

# new wine

JUNE 1979

encouragement





# encouragement

by charles simpson

WE WANT TO DEDICATE THIS ISSUE OF *NEW WINE* to all of our readers, especially those who have stood with us in prayer, response and finances. Thank you for your encouragement to us in this ministry to which we have been called.

These have been challenging days. Recently we sent out a newsletter explaining the computer problems that we have experienced along with the normal difficulties associated with moving a sizable magazine operation and staff. The response we have received has been heartwarming. So many of you expressed your love and commitment in tangible ways, and we thank you from the depth of our hearts. We are humbled by your love and know that your prayerful support will continue. The difficulties are not over, though the situation has improved.

Your letters and support have helped us to realize anew that encouragement is the oxygen of the soul. It is the breath which helps us to progress. To encourage is to strengthen and fortify for achievement.

Recently, I received a letter from a Christian in another state which began, "While in a time of prayer and meditation, your name came to my mind. I inquired of the Lord what I should do for you, and I had the clearest impression that I needed to write you a letter of encouragement. . . ." As this Christian then went on to express how much I had meant to him over the years, and how interested he and his family were in my well-being, tears of gratitude welled up within me. Needless to say I felt encouraged. Then I realized what a good ministry he had performed, because his word would multiply through whatever ministry I have to others. "How good it would be," I thought, "if every person who is struggling to do God's will had one encourager. Or better yet, several."

As a boy I loved to sing, "Home on the Range," and I have vivid memories of the "Sons of the Pioneers" singing that western ballad: "O give me a home, where the buffalo roam. . . ." I always had the impression that the writer liked the West because of the deer, antelope, and roaming buffalo, but recently it occurred to me that maybe the reason he went West was in the next line: ". . . where seldom is heard a discouraging word. . . ." All of us would like to be in a place like that!

Jesus was an encourager. His message was and is good news for the poor, oppressed, sick and lonely. Isaiah, who had said earlier, "Strengthen the feeble hands, and steady the knees that give way," (Is. 35:3, NIV), described the coming Messiah in this manner: "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not put out. He will not falter nor be discouraged till he establishes justice on the earth" (Is. 42:3,4 NIV). May we be as He is.

Before His death He told Peter, "Strengthen your brothers." It is an admonition we should all receive and obey. It is a ministry we can all have. We cannot all have the more "glamorous" gifts, but we all can breathe hope into one another in the Body. Hebrews 10:25 exhorts us to encourage one another more and more as we see the day of the Lord approaching.

The great people of history have been those who found encouragement in their trials, and they were themselves usually encouragers of others. Paul continually prayed that the churches would be "strengthened in the inner man." David was another who went through unusual trials. Rejected by Saul, by Israel, Israel's enemies and finally his own men who were at one time ready to stone him, David, the Scriptures say, "encouraged himself in the Lord." David refused to be discouraged.

Twenty-three years ago, I preached one Sunday at a small church. One of its members was very pessimistic. "This church will never amount to anything," he said. After he talked for a while, I ventured cautiously to say, "You could be part of the reason for its condition. If I were you, I'd change my mind or leave so it *could* grow." Sure enough, within a few years the size of the congregation had multiplied ten times as a result of hope, faith and encouragement. The future belongs to those who can find encouragement today. It is good to be a part of an encouraging community.

Wherever you are at this moment, there is someone nearby who is struggling in uncertainty and weakness. He may be on the verge of great success, but about to faint. Your word could make the difference. Maybe it's your husband, wife, child, parent, employee, pastor—God knows who. A good word, a helping hand, a kind expression could give you an eternal reward for showing favor to one of the least of *His* brothers.

You may not know how to say, "I love you," or "Thanks for your effort," or "You mean a lot to me," or "I want to help you." God will give you the words and ways, for He is an encourager. Many of you have been this kind of encourager to those of us on the Board and staff of *New Wine*, and on behalf of all of us, "Thanks!" 🙏



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We recognize that, according to the Scriptures, God uses men given as ministries to build His Church in the earth. However, the basis of our relationship is not primarily commitment to human personalities, but to Jesus Christ as Head, to the Holy Scriptures as the ultimate standard by which all revelation and practice is to be judged and to God's purpose for His people in the earth at this time, as interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

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supervision of an editorial board which meets several times each year to provide direction and oversight. The board consists of Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince and Charles Simpson, who receive no remuneration for their service on the board.

Please use the form found in this magazine to request *New Wine*, for address changes and contributions. All foreign contributions or payments should be made in the form of a check for U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank or International Money Order for U.S. dollars.



*As our “approval bucket” is filled. . . our entire personality flourishes. But if that bucket remains empty. . . the personality withers and suffers deprivation.*





# Giving Praise and Encouragement

by Don Basham

IN THIS ARTICLE I want to talk about a neglected side of Christian ministry, the ministry of giving praise and approval—most of us find it much easier to praise God than to praise God's people, and we find it much easier to criticize and find fault than to praise one another. My personal conviction is that if we were to do a better job in expressing our approval and our confidence in one another, there would be much less need to rebuke or to correct. People are more effectively motivated by expressions of appreciation, confidence and encouragement than they are by rebuke or correction.

I want to read four verses of Scripture which relate basically to a certain situation in Jesus' life. The first one is in Matthew 3:17, when Jesus is baptized and the Spirit is seen descending upon Him like a dove.

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

The account of the Transfiguration in Matthew 17 is a similar event, when Peter, James and John saw Moses and Elijah appearing to Jesus and talking with Him on the mountain. Right in the midst of Peter's suggestion that they build three commemorative tabernacles, Scripture says:

While he [Peter], yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him (vs. 5).

Then in Mark 1 we have Mark's description of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan.

And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (vs. 11).

Finally the account in Luke 3:21, 22 of the same incident.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

All these passages record God the Father expressing approval and appreciation for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, however, the slight difference in the accounts. In two of the statements God addresses the *bystanders*, saying, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*"—and in the other two statements He speaks directly to Jesus saying, "*Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*"

I believe both types of approval are necessary for us if we are to become the secure and confident people of God. It is good for us to have endorsement and approbation *about* us given to *other* people, but it is even more important to receive that kind of expression *ourselves*. We need to be told *personally* that we are loved and appreciated for who we are and what we are. Certainly if Jesus needed this kind of encouragement, the Father knows we need it, too.

Each of us has different areas of personality which must be ministered to, including the deep need for acceptance and approval. We each have what I call a "praise receptacle" or "approval bucket" somewhere inside us. It is essential to our well-being that this receptacle be periodically replenished. As that "approval bucket" is filled either by the Lord or by people close to us, our entire personality flourishes. But if that bucket remains empty, then in many ways the personality withers and suffers deprivation. In short, we experience a psychological and





spiritual drought. The Father knew that, and I believe Jesus knew it, too. That's why, as we'll see later in this article, He deliberately praised people on certain occasions.

All of us know how much it means to be appreciated, and how warm we feel when people express their approval and encouragement to us. That's because approval gives us a sense of belonging and a sense of worth.

Matthew 7:12 says:

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Just as we thrive when our own approval bucket is filled, we are responsible to minister the same way to others.

### EXPRESSING APPROVAL IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Now, I want to talk specifically about the importance of giving and receiving praise and approval in family relationships. In Ephesians 5, where Paul talks about wives being submitted to husbands and children to their parents, he also gives this instruction to husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (vs. 25). It is largely the responsibility of the husband and the father to set the tone for his family.

His responsibility as head of the house includes ministering encouragement and support to his wife and children.

You husbands need to understand that most women have a tendency to feel insecure. A wife begins to feel insecure and guilty when her husband stops communicating. Husbands, when you stay silent for a few hours, before long, she'll begin to ask, "Honey, do you love me?" Although you might feel you've expressed your love adequately by what you

*do* as a husband, your wife wants to *hear* you *say* it. A wife seeks that verbal expression from her husband because of the security that it brings her. She needs to hear words of approval and appreciation. It's not enough for her to simply believe it—it needs to be said.

New England people are noted for their reluctance to speak, and the story is told about an old Vermonter who said to his cronies, "Sometimes when I sit in my living room watching my wife work, and I think what a good woman she has been, looking after me and the kids and caring for the house all those years, when I think how faithful she's been and how much I love her, it's almost all I can do to keep from telling her!"

Well, a lot of us are like that. We take each other for granted. We feel something, but we're unwilling to express it. But we need to *say* it! We all need to hear praise, approval, and encouragement. It needs to be said. Something takes place when we begin to communicate our approval and appreciation. Those approval buckets and praise receptacles begin to fill up.

When a little boy brings in a little shiny rock to give his mother, and she says, "How many times have I told you not to play on the gravel pit! Look at the dirt on your clothes and your filthy hands!" his little spirit will just shrivel up. He came longing for an expression of praise and approval. Children also have that approval bucket which needs to be continually filled and refilled.

I had a very happy childhood, with very few traumatic experiences. My father and mother loved each other deeply and expressed their love and concern for my two brothers and me. One reason it has been possible for me to fulfill my own responsibility as a husband and father is that I had a good example in my own dad.

After my mother died, I heard my dad say something that spoke volumes to me about the relationship they shared. My dad was a great sportsman, an ardent hunter and fisherman. Some of the happiest moments I can recall are times when we went hunt-



*Our words have a spiritual power behind them, and that's why it's important for us to love and encourage and speak positively to one another.*

ing or fishing together. My mother would go with us, and even after we grew up and left home, my dad and mother would go out and spend an afternoon hunting or fishing. After my mother died, my dad lived on a couple more years, but it was a very lonesome time for him.

