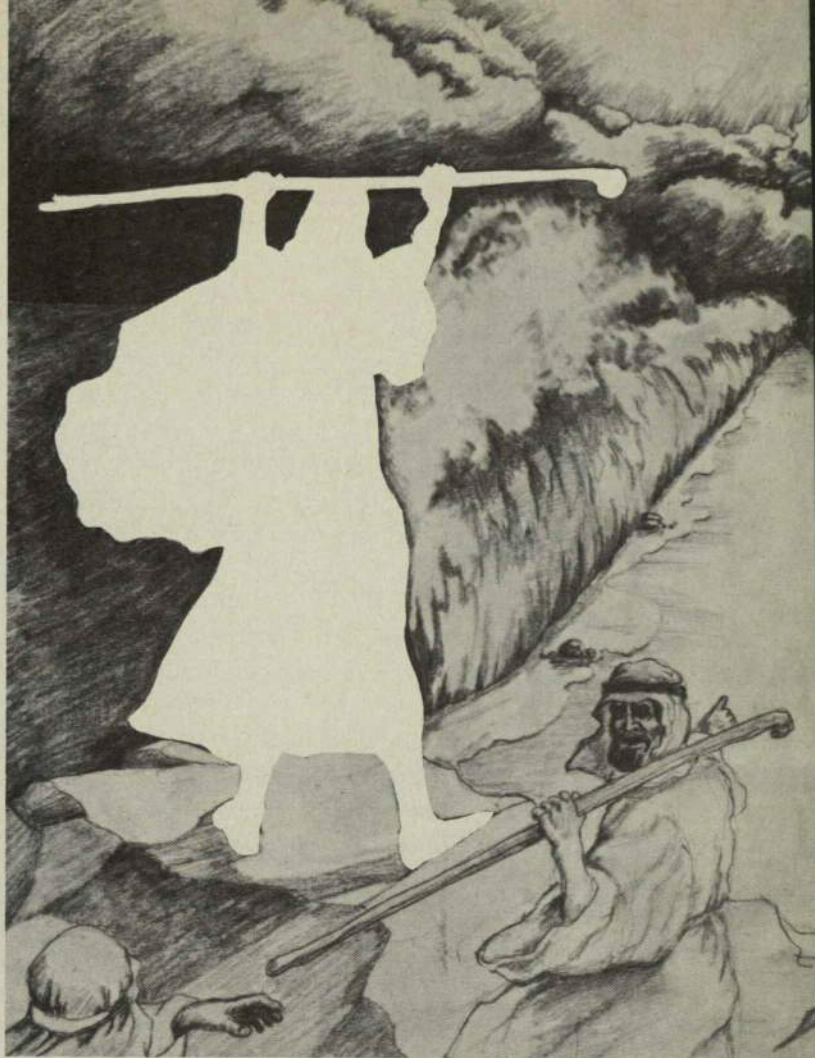
“And when it is done,” saith the Lord, “when I have formed you, when I have prepared you, and when the enemy is no longer within you . . . that is, when you no longer are *defeating yourself* . . . then shall you face the enemy and say, ‘Aha, my hour is come. Thou hast nothing in me, and my Captain shall manifest His salvation in me.’”

“Rejoice, therefore, for God has not sent you into a full battle in this hour, but rather He is preparing you so that in that day, there shall be no room for defeat. There shall be no room for the enemy to lay hold upon thee. He is forming you. Rejoice that God shall not prematurely put you in a place where you cannot stand, but He is doing that which is good and needful. Rejoice, for He shall prepare thee.”

**NONE TO
GUIDE
HER,**

**NONE TO
TAKE
HER
BY THE
HAND**

**BOB
MUMFORD**



We need men who can lead others in God.



ROUSE YOURSELF! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the Lord's hand the cup of His anger: the chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs.

There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; nor is there one to take her by the hand among all the sons she has reared.

These two things have befallen you; who will mourn for you?—the devastation and destruction, famine and sword; how shall I comfort you?

Your sons have fainted, they lie helpless at the head of every street, *like an antelope in a net*, full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God (Is. 51:17–20, NAS).

While in Australia a few months ago, I met with a group of Christian leaders. They said to me, "All right, Mumford, in one sentence tell us what you're up to." I sat there for a moment wondering what to say, and I felt like the Lord gave me a word of knowledge.