Once on a visit I remember asking, "Dad, do you still go fishing?" He said, "Not as often as I did when your mother was still here." When I asked him, "Why not?" his reply spoke volumes: "Because there's nobody here to brag on the catch when I bring them home." With those words I realized how much her being his champion had meant to my dad through all those years. I think one reason why he didn't live too long after my mother died was because he missed her approval.

One thing we discovered in the deliverance ministry is how many people suffer from a spirit of rejection or loneliness because their parents had given them rebuke and condemnation instead of praise and approval. Speaking the wrong kinds of words can literally open a person up to demonic activity.

In doing research for my book, *Deliver Us From Evil*, I found an interesting story in a history of exorcism in the Roman Catholic church about a young French nun in the 15th century named Jeanne Fery. Shortly after she entered a nunnery at age 15, a series of demonic manifestations began in her life. They went on for some years until she received dramatic ministry and deliverance through the efforts of several priests. One of the most significant aspects of the story was how this girl first began to be tormented. When she was only 5 years old, her father became angry with her one day, and in a fit of rage, he said out loud, "I wish the devil would take you!" Within days, Jeanne Fery testified, evil spirits began to work their way into her personality and evidence of demonic activity began.

What we say can have a very profound effect upon our destiny and the destiny of those we speak to. Just as what is said in criticism or condemnation can open us to death or to demonic problems, what

is said in a positive way in love and approval and encouragement can speak life right into us. Our words have a spiritual power behind them, and that's why it's important for us to love and encourage and speak positively to one another.

### APPROVAL IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Most of us tend to have low self-esteem. My experience as a pastor has shown me that most Christians do not think more *highly* of themselves than they ought to think—they think more *lowly* of themselves than they ought to. That's one reason our spirit needs to be nourished by having our approval bucket refilled.

It's easy to express approval and appreciation when things are going well. If our children come home with good grades, it's easy for us to express our praise. It's more difficult—yet it's really more needed—to express confidence and approval when things aren't going well. I need praise and appreciation and support more after I do something stupid than I do when things are fine. I thank God I've got a wife who encourages me when I have a difficult time or things don't go well. She expresses her faith in me and her confidence that everything will be all right.

In Luke 15 we read the story of the prodigal son and of his older brother who stayed home. The older brother became upset because of the feast honoring his "no good" brother. While he seethes from the injustice of the whole situation, his dad comes out and entreats him to join the party. The son really loses control and condemns his dad in a very disrespectful manner. From beneath his image as the faithful older brother who had always stayed home and looked after the farm and helped his dad, all this bitterness, jealousy, and secret pride comes pouring out to his father. Now, his father would have been completely justified in rebuking—even punishing—his older son. But instead of retaliating in any way, his dad has the unusual wisdom and



*... it's at the point of failure that we most need expressions of approval and encouragement.*

maturity to express approval, confidence and appreciation for that boy. There's not one word of defense or criticism in his reply:

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine (vs. 31).

In essence, he was saying, "Son, I've appreciated all these years of loyalty to me. I know it hasn't been easy on you while your younger brother has been gone, and I realize you've been jealous, but I appreciate your loyalty. You've always been there, and I've always been able to count on you, and I appreciate that. Everything I have is yours."

Do you see the wisdom in that? The father ministered in an amazingly mature way by speaking the right word of confidence and loyalty to that boy when he least deserved it, but most needed it. See the point? That's when we need that kind of acceptance, approval, and encouragement—when we least deserve it.

Although we are not told how the story came out, I believe there was real reconciliation between the brothers. With a father like that, I don't see how they could go wrong. When the prodigal had returned and repented, there had been no hint of "I told you so" from his dad—just sheer rejoicing. Why? Because he knew the prodigal had learned his lesson and didn't need a rebuke—simply a welcome home. In the same mature way, when the older brother blew it and revealed all his resentment, his dad took it all and spoke just the words of appreciation and love that were needed.

Like the father in that story, we need to understand that failure isn't evil: it's merely human. Because of our human weakness, none of us is without some kind of failure. But it's at the point of failure that we most need expressions of approval and encouragement.

Take a look at how you're handling your own family today. Are you giving condemnation in place of encouragement? I'm not sure there is such a thing as giving *too much* encouragement or too much love or too much appreciation to those around you.

## PEOPLE JESUS PRAISED

Let me give you three scriptural examples of people Jesus praised. The first is in Luke 7, the story of the Roman centurion who sent some men to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant.

Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick (vss. 6-10).

Here we find Jesus being lavish in His praise of this centurion—a Roman captain—because of his faith.

Another case is in Mark 12:41-44.

Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

What encouragement it must have been to this lit-





the widow to overhear what Jesus said to the disciples! She must have felt comforted from what she heard Him say. More than that, when she got home, she probably found groceries on the doorstep. You can't give God all you have—you can't offer that kind of sacrificial expression of love and devotion—without being showered with abundance.

The third and final scriptural example of Jesus giving praise which I want to cite is in Matthew 26.

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her (vss. 6-13).

Whole sermons have been preached on this one incident! The thing that amazes me is the high priority and importance Jesus placed upon this act of extravagance. Not only did He praise the woman, but also testified that this simple, extravagant act would be remembered wherever the gospel was preached.

It's interesting to note that extravagance was involved in all three cases: the centurion had extravagant faith; the little widow had given extravagantly the last two coins that she had; the woman extravagantly gave this expensive box of ointment, the most expensive thing she had. All three of these people responded extravagantly in some way to the Lord, and Jesus praised them for it. That tells us

something about the nature of God and what He longs for in our response to Him. One thing you can say about God is that He is not stingy, and because of His lavish, extravagant nature, it seems to strike a certain special chord in the heart of God when we respond to Him in some extravagant way. Of course, we can see from Jesus' response that the Father's praise was extravagant in their behalf. We need to follow his example and be extravagant in the way we praise and encourage others.

## BLENDING PRAISE AND CORRECTION

One other point I want to make is that when praise and approval is properly ministered or properly offered, it paves the way for the right kind of correction and rebuke or adjustment. Most parents know that if all you ever do is berate your children, fuss at them, condemn them, and correct them, then your words finally begin to fall on deaf ears. The more you give out negative words, the less response they get.

It's like the woman talking to the 3-year-old boy. She asked, "Little boy, what's your name?" He answered, "My name is 'Johnny-Stop-That.'" Obviously, all he knew from his mother was rebuke.

On the other hand, praise given in the right way makes it easier to speak the word of correction or rebuke that may be necessary. That's because the one you're talking to realizes that you do appreciate him. Once you have ministered praise or filled his approval bucket, he has confidence in his relationship to you and is able to receive your word of correction or adjustment.

This was really pressed home to me some years ago when I was working on the book *Deliver Us From Evil*. John and Elizabeth Sherrill were my editors on the book. Although it was the fifth book I had written, it was the first time I had ever had any outside editorial help. I had to completely rewrite the book five times before it finally met their standards.



## *If you develop the habit of looking for things to praise or thank people for, it can work a wonderful work in your own spirit.*

During one of those rewrites John Sherrill and I set up a long telephone call to go over the manuscript I had sent to him. For the first 30 minutes or so John did nothing but praise my manuscript. He told me so many good things about it that by the time he finished, I thought we were going to have a best-seller for sure. But do you know what that 30 minutes of praise set me up for? It prepared me for the next hour in which he tore the manuscript to pieces and showed me all that had to be changed and redone.

I would never have been able to receive that hard hour of editorial correction without first having received the 30 minutes of sincere praise and encouragement. As painful as that hour was, I knew John Sherrill was right. There was a lot that was good in my manuscript, but there was also a lot that wasn't. He handled me wisely in that situation because his criticisms were so devastating that I wouldn't have been able to stand them had he not first assured me that we really had a good book in preparation; one that would eventually come out fine if enough work was done on it. So what I'm saying is that praise and approval and appreciation—properly and genuinely given—can pave the way for the right kind of rebuke or correction that may be needed.

Those of us in positions of authority or leadership need to develop the ability to see things for which we can be appreciative or encouraging. If you develop the habit of looking for things to praise or thank people for, it can work a wonderful work in your own spirit. It will turn sunlight into the dark corners of your own personality and drive pessimism away. It will make you more optimistic and appreciative of what people are doing.

I remember reading an incident in the life of Albert Schweitzer. A few years before his death, he was in the U.S. on his birthday with a few friends, at a private party at a restaurant. After supper, the waitress brought him the cake, and after he blew out the candles, they gave him the knife to cut it. There were seven people in the party, and Albert Schweitzer cut the cake into eight equal slices. He

gave one to each person around the table, expressing appreciation for each one. When it came to the last slice, he put it on the plate and handed it up to the waitress, saying, "And this is for the young lady who served us so graciously through the meal." I suspect that just about made that waitress' day.

That's an example of how God would have us mindful to speak words of approval, appreciation, trust and confidence as part of our ministry one to another.

### **A FINAL ADMONITION**

In closing I want to make a couple of points. First, we should be careful as we begin to do this to praise and encourage one another honestly and sincerely; make sure it doesn't reduce itself to flattery. There's a vast difference between praise and flattery. Praise is an expression of appreciation and gratitude for the person, as well as for what he has done. You praise someone because you want to minister to him and genuinely show your appreciation. Flattery is deceitful and self-seeking.

By the same token, don't become a praise seeker. It's much more important to give praise than to seek it. If you start seeking approval or praise, that affects the way you act, and it can even affect your faithfulness to God. Luke 6:26 says: "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." If you behave in such a way as to encourage praise from people, you'll compromise your faith. There's a price to pay when we live in the will of God. Some people will misunderstand and mistrust us. Others will say things against us and about us that aren't true. That's part of the cost of being a faithful Christian.