I answered them, "All right, I'll tell you what I'm up to. The reproduction of new leadership." There were seven very astute, mature brothers in the room, and they just looked at me and said, "That really is the issue, isn't it?"

Verse eighteen of Isaiah 51 is a description of a nation in deep spiritual trouble: "There is none to guide her." I repeat, "*There is none to guide her.*" There is nobody that knows the way—nobody that even knows where the path is, let alone how to walk in it! It's not enough to be willing to sell all for the Kingdom. You have to know where the pearl is!

"There is none to take her by the hand." Of all the sons that she has brought forth, there is no guide and no leader. Do you know the difference between a pointer and a leader? For many years, we were pointers. We would say to people, "Now don't look at me. Don't look at man. Keep your eyes on Jesus!" We were pointing.

What were we really saying? "I can't make it, but you can." Now we need leaders, not pointers. We need men who can take another man by the hand and lead him in God.

Verse 20 says that all of the sons she has brought forth are like a wild bull in a net. They are tangled up in all kinds of things that produce continual frustration and inefficiency. The New American Standard says it's an antelope; King James says it's a bull—but it is an animal trapped in a net. Can you picture an animal struggling in a net? That's a description of the way I felt about my life, my ministry, the will of God, and all that I tried to do for so many years! I felt like a wild bull in a net!

It was not a matter of consecration or dedication. It was not a matter of commitment. It was not a matter of whether I was willing to suffer or not. I was literally trapped in a net of spiritual bondage that I was not able to shake!

QUALITY CONTROL

Our problem right now is not getting people to accept the message of government, authority and

being rightly related. (We have more people that want to relate than we have men who are able to shepherd them and care for them.) Our problem is that of *quality control*. Quality control means that the message is applied, administered and produces the kind of fruit the Lord intended it to produce.

I asked David Edwards, a professor from Elim Bible Institute, to come down to Ft. Lauderdale and share some time with me. I said, "I want you to examine what we are doing here and see if there's domination, abuse or misapplication of truth in the fiber of what we are doing."

David came down and spent four or five days with us. At the end of that time I said, "David, what do you see?"

His eyes filled with tears, and he said, "Bob, what I see among you and your brothers is the nearest thing I've seen to what I knew in the Welsh visitation.

"Early in the visitation, when I was a young boy, a man came to our house. He was a man who carried apostolic authority. During his visit he sat down with my father and said to him, 'Mr. Edwards, your ministry is needed in the southern part of England.' He didn't say any more than that.

"My daddy replied, 'Yes sir, I hear that. Thank you very much. We'll prepare immediately.' I stood there as a young man, and I understood what authority was. Apostolic authority came to my father, and on that word my father packed up and moved his whole family."

We're not touching anything new. We're touching the very heart of God. But what we need *before anything else* is quality control in all that we are doing.

In order to have the qualities of flexibility, depth and clarity of life, you must *move everything else out of the life that competes with the will of God*. Man, I wanted to do that since the day I met the Lord! Is that your own heart cry? "All I want is to do Your will. Show me where Your will is."

PREPARATION

Recently I heard an excellent illustration of quality control. The example dealt with the soil. Let's look at Isaiah 28:23–28 and see what the Lord says about preparation of soil as it relates to quality control.

Give ear and hear my voice, listen and hear my words.

Does the farmer plow continually to plant seed? Does he *continually* turn and harrow the ground?

Does he not level its surface, and sow dill and

"We need leaders, not pointers. We need men who can take another man by the hand and lead him in God."

scatter cummin, and plant wheat in rows, barley in its place, and rye within its area?

For his God instructs and teaches him properly.

For dill is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is the cartwheel driven over cummin; but dill is beaten out with a rod, and cummin with a club.

Grain for bread is crushed . . . he does not thresh it longer (NAS).

There has come a basic change in our attitude toward what God is saying today. We have ceased pounding seeds into concrete! This means we are letting God be God in what we do, and we are letting Him take the initiative again. We are ceasing to pound seeds into the concrete, and beginning to deal with the soil, the preparation of *the man*, with the plow, the harrow and the disk.

The lesson here is very deep and very important. The farmer does not *continue* to plow. He does not *continue* to harrow. God does not enjoy plowing you up continually! In twenty-three years of walking with the Lord, I have seen God deal severely with men and women; I've seen Him deal severely with me, and one of the things that I want to testify to is this: never in my life have I seen God use more dealings than were absolutely necessary. Never!

You say, "Brother Bob, He deals so severely with me!" I'll tell you why. The farmer knows when you need the plow! He knows when to disk. He knows when to harrow. He knows how to prepare the ground.

We, as God's people, must learn to embrace the dealings of God with joy! Don't run from them. Don't rebuke them. Grab them like an orange and squeeze all the juice out of them! Learn every lesson out of every dealing, whether it be plows, disks or harrows! But not only does He know how to plow the ground, He also knows how to get the grain out.

Do you know what dill is? Have you ever seen dill pickles and those little tiny seeds that look like miniature ball bearings? That's dill. The Lord knows not to use a sledge on dill.

He knows how to use a club on cummin. Do you

know why the club? It is a healthier thing. And He beats the cummin, which is a form of a spice. He also knows how to winnow the wheat. He crushes the wheat to make it into bread.

You see, the Lord knows when to plow and when to quit plowing. He knows when to disk and when to quit disking. He also knows how to crush corn into meal for bread. He knows just how much force to use. When I was teaching homiletics in Bible college, I said to the young students, "Don't worry about the depth of your message. The Lord always allows every man a proportionate amount of suffering to deepen His message."

Part of quality control is hearing the Word of God like it's really written. We are hearing the price. We are not hearing what God can do for us. We are finally hearing what we can do for God. The change has come. The plow has stopped. The seed is in. The first crops are beginning to appear.

LEARNING TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT

God will send you, if He hasn't already, a man with a plow in his hand. It's not some sovereign, mystical thing; it's a man with a plow or a harrow or a disk, and he knows how to run it right up your back. You say, "I am getting tender!" Now you're getting the message.

Look at Isaiah 50:4-7:

The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens *Me* morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.

The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back.

I gave My back to those who strike Me [the plow, the harrow, the disk], and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

For the Lord God helps Me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed (NAS).

We have to understand that what God is doing cannot be reduced to a set of rules. It's not a methodology. It's not some legalistic process that we are talking about. It means we are going to learn how to walk in the Spirit.

Jesus knew how to walk in the Spirit. He knew obedience. He said, "I didn't rebel. I didn't say, 'Why me? Why is this happening to Me?' I didn't go through all that like some little whimpering child. I said I'd set My face like a flint. I said, 'God, I thank

you for the privilege of walking this way. Plow Me when I need to be plowed. Disk Me when I need to be disked, and harrow Me.' "

If we cannot agree with that, we are in danger of missing His word, failing His purpose and hardening under the dealings of God, and in the end, being rejected. There is only one thing we need to be afraid of: that is, missing His will.

SPIRITUAL POW'S

The ultimate weapon of God is a foot soldier with a rifle. It's not battleships or atomic bombs that finally do the job. The ultimate weapon in warfare has ever been and ever will be one kind of man, a soldier. God's ultimate weapon is to save this one kind of man who has been dealt with, disciplined, plowed, disked and harrowed.

I carry a very deep, God-given burden for what I call "spiritual prisoners of war." A spiritual POW is a man or woman who gets saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, gets a handful of tracts, is sent out to take on the devil and ends up being taken prisoner himself.

The Jesus Movement in California is falling apart so fast now that it is frightening. A lot of the kids are backsliding, going back into drugs, and denying the whole thing. Do you know why? Because they were taught, "Jesus is coming next week! In fact, it may be tomorrow! You don't need to study. You don't need to do anything."

Now, just a few years later, Jesus hasn't come! They have no foundation, no direction, no placement, no relationship. So do you know what happens? When they go out to challenge the devil on his territory, they wind up being captured by the very thing they are seeking to destroy. Habits they once were set free from now have them in bondage again—drugs, sex, lusts, apathy, pressures, religious cults, confusion and all kinds of spiritual deception.

Do you understand me when I say that a man in a bamboo prison in Vietnam for seven years is still a U.S. citizen? Do you know that the forces of hell have many of our troops captured out there? They are spiritual prisoners of war—men saved and with a heart for God, but trapped in all kinds of habits, feelings, rejections, backslidings and religious confusion.