That being true, we still have a responsibility as Christians to express appreciation and love for each other. We need to minister to one another's praise receptacles and fill each other's approval buckets, thus helping each other to more faithfully live the covenant life we have with the Lord Jesus Christ and with one another. ♡



# update



*In 1963 Derek Prince began his ministry in the U.S. with a systematic Bible teaching program on radio. In February of 1979, after much prayer, Derek returned to radio with a new 15 minute program entitled "Today with Derek Prince," which is aired at various times Monday through Friday on stations around the country.*

*In addition to Derek's new thrust in ministry through radio, he and his wife Ruth are also vitally involved in ministry to the nation of Israel.*

*We recently spoke with Derek about both these aspects of his ministry, and we think you'll enjoy reading some of his observations.*

When God first spoke to me about this radio outreach, I was meditating on Acts 1:8: "... ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." It seemed to me that my ministry had been effective in "Jerusalem"—the places closest to me—and in "Judea"—in this case, the charismatic movement. But I had not yet reached "Samaria" with the truths which God had been teaching me in my walk of nearly forty years with Him. "Samaria" in this context is the whole evangelical Christian world—and Christian radio is one of the most effective ways to reach it.

I marvel at God's response to my step of faith. Since we began the program, we have had dozens of inquiries from Christian radio stations and Christian friends who want to carry my broadcast in their area. Of course, the financial response is not yet by any means equal to the output on the stations, but because a number of fellowship groups are helping to underwrite the program—with pledges from in-

dividual supporters as well—we have nearly broken even so far. Normally it takes a year to build a listening constituency that can fully support a program, so I would say the initial response is very encouraging. The station where it's on the air in Kansas City said they've had the best response to it of any program they have ever aired.

One of the most exciting things is that the program is being broadcast at 7:15 AM in metropolitan New York from WWDJ in Hackensack, N.J. This station alone gives us a potential audience of 12 to 20 million people, many of whom are Jewish. The daily program costs approximately \$2,500 per month, but the more people you reach, the more it costs.

It seems to me the key word God is giving me right now is "proclaim." There are different types of speaking. Many people are doing systematic teaching, and explaining various principles, which is very good, but we also need to maintain the balance and *proclaim*. God has given me a vision of a whole world out there—even professing Christians—who have never heard the central truths of the Christian faith positively proclaimed. In a sense that's what God is having me to do.

Of course, we also feel our commitment to Israel is no less important than the radio ministry. My prior commitment in God is to Israel before any other. Because of that, Ruth and I are planning to spend the whole summer from June through mid-October in language study at Hebrew University in Israel so that we can better communicate with the Israelis in their own language.

People ask what we expect to do in Israel. I think there are two things. One is to help strengthen and unite the Body of Christ there. There is a real flowing together of charismatic leaders and people in Jerusalem. It's very gratifying. We have received a very warm welcome from all of them—Catholics, Protestants, the whole spectrum.

Secondly, we feel the Holy Spirit is about to do something new and powerful with the people of Israel. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing there on our own. Yet it's not simply a matter of waiting because the Holy Spirit is already at work. We feel that God wants us there as a kind of midwife to assist with whatever the Holy Spirit is going to birth in Israel, and to us this is a very thrilling opportunity. ♥

*We want to encourage you to pray for Derek and Ruth as they embark on these new aspects of their ministry in service to the Lord.*



# Help Wanted:

## To Extend the Outreach of *New Wine*

We have something of a problem that you can help us with. For some ten years now, *New Wine* has blessed thousands of people every month. Through the years we have enjoyed moderate success in our attempts to increase our circulation and extend the ministry of *New Wine*, yet despite our broad circulation, we feel there are still thousands more people who would benefit from receiving it regularly, if only we knew who they were.

This is where you come in. You can be our eyes, and ears and hands to find out who these people are and help us to send them *New Wine*. Every day you probably meet or talk with at least one person who would really enjoy getting it regularly.

"What kind of people are you talking about?" you ask. Well, we've given that some thought, and have come up with four suggestions that you might like to try. Of course, there are hundreds more you might think of.

1. *New Wine* is an evangelistic tool. Since *New Wine* carries many practical articles with universal appeal, it is an effective means for touching those who don't know the Lord or who have fallen away from a close walk with Him.

2. *Leaders benefit from New Wine. New Wine*

periodically carries articles for and about leadership which are of specific interest to pastors and Christian leaders. *New Wine* is also a good study and reference source.

3. *Neighbors can be touched through New Wine.* To develop more than a casual relationship with your neighbors, have *New Wine* sent to them as an expression of your genuine interest and concern for them.

4. *New Wine can encourage those that are discouraged.* People in hospitals and doctors' offices often need encouragement and spiritual strength. Obtain permission for *New Wine* to be placed in the magazine racks in waiting rooms in your locale.

### How do I help?

If you would like to have *New Wine* sent to someone, just use the form below to send in your name and the names of those you want to get the magazine. Unless you specify otherwise, we'll send them a letter telling them *New Wine* is on its way at your request. You can also help us to offset the expense of sending them the magazine for the first year by enclosing a \$10.00 tax-deductible contribution for each name you send in.

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Please send *New Wine* Magazine for one year to the friends whose names are listed below. Enclosed is a \$10.00 gift for each person recommended. I realize this does not represent a subscription, but a tax-deductible gift which makes it possible for you to send *New Wine*.

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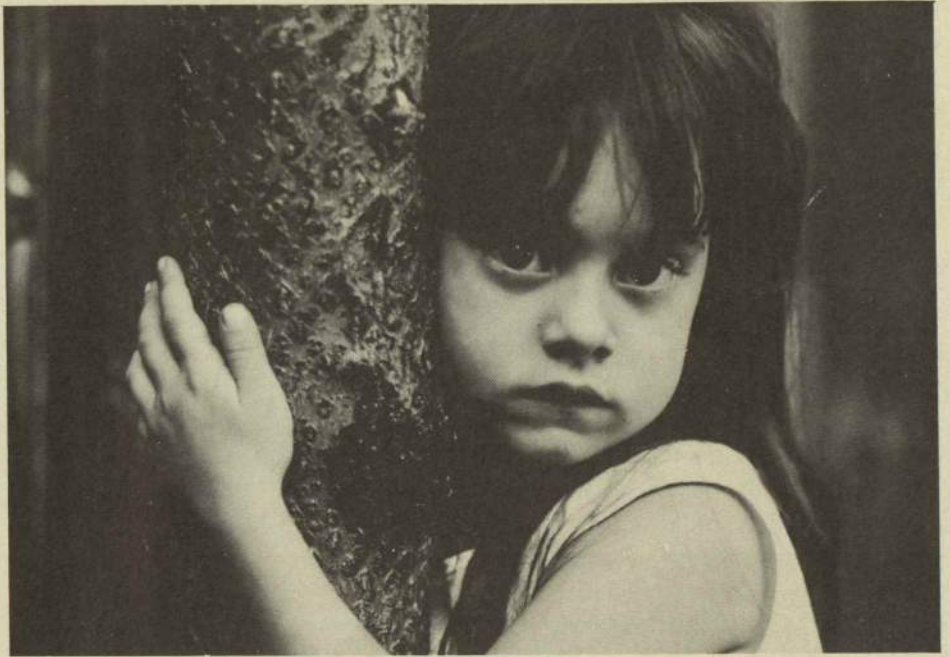
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Every child  
needs to know the answer  
to the question. . .

do  
you  
approve  
of  
me?

by James Dobson



**JOHN MCKAY, THE GREAT** football coach at the University of Southern California, was recently interviewed on television, and the subject of his son's athletic talent was raised. John Junior is a successful player on his dad's team. Coach McKay was asked to comment on the pride he must feel over his son's accomplishments on the field. His answer was most impressive:

Yes, I'm pleased that John had a good season last year. He does a fine job and I *am* proud of him. But I would be just as proud if he had never played the game at all.

Coach McKay was saying, in effect, that John's football talent is recognized and appreciated, but his human worth does not depend on his ability to play football. Thus, his son will not lose respect if the next season brings failure and disappointment. John's place in his dad's heart is secure, being independent of his performance. I wish every child could say the same.

To the contrary, human worth in our society is carefully reserved for those who meet certain rigid specifications. The beautiful people are born with it; those who are highly intelligent are likely to find approval; superstar athletes are usually respected. But no one is considered valuable just because he *is*! Social acceptability is awarded rather carefully,

making certain to exclude those who are unqualified.

Believe it or not, a five-year-old is capable of "feeling" his own lack of worth in this system. Most of our little ones have observed very early that some people are valuable and some aren't; they also know when they are one of the losers! In many ways, we parents inadvertently teach this system to them, beginning in infancy to place a price tag on human worth. The result is widespread inferiority and inadequacy—which has probably included you and me in its toll.

There is a better way! This article is intended to help parents and teachers raise self-confident, healthy children. Our youngsters need not *hide* in shame; by applying the strategies I have outlined, we can give them the courage to *seek* the best from their world.

## EXAMINE THE VALUES IN YOUR OWN HOME

In a very real sense, we parents are products of the society whose values I have condemned. We have systematically been taught to worship beauty and brains, as everyone else, and so have our grandmothers and grandpoppas and uncles and aunts and cousins and neighbors. We all want superchildren who will amaze the world. Let's face it, folks: we have met the enemy and it is *us*! Often the greatest damage is unintentionally inflicted right in the home, which should be the child's sanctuary and



fortress. Furthermore, I have observed in working with parents that their *own* feelings of inferiority make it difficult for them to accept gross imperfections in their children. They don't intend to reject their sons and daughters and they work hard to conceal these inner thoughts. But their "damaged" child symbolizes their own personal inadequacies and failures. Thus, it takes a very mature parent to look down upon an ugly child, or one who is clearly deficient in mentality, saying, "Not only do I love you, little one, but I recognize your immeasurable worth as a human being."