They're saying, "Is there anybody that can guide me? Does anybody know the way? Can anybody take me by the hand?"

"Aw," we said, "you don't need anybody to take your hand. Just keep your eyes on Jesus. Don't look at us."

"That's how I got where I am," they cry. "How can I interpret all this? How can I know the voice of God? How can I understand all the guidance, and feelings, and leadings and doctrines? How can I know all this business?"

Have you ever gone hunting? Would you like to go hunting in Montana without a guide? When you're lost up there, you're really lost! When they say "big sky country," they're not kidding, because when you're lost there, all you can see is sky.

Not me. I want to travel with somebody who knows where the jeep is! There is no better feeling when the hunt's over than for the guy to say, "Come on, there's the jeep."

A lot of people do not know where home is. They love the Lord with all their heart and all their mind, but they do not have any direction; they do not know who they are; they do not know where they are going. Their cry is, "Oh, God, show me!"

I am not talking about some mental or psychological cripple or someone who has had a frontal lobotomy performed on him. I am talking about healthy men who have graduated from college and seminary who have known God and preached all their lives, who want to know how to relate and how to get going with God!

Isaiah 51:11 is the promise to spiritual POW's:

So the ransomed of the Lord will return, and come with joyful shouting to Zion: and everlasting joy *will be* on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away (NAS).

Now go to verse 14: "The exile will soon be set free, and will not die in the dungeon, nor will his bread be lacking."

Is that a promise from God or not? He said the POW is not going to die in the dungeon. The captive is going to be released, and he is going to come to Zion. He is going to see the government of God. He is going to see God's people in order. He is going to see direction and purpose, life and vitality, and above all he is going to see normal people. "He will not die in the dungeon, nor will his bread be lacking." I believe that! "For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (the Lord of hosts is His name)" (vs. 15).

Do you know something? If we have soil preparation, the sea can roar and the waves break, and we can relax. Do you believe the Lord God could bring some pretty good-sized waves before the Church will really hear? I believe with all my heart that there are some pretty good-sized waves coming. Now what I do

not want to do is to disturb the Master in the boat. I believe He knows what He is doing, even when He is asleep!

STRATEGY FOR THE CHURCH

Here is what I believe that we as the Church need to do under God: First, we must begin to raise up guides.

One man says, "Let's get some tapes and start a ministry."

Another man says, "I know what we ought to do. We ought to run to Missouri, get a cave and store our food."

Personally, that doesn't sound very exciting. I don't want to be found in a cave, eating freeze-dried food. I want to die with my boots on!

Second, we need leaders, not pointers. Leadership in the Body of Christ must stop pointing people to places! If leaders will not *lead* them, then they should not *point* them.

We have had some interesting things happen in evangelism. A man came to a brother in a fellowship we are involved with and said, "What are you guys doing?"

The brother answered, "Well, come with me, and I'll show you." First, they went over and mowed someone's grass, and then they went to dinner together. For two days he just treated him like one of the brothers.

Finally, after the second day, the guy said, "Hey, don't I have to be born again?"

The brother said, "Yeah! That's right!" After two days he wanted what we had and was willing to pay the price.

Now I do not think I need to be led by the hand all my life, but I do need to be led by the hand until I

get a grip on the Lord's direction for my life; and even then, I'll always have need for leadership.

Third, it is time we broke the net! That is the same as cleansing the soil, releasing the captives, breaking the snares. We must free ourselves and free others to do the will of God.

Fourth, I want us to put in the *offensive* team and pull out the *defensive* team. Pull out the defense and put in the offense! I believe we are coming to the place where we are going to stop putting "Band-Aids" on society and start exerting some real influence on this world. The Church turned the world upside down in the first century, and when we understand what they did, we will, too.

Fifth, prepare the soil! Don't pound seeds into concrete. Prepare the soil. God is the one who waters and causes growth—He has called us to help prepare the ground by working with men in a deep and real way.

Sixth, I want us to put confidence in the seed of the Kingdom. Not just in the man or in the preparation of the soil, but in the seed. The seed contains all of the Kingdom of God. Precious Kingdom seed has within it the ability to grow up under a rock and split a twenty-ton boulder. Do you believe that?

Do you know why men rise in God today? Because somewhere in their past they were touched by Kingdom seed. It got into their spirit, and they kept trying to get it out and do something with it, but it kept growing until it split everything wide open. I have confidence in the seed, and I know that God has begun a work which He will surely bring to a glorious completion. 🍷

1. The Welsh visitation was a great revival which took place in the early 1900's.

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Few vocations are more taxing of one's ability and strength than being a leader in Christ's government. Yet no other type of employment offers such gratifying rewards, including the potential for divine approbation. Most laborers in the Lord's vineyard yearn to hear the Lord say, "Well done, My good and faithful servant," as they exercise their ministry in mundane as well as in miraculous areas.

(Bible Study answers on page 30)*

1. Read Acts 20:28 and answer the following questions.
 - A. Who did Paul urge the elders to guard? _____
 - B. Who made them overseers? _____
 - C. How were the sheep purchased? _____
2. Paul and Timothy were of a _____ spirit as they both were genuinely _____ for the _____ of the people (Phil. 2:20).
3. However, many other leaders sought after their own _____, and not those of _____ (Phil. 2:21).
4. Compare 2 Timothy 4:2, Romans 10:14 and 1 Corinthians 1:17, and give the foremost duty of an apostle. _____
5. What three functions should his words perform? (2 Tim. 4:2) _____
6. Jesus was the greatest "leadership producer" of all time. Give three reasons why He appointed the twelve apostles (Mk. 3:14-15). _____
7. In Revelation 2:2, Jesus complimented the Ephesian church for testing those who said they were apostles, but in reality were not. What are the four signs of a true apostle? (2 Cor. 12:12) _____
8. God's leaders are to lead His people with a sure hand, not as the blind leading the blind. According to 2 Corinthians 1:17-19, if a person continually vacillates in his intentions, is he operating in the flesh or Spirit? _____
9. Underline the two words that best describe how a shepherd should approach his ministry (1 Pet. 5:2). A. Eagerly B. Voluntarily C. Forcefully D. Educatedly
10. Read the account of Jesus' healing of the Roman centurion's servant, and answer these questions (Mt. 8:5-13).
 - A. Was the centurion a Jew or Gentile? _____
 - B. Was it his concept of authority or his faith that amazed Jesus? _____
11. Christian leaders must not exercise their authority as the rulers of the _____ who impose their authority and _____ it over people, but rather they should become _____ by being _____ (Mt. 20:25-26).
12. If an elder labors hard at preaching and teaching, what should he be given? (1 Tim. 5:17) _____
13. Read 1 Corinthians 9:7-11 and answer the following questions concerning finances.
 - A. Is it right for a man of God to continually serve without being financially rewarded? _____
 - B. If the ox is unmuzzled, who determines how much the ox may eat? _____
 - C. If a man sows in the spiritual, he can, in good conscience, hope for abundant reaping in the _____.
14. Full-time leaders should be free to give themselves to what two activities? (Acts 6:4) _____
15. Paul instructed Timothy that he should take pains with and be absorbed in the _____ reading of _____, _____ and teaching, and at the same time not _____ the _____ within him (1 Tim. 3:13-15).
16. Read 2 Corinthians 6:4-7 and answer the following questions concerning the attributes that commended Paul and his associates as men of God.
 - A. What kind of love did they exercise? _____
 - B. What did they have in each hand? _____
 - C. They were to remain in what state morally? _____
17. What ordinance of the Church did Jesus instruct His disciples to practice as a curb to competition? (Jn. 13:13-14) _____
18. The way Jacob cared for Laban's flocks can serve as an example to men called to oversee the Lord's flock. In his care for them many nights the _____ fled from his _____ (Gen. 31:38-40).
19. A pastor's wife must be dignified, having earned the respect of those who know her. She must be _____ in all things, not a _____ (1 Tim. 3:11).
20. What character fault is the weight of leadership apt to put on a new convert? (1 Tim. 3:6) _____



Photo by Arthur Garlitts, © 1975.