The first step in building your child's esteem, then, is to examine your own feelings—even being willing to expose those guilt-laden attitudes which may have been unconscious, heretofore. Are you secretly disappointed because your child is so ordinary? Have you rejected him, at times, because of his lack of appeal and charm? Do you think he is dumb and stupid? Was he born during a difficult time, imposing financial and physical stress on the family? Did you want a girl instead of a boy? Or a boy instead of a girl? Was this child conceived out of wedlock, forcing an unwanted marriage? Do you resent the freedom you lost when he came, or the demands he places on your time and effort? Does he embarrass you by being either too loud and rambunctious or too inward and withdrawn? Quite obviously, you can't teach a child to respect himself when you dislike him for reasons of your own! By examining your innermost feelings, perhaps with the help of an understanding counselor or doctor, you *can* make room in your heart as a loving parent for your less-than-perfect youngster. After all, what right do we have to demand superchildren when we are so ordinary ourselves?

A sizable proportion of your child's self-concept emerges from the way he thinks you "see" him. He watches what you say and do with interest. He is more alert to your "statements" regarding his worth than any other subject, even reading your unspoken



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He has written a number of books. Among them are *Dare to Discipline* and *Hide or Seek*, from which this article is taken. Dr. Dobson, who is married and the father of two children, lives with his family in Arcadia, California.

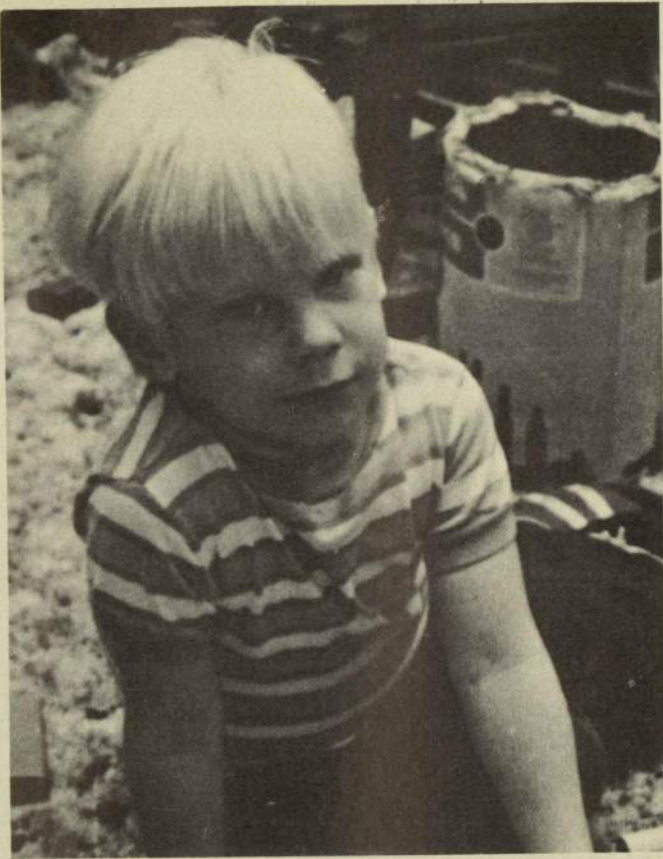
(and perhaps unconscious) attitudes. Dr. Stanley Coopersmith conducted an exhaustive study of self-esteem and concluded that parents have a tremendous influence on their child's view of himself. They can either equip him with the confidence necessary to withstand the social pressures I have described, or they can leave him virtually defenseless. The difference is in the quality of their interaction. When the child is convinced that he is greatly loved and respected by his parents, he is inclined to accept his own worth as a person.

However, I have observed that many children know intuitively that they are loved by their parents, but they do not believe they are held in high esteem by them. These seemingly contradictory attitudes are not so uncommon in human relationships. A wife can love her alcoholic husband, for example, yet disrespect him for what he has become. Thus, a child can conclude in his own mind, "Sure they love me because I'm their child—I can see that I'm important to them—but they are not proud of me as a person. I'm a disappointment to them. I've let them down. I didn't turn out like they had hoped."

At the risk of being redundant, I must emphasize the point made above: it is very easy to convey love and disrespect at the same time. A child can know that you would actually give your life for him, if required, and yet your doubts about his acceptability show through. You are tense and nervous when he starts to speak to guests or outsiders. You butt in to explain what he was trying to say or laugh nervously when his remarks sound foolish. When someone asks him a direct question, you interrupt and answer for him. You reveal your frustration when you are trying to comb his hair or make him "look nice" for an important event. He knows you think it is an impossible assignment. If he is to spend a weekend away from the family, you give him an extended lecture on how to avoid making a fool of himself. These subtle behaviors are signals to the child that you don't trust him with *your* image—that he must be supervised closely to avoid embarrassing the whole family. He reads disrespect in your manner, though it is framed in genuine love. The love is a private thing between you—whereas confidence and admiration are "other" oriented, having social implications to those outside the family.

Loving your child, therefore, is only half of the task of building self-esteem. The element of respect must be added if you are to counterbalance the insults which society will later throw at him. Unless *somebody* believes in his worth, the world can be a





cold and lonely place, indeed. Each parent needs to see just what his child faces in life and the vital importance of preparing him to meet his critics head on.

There are, I believe, five common barriers which can cause your child to doubt his worth, even when he is deeply loved. I would suggest that the reader examine his own home as we discuss these pitfalls to be avoided.

(1) *Parental Insensitivity.* If there is one lesson parents need to learn most urgently, it is to guard what they say in the presence of their children. How many times, following a speaking engagement, have I been consulted by a parent regarding a particular problem her child is having. As Mom describes the gritty details, I notice that the object of all this conversation is standing about a yard behind her. His ears are ten feet tall as he listens to a candid description of all his faults. I visibly flinch when I hear a parent unintentionally disassemble esteem in this fashion. Just this afternoon, for example, I took my son and daughter to a park during a break in my writing schedule. While there, an insensitive mother was talking to me about her six-year-old boy, Roger, who stood within hearing distance just a few feet away.

She spoke in Gatling-gun fashion: "He had a high fever when he was born, about 105, at least. The doctor couldn't do nothing to help him. He gave Roger the wrong kind of pills. Now Roger won't ever be the same. They say he has some brain damage now, and he don't learn too good in school."

If Roger were my boy, his mental handicap would be the very last thing I would let him hear me describe to a stranger. It was like saying, "This is my son, Roger. He's the dumb one—you know, there's something wrong with his brain." How imperceptive she was of her unfortunate son. Roger did not show shock. In fact, he didn't even look up. But you can bet he heard his mother, and his self-concept will *always* reflect what she said.

Surprisingly, it is not just insensitive parents who blunder into this kind of foolishness. I recently referred a bright nine-year-old boy to a neurologist because of severe learning problems. After giving the lad a thorough examination, the physician called in his parents and discussed the full details of the boy's "brain damage" in front of his wide-eyed little patient. How can we preserve self-esteem when we have totally lost touch with childhood ourselves? Don't we know they are listening to us? It is a wise adult who understands that self-esteem is the most fragile characteristic in human nature, and once broken, its reconstruction is more difficult than repairing Humpty Dumpty.

Parental sensitivity should be especially sharp in regard to matters pertaining to physical attractiveness and intelligence. Those are the two main "soft spots" where their children are most vulnerable. It is, of course, impossible to shut out this value system entirely, for it penetrates like termites through the walls. Consider how the importance of beauty is taught through the casual occurrences and conversations of each day:

Advertisements: "You, too, can have gorgeous hair."

Mother: "Mr. and Mrs. Martin sure have cute kids, don't they?"

Father: "When are you going to start growing, Billy?"

Fairy Stories: "Then the ugly duckling sat down to cry."

Television: "The *new* Miss America is . . ."

Relative: "My, what a pretty little girl you've become."

The whole world seems organized to convey this one message to the younger set. While you can't shield your child from its impact, you don't have to add to it yourself. You can also screen out the televi-



sion programs which are most offensive ("The Dating Game" is one of the worst!) and help your child select good reading material.

Sensitivity is a vitally important skill for teachers as well. Dr. Clyde Narramore, author and psychologist, describes being in a classroom where a teacher wanted to convey the concepts of "small" versus "large." She selected the tiniest little runt in the room, a withdrawn fellow who rarely made a sound, and instructed him to stand beside her at the front. "Small!" she said. "David is small." She then dismissed him and summoned the tallest girl in the class. "Large! Large! Sharon is very large!" said the teacher. Dr. Narramore said every child in the room could see David and Sharon blush in humiliation, but the teacher failed to notice. We cannot preserve the esteem of the next generation if our eyes are always aimed about twenty-four inches above their bowed heads.

Sensitivity is the key word. It means "tuning in" to the thoughts and feelings of our kids, listening to the cues they give us and reacting appropriately to what we detect there.