OUR DEBT TO ISRAEL

BY DEREK PRINCE



IN HIS CONVERSATION with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, Jesus told her: "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). By "ye" Jesus was referring to the Samaritans; by "we" He was referring to the Jews. Thus He identified Himself with the Jews; He spoke as one of them. In

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"The Bible makes it clear that God requires the Christians of all other nations to acknowledge their debt to the Jews and to do what they can to repay it."

the last book of the Bible—Revelation 5:5—Jesus is called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." "Judah" is the name from which the word "Jew" is taken. It is important for us all to understand that there is a way in which Jesus is specially identified with the Jews; and that this identification did not cease with His earthly life, but is still continued by Scripture after His death, burial and resurrection—on into eternity.

It is equally important for us all to acknowledge the truth of what Jesus said to the Samaritan woman—"salvation is of the Jews." This is an indisputable, historical fact. Without the Jews we would have no patriarchs, no prophets, no apostles, no Bible—and no Savior! Deprived of all these, how much salvation would we have left to us? None!

All other nations of the earth owe all that is most precious in their spiritual inheritance to the Jews. This is true of all of us—whether we be Arabs, Africans, Asians or Europeans—Russians, Americans or Chinese. We all owe a spiritual debt to the Jews that cannot be calculated.

The Bible makes it clear that God requires the Christians of all other nations to acknowledge their debt to the Jews and to do what they can to repay it. In Romans chapter 11 Paul is writing primarily to Christians of Gentile origin. In verse 13 he says, "For I speak to you Gentiles . . ." He reminds the Gentiles of their debt to the Jews and warns them against adopting an arrogant or unthankful attitude toward Israel. An analysis of this chapter will show that Paul uses the name "Israel" to refer to those who are Jews by natural descent and to distinguish them from Christians of Gentile descent. In other words, he does not use "Israel" as a synonym of the Church.

In Romans 11:30–31 Paul sums up what he has been saying about the debt and the responsibility of the Gentile Christians toward Israel (for the sake of clarity I have inserted the appropriate words—either "Israel" or "the Gentiles"—in parenthesis beside the pronouns):

For as ye (Gentiles) in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their (Israel's) unbelief:

Even so have these (Israel) also now not believed God, that through your (Gentiles') mercy they (Israel) may also obtain mercy.

In other words, because of the mercy of God that has come to us as Gentile Christians through Israel, God requires us in our turn to show mercy to Israel. How shall we fulfill this obligation? The following are four practical ways that we may do so.

First, we can cultivate and express an attitude of sincere love for Jewish people. Most standard forms of "witnessing" or "preaching" practiced by Christians do not reach the heart of the Jewish people at all. In fact, they frequently anger them and alienate them. But it is amazing how the apparently hard exterior of a Jew will melt when confronted by warm, unfeigned love. In nineteen centuries of dispersion among the other nations there is one thing that the Jews have seldom encountered—and that is love! For the Lord's own sake, let us stop trying to make "converts" out of the Jewish people and let us begin to repay the debt of love we have owed them for so many centuries.

Secondly, in Romans 11:11 Paul says that "salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them (Israel) to jealousy." This is another significant way in which we can repay our debt to the Jews—by enjoying and demonstrating the abundance of God's blessings in Christ in such a way that the Jews may be made jealous and desire what they see us enjoying. These blessings should be seen in every area of our lives—spiritual, physical, financial, material. But above all they should be expressed in our corporate life as believers together—a life of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Alas! Over the centuries the Jews have seen little among the Christians that would provoke their jealousy. Mainly they have seen innumerable sects, all laying claim to the title "Christian," criticising one another, attacking one another, even killing one another—all in the name of Christianity. Nowhere has Christian disunity been more blatantly demonstrated than in the city held sacred by Christians and Jews alike—Jerusalem. Frequently, at the so-called "sacred