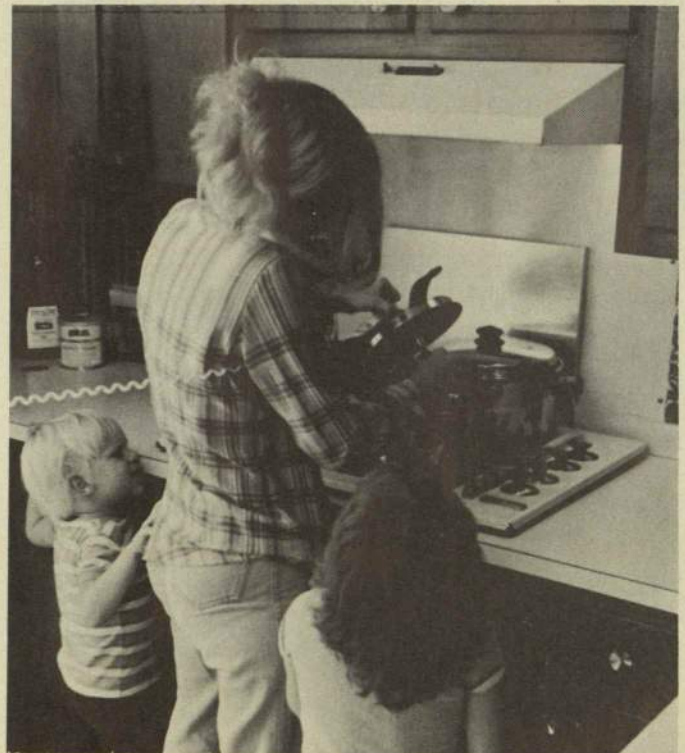
(2) *Fatigue and Time Pressure.* Why do dedicated parents have to be reminded to be sensitive to the needs of their children, anyway? Shouldn't this be the natural expression of their love and concern? Yes, it should, but Mom and Dad have some problems of their own. They are pushed to the limits of their endurance by the pressure of time. Dad is holding down three jobs and he huffs and puffs to keep up with it all. Mom never has a free minute, either. Tomorrow night, for example, she is having eight guests for dinner and she only has this one evening to clean the house, go to the market, arrange the flowers for the centerpiece, and put the hem in the dress she will wear. Her "to do" list is three pages long and she already has a splitting headache from it all. She opens a can of "Spaghetti-Os" for the kids' supper and hopes the troops will stay out of her hair. About 7 P.M., little Larry tracks down his perspiring mother and says, "Look what I just drew, Mom." She glances downward and says, "Uh huh," obviously thinking about something else.

Ten minutes later, Larry asks her to get him some juice. She complies but resents his intrusion. She is behind schedule and her tension is mounting. Five minutes later he interrupts again, this time wanting her to reach a toy that sits on the top shelf of the closet. She stands looking down at him for a moment and then hurries down the hall to meet his demand, mumbling as she goes. But as she passes his bedroom door, she notices that he has spread his toys all over

the floor and made a mess with the glue. Mom explodes. She screams and threatens and shakes Larry till his teeth rattle.

Does this drama sound familiar? It should, for "routine panic" is becoming an American way of life. I recently conducted an inquiry among seventy-five middle-class married women, between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age. I asked them to indicate the sources of depression which most often send them into despair and gloom. Many common problems were revealed, including in-law conflicts, financial hardships, difficulties with children, sexual problems, and mood fluctuations associated with menstrual and physiological distress. But to my surprise, *fatigue and time pressure* was tagged as *the* most troublesome source of depression by half the group; the other half ranked it a close second! It is obvious that many families live on this kind of last minute, emergency schedule, making it impossible to meet the demands of their own overcommitments. Why do they do it? The women whom I surveyed admitted their dislike for the pace they kept, yet it has become a monster which defies containment. Faster and faster they run, jamming more and more activities into their hectic days. Even their recreation is marked by the same breakneck pace. There was a time when a man didn't fret if he missed a stage coach; he'd just catch it next month. Now if a fellow misses a section of a revolving door he's thrown into despair!

But guess who is the inevitable loser from this





breathless lifestyle? It's the little guy who is leaning against the wall with his hands in the pockets of his blue jeans. He misses his father during the long day and tags around after him at night, saying, "Play ball, Dad!" But Dad is pooped. Besides, he has a briefcase full of work to be done. Mom had promised to take him to the park this afternoon, but then she had to go to that Women's Auxiliary meeting at the last minute. The lad gets the message—his folks are busy again. So he drifts into the family room and watches two hours of pointless cartoons and reruns on television.

Children just don't fit into a "to do" list very well. It takes time to be an effective parent when children are small. It takes time to introduce them to good books—it takes time to fly kites and play punch ball and put together jigsaw puzzles. It takes time to listen, once more, to the skinned-knee episode and talk about the bird with the broken wing. These are the building blocks of esteem, held together with the mortar of love. But they seldom materialize amidst busy timetables. Instead, crowded lives produce fatigue—and fatigue produces irritability—and irritability produces indifference—and indifference can be interpreted by the child as a lack of genuine affection and personal esteem.

As the commercial says, "Slow down, America!" What is your rush, anyway? Don't you know your children will be gone so quickly and you will have nothing but blurred memories of those years when they needed you? I'm not suggesting that we invest our entire adult lives into the next generation, nor must everyone become parents. But once those children are here, they had better fit into our schedule somewhere. This is, however, a lonely message at the present time in our society. Others are telling Mom to go to work—have a career—do her own thing—turn her babies over to employees of the state working in child-care centers. Let someone else discipline, teach, and guide her toddler. While she's at it, though, she'd better hope that her "someone else" gets across the message of esteem and worth to that pudgy little butterball who waves "good-bye" to his mommy each morning.

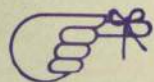
(3) *Guilt*. In case you haven't noticed, parenthood is a very guilt-producing affair—even for the dedicated "professional." The conflict of interest between the needs of children and the demands of

adult responsibilities, as described above, is only one of many inconsistencies which can strike pangs of guilt in our hearts. (It is interesting to me that the situation gradually reverses itself as we age, with our grown-up children then feeling guilty over their failures with us!) Since no one can do the job perfectly, we subject ourselves to a constant cross-examination in the courtroom of parental acceptability. Was I fair in my discipline? Did I overreact out of frustration and anger? Have I been partial to the child who is my favorite? Did I cause that illness by giving him poor care? Was the accident my fault? Have I made the same mistakes for which I resented my own parents? 'Round and 'round go the self-doubts and recriminations.

I have even seen parents agonize over circumstances totally beyond their control, such as when they give birth to a mentally retarded child. Although the cause of the child's defect was genetic and completely unknowable until it occurred, they often interpret the disaster as punishment for some past sin. Once that idea has been accepted as truth, they will bear the personal responsibility for their child's misfortune from that day forward. This unfounded guilt can drive a wedge between two happily married people, destroying their relationship and consuming them in bitterness.

Guilt can interfere with a healthy parent-child relationship in numerous ways. First, it can take the joy out of parenthood, turning the entire responsibility into a painful chore. Secondly, guilt almost always affects the way a parent handles a child; the typical reaction is to buy everything Junior screams for, whether he needs it or not, and to become much too permissive in matters of control. The reasoning seems to be, "With all that I have done wrong, the least I can do for the child is avoid punishment and unpleasantness." As we will discuss later, self-esteem splinters under that freewheeling environment. Thirdly, through some mystery of perception, a child can usually "feel" hidden guilt in his parents. He knows something unidentifiable is there, and wonders about its meaning. He may well conclude that it is all his fault. In short, guilt can be another formidable barrier in building self-respect among the young.

The best way to handle guilt is to face it squarely, using it as a source of motivation for change, where



**Don't forget: June 1st is a national day of prayer and fasting.**



warranted. Dr. William Glasser said, and I agree, that guilt is a valuable emotion, providing the energy to improve and grow. Thus, I would suggest that guilty parents sit down together and discuss their personal dissatisfaction. They should actually write down their most troubling parental shortcomings. Each item should then be assessed as follows: Is my guilt valid? Can I do anything about it? If so, how? If not, isn't it appropriate that I lay the matter to rest?

Remember, again, that none of us can be perfect parents, any more than we can be perfect human beings. We get tired and frustrated and disappointed and irritable, affecting the way we approach those little fellows around our feet. But fortunately, we are permitted to make many mistakes through the years—provided the overall tone is somewhere near the right note.

*Rivals for Love.* My son arrived on the scene when his sister was five years of age. She had been the only granddaughter on either side of the family and had received all the adult attention that can be heaped upon a child. Then suddenly, her secure kingdom was invaded by a cute little fellow who captured and held the center stage. All of the relatives cuddled, cooed, rocked, bounced, and hugged baby Ryan, while Danae watched suspiciously from the wings. As we drove home from Grandmother's house on a Sunday afternoon, about a week after Ryan's arrival, my daughter suddenly said, "Daddy, you know I'm just talking. You know, I don't mean to be bad or anything, but sometimes I wish little Ryan wasn't here!"

She had given us a valuable clue to her feelings in that brief sentence, and we immediately seized the opportunity she had provided. We moved her into the front seat of the car so we could discuss what she had said. We told her we understood how she felt and assured her of our love. We also explained that a baby is completely helpless and will die if people don't take care of him—feed, clothe, change, and love him. We reminded her that she was taken care of that way when she was a baby, and explained that Ryan would soon grow up too. We were also careful in the months that followed to minimize the threat to her place in our hearts. By giving careful attention to her feelings and security, the relationship with her brother developed into a lasting friendship and love.

Danae's admission was not a typical response among children. Much more commonly, a child will be unable or unwilling to express the insecurity brought by a newborn rival, requiring his parents to

read more subtle signs and cues. The most reliable symptom of the I've-been-replaced syndrome is a sudden return to infantile behavior. Obviously, "If babyhood is where it's at, then I'll be a baby again." Therefore, the child throws temper tantrums, wets the bed, sucks his thumb, holds tightly to Mamma, baby talks, etc. In this situation, the child has observed a clear and present danger and is solving it in the best way he knows.

If your firstborn child seems to feel like a has-been, I would suggest the following procedures be implemented:

- (1) Bring his feelings out in the open and help him verbalize them. When a child is acting silly in front of adults, trying to make them laugh or notice him, it is good to take him in your arms and say, "What's the matter, Joey? Do you need some attention today?" Gradually, a child can be taught to use similar words when he feels excluded or rejected. "I need some attention, Dad. Will you play with me?" By verbalizing his feelings, you also help him to understand himself better.