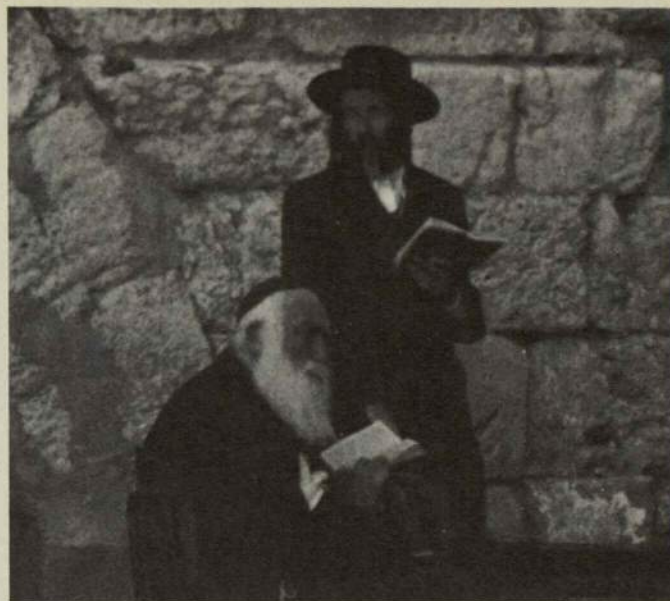
sites" of Christendom, representatives of different Christian sects have come to blows and shed one another's blood—in proof of their orthodoxy and in defence of their shrines and their privileges. On more than one occasion since the state of Israel came into being, missionaries from one Christian group have complained to the Jewish minister of religion concerning the representatives of another Christian group and requested that they be deported. All this is scarcely calculated to make the Jews exclaim, "Behold, how these Christians love one another!"

Thirdly, the Bible exhorts us to seek the good of Israel by our prayers: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalm 122:6). To pray effectively in this way we need to search out from the Scriptures the purposes of God for Israel and for Jerusalem, and then set ourselves to pray intelligently and consistently for the outworking and fulfilment of these purposes. As we make this scriptural study, we will discover that, ultimately, righteousness and peace are ordained to flow forth from Jerusalem to all the nations of the earth; and so the well-being of all nations is included in this prayer for Jerusalem and is dependent upon its fulfilment.

A challenging, scriptural pattern of this kind of praying is provided by Daniel, who set himself to pray three times daily with his window open toward Jerusalem. Daniel's prayers so disturbed Satan and threatened his kingdom that he used the jealousy of evil men to bring about a change in the laws of the entire Persian empire that would make Daniel's prayers illegal. On the other hand, praying for Jerusalem meant so much to Daniel that he preferred to be cast into the lions' den rather than give up his praying. Ultimately Daniel's faith and courage overcame the satanic opposition and he emerged triumphant from the lions' den—to go on praying for Jerusalem. (See Daniel 6.)

From my own experience, extending over many years, I would like to add a personal comment at this point. I have discovered that making a commitment of this kind to pray for Jerusalem and Israel will definitely stir up a special measure of opposition from satanically inspired forces. On the other hand, I have also discovered that God's promise given to those who do pray in this way will hold true—"they shall prosper that love thee." This is a scriptural pathway to prosperity—not merely in a financial or material sense, but as embracing an abiding assurance of God's favor, provision and protection.

Fourthly, we can seek to repay our debt to Israel by practical acts of kindness and mercy. In Romans 12:6–8 Paul lists seven different gifts (*charismata*) which Christians should cultivate and exercise. The



last one he mentions is that of "showing mercy." I believe it is appropriate that we Christians exercise this gift not merely toward individual Jews, but toward Israel as a nation. Thus we would in some measure expiate the countless acts of injustice, cruelty and barbarity which have over the centuries been inflicted upon the Jews—often in the name of Christianity.

Few Gentile Christians are aware of the deeply ingrained, but seldom stated, attitude of the Jews toward them. The Jews have suffered persecution in many different forms from many different peoples, but—in their view of history—their cruellest and most consistent persecutors have been the Christians. Before we reject this view as untrue or unfair, let us glance briefly at the kind of historical facts upon which it is based.

In the middle ages the Crusaders, on their way through Europe to "liberate" the Holy Land, massacred entire Jewish communities—men, women and children—numbering many hundreds. Later, when they did succeed in capturing Jerusalem, they shed more blood and displayed more cruelty than any of Jerusalem's many conquerors before them—except perhaps the Romans under Titus. All this they did in the name of Christ and with the cross as their sacred emblem. (For this reason I personally am never happy to see any genuine presentation of the gospel described by the word "crusade.")

Later still, in the ghettos of Europe and Russia, it was Christian priests carrying crucifixes who led the mobs against the Jewish communities—pillaging and burning their homes and their synagogues, raping their women and murdering those who sought to defend themselves. Their justification for this was that it was the Jews who "murdered Christ."