- (2) Don't let antisocial behavior succeed. If the child cries when the baby-sitter arrives, leave him anyway. A temper tantrum can be greeted with a firm swat, etc. However, reveal little anger and displeasure, remembering that the entire episode is motivated by a threat to your love.

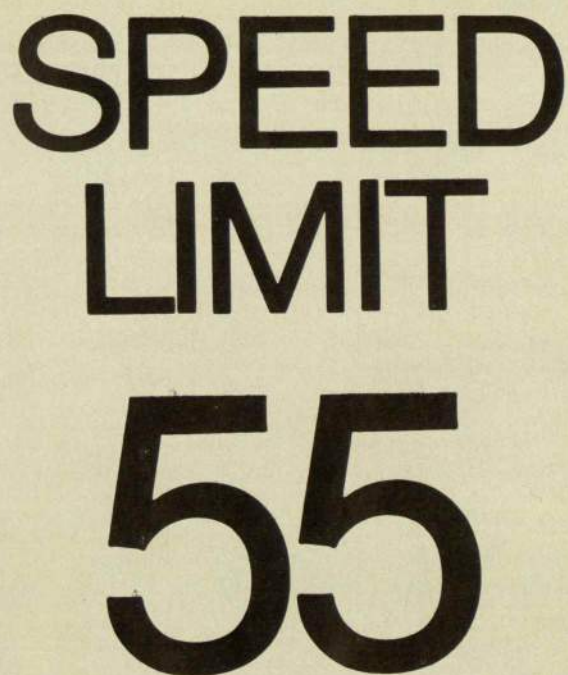
- (3) Meet his needs in ways that grant status to him for being older. Take him to the park, making it clear that the baby is too little to go; talk "up" to him about the things he can do that the baby can't—he can use the bathroom instead of his pants, for example. Let him help take care of the baby so he will feel he is part of the family process.

It is not difficult to convey love to more than one child simultaneously provided you put your mind (and heart) to it.

This first strategy, in summary, involves examining the emotional content of your home. Does it contribute to self-confidence or self-degradation? Does it meet the basic emotional needs or does it leave them unsatisfied and yearning? Does it reserve respect and admiration for the bright and beautiful superchild, or does it grant human worth to every person on this earth? Does it reinforce the best in life, or the worst? Someday, when your little one is grown, he will look back in anger or appreciation, depending on the answers to those relevant questions. ♥



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# the encouragement connection

by virgil vogt



**IN OUR LIFE TOGETHER** as brothers and sisters in Christ we are called to “encourage one another and build one another up” (1 Thess. 5:11, RSV). Often we do this without knowing or intending it. Some have an effective gift of encouragement—and use it! But most of us need help. How do we encourage? How do we affirm and build up our brothers and sisters?

Encouragement is different than teaching or correction; it's not aimed at changing someone's direction or behavior. Encouragement strengthens and invigorates a brother in his chosen direction or activity.

## JUMPER CABLES

The New Testament Greek word for encouragement contains the idea of being called alongside another. On the coldest winter days we do this to some of our cars. They need encouragement! When one battery is so weak that it cannot spark its engine, we bring another car alongside and connect the working battery with heavy jumper cables to the weaker battery. Nothing is changed in the car that won't start. But with the direct infusion of power from the other vehicle, the weakness is overcome and the stranded car is able to function on its own.

We Christians often need to connect with the strength in others in order to get started or to keep

going in difficult circumstances. We need someone to come alongside and give us a “jump.”

“I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts” (Col. 4:8). In the Scriptures the ministry of encouragement is specifically focused on our hearts. Through the wear and tear of living, we get run down and weak. The voltage in our spiritual circuits is low and the whole system begins malfunctioning. We become “faint-hearted” (1 Thess. 5:14). That's when we need encouragement. A word of encouragement connects the faith and vitality which is in your heart with the spiritual circuits in my heart. By means of this connection, I am able to draw strength from you.

The jumper cable analogy is useful in illustrating several factors which are important in a ministry of encouragement.

**1. Take time.** If you are in your car, hurrying to the store or to a meeting, and your brother's car is stalled beside the curb, you must interrupt your own activities if you are to give him a jump. We should be ready to temporarily set aside our own agenda if we are to focus on the needs of another person.

For example, we may be just about to say something important when a sister shares a deep struggle. If we are to speak a word of encouragement, we must take time to hear and respond. Unless we interrupt what we are doing and pay attention to the needs of others we are not able to provide the necessary encouragement.

**2. Come alongside—close.** The capacity to encourage depends upon being able to understand and identify with the other person in his or her weakness. Often we must ask the other person to say more about what he or she is feeling. We should try to grow in the art of empathetic listening. Identifying points in our own experience where we have faced similar problems is often a helpful way to come close.

We may need to actually verbalize this sense of closeness when someone is sharing a problem. We can't always assume that the other person knows that we understand and go on to discuss the solution. People may need to be told explicitly that we understand, that we accept and love them as they are. They need to know that we are solidly alongside.

In the small groups in our community we find that many of us need to become more responsive, affirmative, and vocal after someone has shared a deep need or a difficult problem. The profound struggles of life tend to alienate us from others and from God. We feel isolated, alone, confused, fearful. After we have shared something of this nature in a group or with another individual, it is very helpful to hear that others understand, that they affirm and



accept us. We may be struggling, but we need not be separated.

3. **Have a strong heart-to-heart-connection.** Jumper cables are thick so as to allow a full flow of energy to pass from one battery to another. In giving encouragement we need to be direct and strong. We need to speak out of the depths of our heart to the depths of another's heart. Our words should be strong and clear. Often it is important to be physically close—to touch, to embrace, to look directly in the eyes. Of course we should be sincere about things and not go beyond what we can do with integrity.

## OCCASIONS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

All this applies especially to persons who are stalled out and in serious difficulty. But there are many other occasions when a word of encouragement can be a channel for God's grace.

My wife, Joan, gave me a small African drum for Christmas which a friend had purchased while traveling in Kenya. I planned to take the drum to a Sunday morning service and play it with the music group. The first time I did this, I experienced some uncertainty. For one thing, the sound of the drum seemed so weak in the context of all the other voices and instruments that I wondered whether anyone could hear it. Furthermore, even though I enjoyed playing the drum, I had little experience and no training. So I felt rather shaky going public with the new instrument. But after the meeting several persons told me how much the drum playing added to the music, enhancing the worship. Even though it was a small matter, their words of encouragement meant a lot to me.

We are often called to venture out in new ways, to do things for which we've had no training and little experience. We often wonder how our contribution fits in, whether it is coming through, whether it is helpful. How strengthening it is to hear from others that things are going well! A word of encouragement lends strength and inspiration to carry on. It rekindles our enthusiasm and helps us put ourselves into the task that God has given us to do.

## BARNABAS: SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Our capacity to see the good which God is working in each situation and each person is a crucial aspect of encouragement, whether in ordinary experiences or particularly difficult ones. This ability is especially demonstrated in Joseph, called Barnabas, the New Testament church leader who is noted for his ministry of encouragement. The ministry of encouragement was so much a part of his life

that the other apostles surnamed him Barnabas, or "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36). In giving him this name, the other apostles were confirming and calling forth what must have been the dominant feature in the life and ministry of this brother from Cyprus.

His generous and sincere character is reflected in the sale of his property and the donation of the proceeds to the church (Acts 4:37). While many were involved in this kind of sharing, the example of Barnabas is lifted up in direct contrast to the example of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). His example is as strikingly positive as theirs is negative. Barnabas was a person who gave freely and sincerely of himself.

To give freely requires that we first of all find ourselves secure in the love of God. Similarly, seeing God's grace in our own lives is the prerequisite for being able to see it and encourage it in others. Barnabas "saw the grace of God" (Acts 11:23).

This quality equipped Barnabas to fulfill a strategic and difficult assignment in the early church. He was the leader selected in Jerusalem and sent to Antioch when the Jerusalem church first heard that Gentiles were becoming Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:22). This was before the matter of including Gentiles had been decisively resolved in the early church. Many questions and fears still surrounded this possibility; profound moral and theological questions were as yet unresolved.

Other men coming to Antioch on this occasion might have focused immediately on the questions of Jewish law—but not Barnabas. "When he came and *saw the grace of God*, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:23).

Barnabas had eyes to see the grace of God in a situation. He saw what the Lord was doing. He was able to perceive the purpose of the Lord, and that is what he responded to. He rejoiced in it and encouraged the believers to remain faithful in fulfilling the Lord's purpose in their lives. That was real encouragement!

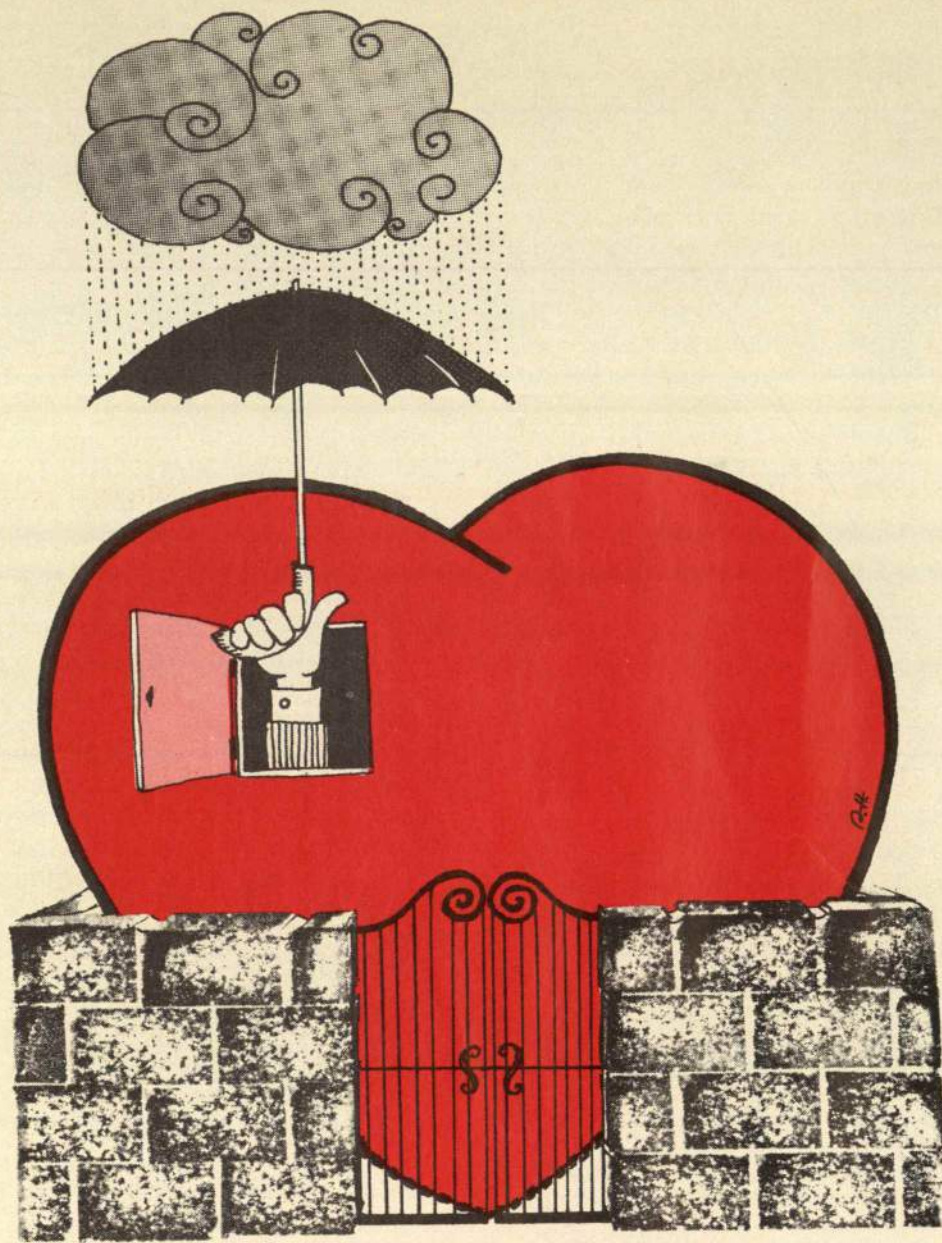
When someone has eyes of faith to see the grace of God in a particular situation—what a blessing that can be to us all. It is refreshing and life-giving to receive feedback from a man like Barnabas.

Let us look for the grace of God in each other and in each situation. Let us then confirm it and affirm it to one another directly. May sons of encouragement arise in great number within the church of our time. ♥

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# **DEFENSE AGAINST DISCOURAGEMENT**

**by Derek Prince**



**THE FIRST TIME** I ever heard Billy Graham speak was in London in 1954. One thing he said at that service never left me. He said, "God never uses a discouraged Christian." I thought that over and concluded, "That's really not fair." Discouragement was definitely a problem that I was facing in those days myself, and I thought, "Well, it's not very nice for him to say that."

The example he gave was Gideon sitting behind the winepress, threshing the wheat and hiding in utter discouragement. God had to change Gideon's attitude before He could use him. So the angel came to Gideon with this unexpected statement: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." I'm sure Gideon looked around to see whom the angel was talking to because he was cowering in fear from the Midianites. The Lord had to change Gideon's picture of himself before He could do anything with him.

The same is true of us. If we can't look at ourselves through the eyes of faith, then we are scarcely eligible for God's service. A wrong negative picture of ourselves will frustrate everything God wants to do for us unless we view things in a different light. Basically I want to talk to you about the Scripture's answer to discouragement and how to deal with that type of spiritual attack.

In the sixth chapter of Ephesians are listed six items of military equipment: the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. These are not just fancy names or theological subtleties. They are very practical realities which each of us needs to lay hold of. I want to take three of those six items and give you some specific practical teaching from Scripture on how to resist the onslaught of spiritual discouragement.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take upon you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:12-17).

Based on my studies and on numerous modern translations, I believe that first verse might more accurately read this way: "For our wrestling match is not against persons with bodies." That is very vivid. In other words, we are not wrestling against human beings. Your mother-in-law is not the problem, nor even some dictator like Stalin or Hitler.

Our wrestling match is not against persons with bodies, but against rulers with realms of authority, against the world dominators of this present darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavens.

So we are involved in a total, all-out conflict with unseen spiritual persons who have tremendous power, who are highly organized, and who are totally opposed to us and to everything that stands for God, the purposes of God and the people of God. Their headquarters is in the heavenlies, and they exert every type of spiritual pressure against us that will in any way bring us down. As a logical conclusion of that fact, Paul says in verse 13, "You've got to put on your armour." Otherwise you are going to be a casualty. That's a very logical, practical conclusion.

I wouldn't recommend that anyone try to be involved in spiritual warfare or in building the Kingdom of God unless he first put on his armor; because when you attack the devil, believe me, he's going to fight back, and he doesn't play according to the rules.

Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day (Eph. 6:13).

Notice that Paul assumes the evil day is coming. I don't believe this refers to the "great tribulation." I believe it means that every Christian is going to go through his own particular evil day. When Jesus gave the parable of the men who built two houses, one on the rock and the other on the sand, He did not say, "If the wind and rain come"; He said, "When the wind and the rain come." Each house was subjected to the same test.

When Jesus told the parable of the sower, He said, "When affliction and persecution arise." He didn't say, "If." He took it for granted that persecution will come. Every Christian will have to go through the evil day when he has to face affliction and perse-



cution. As Paul said in Acts 14:22, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." There is no other way. So first of all we need to get that "when" fixed in our minds. Remember that it doesn't mean something is *wrong* when we

***We need to constantly  
remind ourselves  
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find ourselves in the evil day, under tremendous pressure. It doesn't mean we are out of God's will. On the contrary, it is probably a good indication that we're on the way into the Kingdom of God.

Of the six items of equipment Paul lists, I only want to talk about three: the breastplate, the shield, and the helmet. The other three are necessary, but for the purpose of this message, I want to focus on the three I have mentioned. I want to explore in a very practical way—mainly out of personal experience—the use of the breastplate, the shield, and the helmet.

### THE BREASTPLATE

To begin with, let's note an interesting parallel passage to part of Ephesians 6 in 1 Thessalonians 5.

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation (vs. 8).

Ephesians 6:14 says, "the breastplate of righteousness," but 1 Thessalonians 5:8 tells us more specifically what that righteousness is. It's not the righteousness of self-effort or good works but the righteousness of faith which works by love. (This theme of faith, by the way, is central to these three items of equipment and also to the vital organs of the body which they protect.)

What vital organ of the body does the breastplate protect? The heart. The protection of the heart is the purpose of the breastplate of righteousness through faith which works by love. Bear in mind that scriptural faith is always in the heart, not in the head. For instance, Romans 10:10 says, "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." Real faith is not just intellectual concepts, nor theology, nor doctrine. It's heart faith which works along one primary line—love.

In conjunction with this, let's look at Galatians 5:6:

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

That is a simple, yet profound statement. The only thing in the Christian life which really matters is *faith*, but not inactive faith or intellectual faith. It's faith in the heart that works by *love*. We need to constantly remind ourselves that the only thing that really matters in the whole Christian life is *faith* that *works* by *love*. We can get so sophisticated that we have answers to all sorts of theological questions and still miss the one central reality—faith in the heart working by love. Without that, you have missed it all.

So the breastplate that protects the heart is faith that works by love. Once the breastplate is removed, our most delicate vital organ, the heart, is exposed.

One other thing we need to see concerning the nature of faith is that it always relates to the invisible, never to the visible. Or, as 2 Corinthians 5:7 states very simply, ". . . we walk by faith, not by sight." "Walk" means "live." Our whole life as Christians is based not on what we see, but on what we believe. It's by faith, not by sight and these two are in opposition to one another. If we go by what we see, we are not going by what we believe.

This whole issue was the very first mistake that humanity made. When the serpent in the Garden of Eden questioned the word of God, and Eve entertained that question, she was defeated. Genesis 3:6 tells us what pressure Eve responded to: "And when the woman *saw* that the tree was good for food." What's the key word there? *Saw*. Eve had moved out from the realm of faith in the invisible word to trusting her sight, and the very next moment, she was defeated. This same principle applies to us. When we go by what we see, we are no match for the devil. We must walk by faith, not by sight.

The breastplate that protects our heart is faith in



the invisible God and His word, and this faith works by love. The moment you abandon that faith, you cease to be truly loving. People say, "Love is more important than faith." That may be, but the only way to love is by faith. Since faith works by love, it is no wonder you get irritable, frustrated, impatient, and snap at your husband or wife the moment you let the breastplate down. Your faith, which is the only thing that produces love, has gone. Consequently, out comes the old man with all his nasty quirks and idiosyncrasies. But what was your basic problem? You lowered your breastplate.

## THE SHIELD

Let's look now at the shield. If the breastplate protects the heart, what does the shield protect? The answer is really *the whole person*. In the Roman era, if you knew how to manipulate the shield, there was no part of you that could be reached by the fiery dart, and in the same way, the shield of faith protects the whole person.

Sometimes we misunderstand faith, thinking of it as something we have to be consciously doing all the time. "I must flex my spiritual muscles and believe." But faith is not so much an action as an attitude of trust in God.