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Again, within living memory, the Nazis—in their systematic extermination of six million Jews in Europe—used as their instruments men who were professing Christians—mainly Lutherans or Catholics. Furthermore, no major Christian group, in Europe or elsewhere, raised their voices to protest or condemn the Nazi policy against the Jews. In the eyes of the Jews, multitudes of Christians stand condemned merely by their silence.

To undo the effect upon the Jewish people of these experiences—and countless others like them—will take more than tracts or sermons. It will require acts—both individual and collective—that are manifestly as kind and merciful as the previous acts were unjust and cruel.

Finally, we need to bear in mind that one major factor in God's judgment of all other nations will be their treatment of the Jews. In Matthew 25:31–46 we have a picture of Christ as King at the end of this age on the throne of His glory, with all the nations arraigned before Him for judgment. They are separated into two categories—the "sheep," who are accepted into Christ's Kingdom, and the "goats," who are rejected from His Kingdom. In each case, the reason given by Christ is, "Inasmuch as ye did it—or did it not—unto one of the least of these my brethren." The nations who show mercy to the Jews will receive mercy from God; the nations who deny mercy to the Jews will be denied mercy from God.

In a measure, this has already been proven true many times in history. For example, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Spain was the dominant nation of Europe, with a high level of culture, a powerful army and navy, and an empire that spanned both hemispheres. But within a century of expelling all Jews from her territories Spain declined to a struggling, second-rate power.

In my personal memory and experience, much the same happened to my own motherland, Britain. Britain emerged victorious from two World Wars,

retaining intact an empire that was perhaps the most extensive in human history. But in 1947-8, as the mandatory power over Palestine, Britain opposed and attempted to thwart the rebirth of Israel as a sovereign nation with her own state. (Since I was living in Jerusalem throughout this period, I make this statement as an eye-witness of what actually took place.) From that very moment in history, Britain's empire underwent a process of decline and disintegration so rapid and total that it cannot be accounted for merely by the relevant political, military or economic factors. Today, less than a generation later, Britain—like Spain—is a struggling, second-rate power.

This represents, in part at least, the outworking of a divine principle stated in Isaiah 60:12: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." God here promises Israel, and also warns all the Gentiles, that He will bring judgment on any nation that opposes His purposes of redemption and restoration for Israel. Therefore, in seeking and praying for the good of Israel, Gentile Christians need to remind themselves that they are serving not merely the interests of Israel, but even more those of their own nations. ☞

BIBLE STUDY ANSWERS

(From page 21)

1. A. Themselves, the flock, B. The Holy Spirit, C. By the blood of Jesus; 2. kindred, concerned, welfare; 3. interests, Christ Jesus; 4. Preaching; 5. Reproof, rebuke and exhortation; 6. That they might be with Him, to preach and to cast out demons; 7. Perseverance, signs, wonders and miracles; 8. Flesh; 9. A. Eagerly, B. Voluntarily; 10. A. Gentile, B. His faith; 11. Gentiles, lord, great, servants; 12. Double honour; 13. A. No, B. The ox, C. material; 14. Ministry of the Word and prayer; 15. public, Scripture, exhortation, neglect, spiritual gift; 16. A. Genuine, B. Weapons of righteousness, C. Purity; 17. Foot washing; 18. sleep, eyes; 19. faithful, malicious gossip; 20. Conceit.

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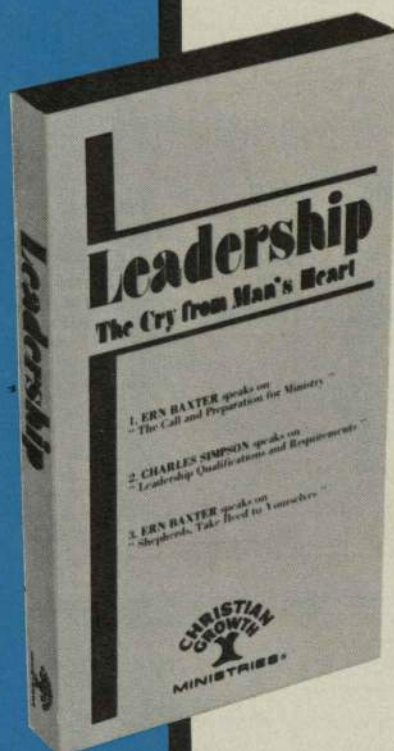
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