My late wife Lydia used to give the example of a little boy in his father's arms. The little boy would hold tightly onto the lapels of his father's coat so that he wouldn't fall, but after a while he would get sleepy and nod off. His hands would relax, but his father would still be holding him. So all his holding onto the lapels was really unnecessary effort. That's like us with God. We can hold on, but even when we let go, God is still holding on.

In a certain sense, we can relax. Faith is not this continuous effort of holding onto God lest He get away. Instead it's an attitude of just knowing God is there, and underneath are His everlasting arms. And along with that attitude, there is an affirmation of the faith you have.

Many of you have probably heard about the three "F's," which is a very familiar teaching: Fact, Faith and Feeling, in that order. The facts are in the Bible. Faith affirms those facts, and your feelings take care of themselves. But if you begin with feeling, you'll be as unstable as they are. Facts never change, while feelings vary from moment to moment.

So you cannot afford to base your faith on your feelings. You base your faith on the facts in the word of God which never change. They are the same hour

by hour, day by day, year by year. To believe that requires a mental decision. Smith Wigglesworth once said, "I'm never moved by what I feel; only by what I believe."

The only permanent, unchanging, valid source of facts is the Bible. Faith has the attitude: "The Bible is true and I believe it. God is there. He won't let me go. My feelings can take care of themselves." If you have that attitude, your feelings will come into line with the facts. But if you begin with your feelings, you'll never get to the facts. It's an absolute priority that you begin with the facts in the word of God.

In order to do that, you have to *know* the facts. You have to be aware of what Scripture says.

For example, the fact of our redemption. The word "to redeem" means "to buy back." Scripture says that we were sold under sin in Satan's slave market, but Jesus redeemed us, or bought us back

## Just Around the Corner





out of Satan's slave market with His precious blood. Where does it state that fact? Psalm 107 verse 2 says, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." The Lord has redeemed us so that we are *no longer* in the hand of the enemy but in the Lord's hands.

Then consider Colossians 1:12-14.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

It's a fact that God has delivered us from the power of darkness—that is, Satan's kingdom—and translated us into the Kingdom of Christ, and thus we have redemption; and our sins are forgiven. We are no longer in Satan's territory nor are we under His authority. The unbelieving, the Christ-rejecting, the rebellious and disobedient are under Satan's legitimate authority; but we aren't.

The fact is that when we repented and surrendered to Jesus Christ and made Him Lord, we were translated—carried over—spirit, soul, and body—out of the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of Christ.

## *God showed me that for me to be a pessimist was a denial of my faith.*

These are facts. We believe these facts from the invisible realm of His word because we no longer go by our feelings. That shield of faith covers every area of our lives. No fiery dart need ever get past it.

### THE HELMET

Now we come to the helmet. What part of the body does the helmet protect? The head, or the mind. Many years ago I recognized that my main area of weakness as a Christian was my mind, because I had a very highly trained mind and I tended to trust in it. I have discovered that the more you trust your mind, the more problems you have with it. The people who know they know nothing

start with an advantage. In fact, the Bible says, "And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2), and "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18).

As long as we trust in our own intellect we are exposed to the pressures of Satan. So knowing that I needed to protect my mind, I read Ephesians 6:17

## *The more you trust your mind, the more problems you have with it.*

which said, "Take the helmet of salvation." I thought to myself, "What is the helmet of salvation? Does it just mean 'being saved,' or is there something more?" My Bible had a cross reference to 1 Thessalonians 5:8, and if ever anything helped me in life, this did.

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

When I read that word "hope," I suddenly realized, "*That's* my helmet; it's hope." I thought of 1 Corinthians 13:13 where Paul said, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity," and I thought to myself, "I've heard a whole lot of sermons on faith, and a lot of sermons on love, but I don't recall ever hearing a sermon on hope." Then the Holy Spirit preached to me the first sermon I ever heard on hope.

Let me give you this definition. "Hope" in the Bible is not wishful thinking; it's not daydreaming or flights of fancy. "Hope" in the Bible means "a steady, serene, confident expectation of good." Hope is not wishful thinking because it has a foundation. What is that foundation? Faith.

Let's look in Hebrews 11:1.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. . .

Before you can have hope, you have to have faith. Faith is the substance, the basis, the underlying reality on which hopes are built.

There are two kinds of hope. One kind of hope is not based on faith, and it is not valid. It will probably be disappointed. The other kind of hope, Christian hope, is based on faith. It is guaranteed. We



need to ask ourselves, "Are my hopes based on faith, or are they merely wishful thinking and flights of fancy?"

Let me give you one scriptural basis for hope: Romans 8:28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Let's not misapply that scripture, because it doesn't apply to everybody. There are conditions to be met. Do you love God? Are you seeking to fulfill His purpose in your life? If so, then you know that all things work together for good. Now, if you know that all things work together for good, there can be no logical reaction but hope. Anything else is illogical.

It has been said that everybody is born either an optimist or a pessimist. There is no doubt in my mind that I was born a pessimist. Furthermore, in my family I was trained to be a pessimist. In my family if you weren't worried, you should be worry-

ing about the fact that you weren't worrying.

Well, God showed me that for me to be a pessimist was a denial of my faith. I could not logically believe the Bible and be a pessimist. God showed me I had to change and rediscipline my mind. First of all I had to be delivered by divine intervention from a spirit of heaviness or depression. Then God said, "I delivered you; now *you* retrain your mind. Don't focus on the negative. Don't always look for a reason for worrying. Focus on the positive. Look for a reason for believing."

That didn't happen overnight. It took me several years to retrain my mind, but those who know me well would acknowledge that I have changed my mind. I am very seldom depressed today, but 20 years ago it was almost my normal condition. It's possible to change if you will meet God's conditions.

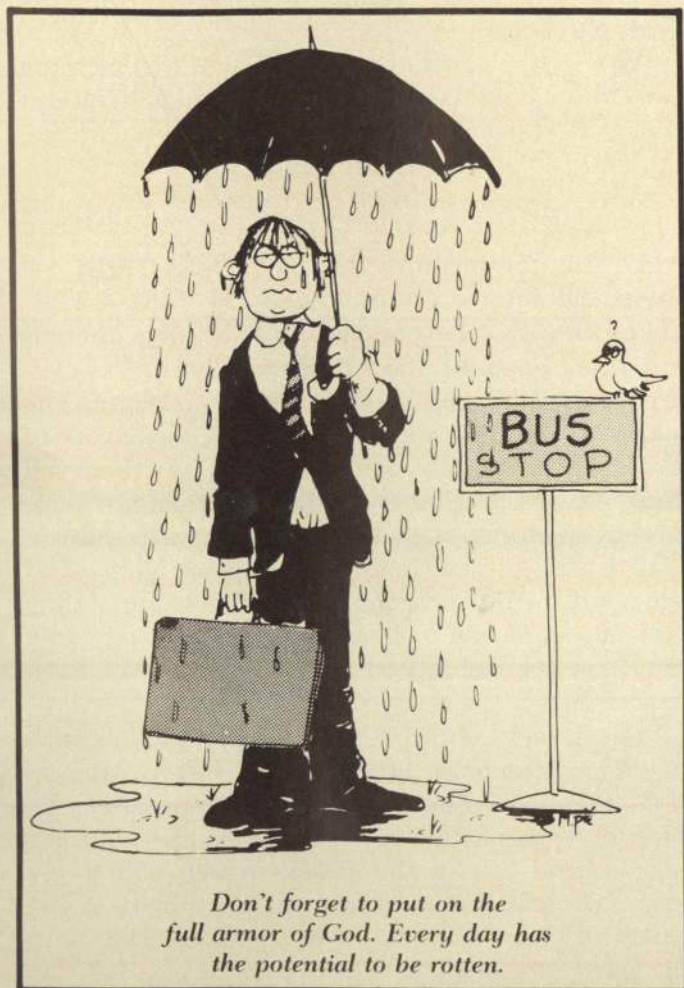
What prompted the change in me was seeing out of Scripture that my attitude of depression was unscriptural. It was illogical. It was contrary to God. So I retrained my mind. In that way I put on my helmet. What I am telling you is not merely based on Scripture, but also on experience. I want to testify that I've proved it; it works.

Now I want to give you the little sermon on hope that the Holy Spirit gave me out of the New Testament. First let's look at a passage from Romans 8.

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? (vs. 24).

Notice again the opposition between what you hope and what you see. If you see a thing, you don't have to hope for it. If the sun is shining, you don't need to hope the weather is going to be nice. Hope, like faith, relates to something not yet seen. The Holy Spirit said to me that we're saved by hope. No hope, no salvation. I don't mean you're a lost soul, but experientially you are not living in salvation. That's why you are so miserable.

Romans 15:13 says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing [not in feeling, not in wishing nor in seeing, but in believing], that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." It takes the power of the Holy Spirit to make you abound in hope, but that is the will of God. Don't take the helmet off because there is an evil spiritual being somewhere in the unseen world that has his arrows trained on you. The moment you take that helmet off, he'll strike you in the head. Sleep with your helmet on; it's quite comfortable. Go to bed hoping and wake up hoping.





Ephesians 2:12 describes the condition of the unbeliever, the unconverted. Notice there are three things said about them: 1) "at that time ye were *without Christ*, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise," 2) "having *no hope*," 3) "and *without God* in the world." The Holy Spirit said, "Without Christ, without God, without hope." Actually, when we are without hope, we are in the condition of the lost. I do not mean God has given up on us, but we are not living experientially in salvation.

In Colossians 1:27 Paul says, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the *hope* of glory." The Holy Spirit said to me, "Christ in you produces hope. If you have no hope, there is no Christ in you." Christ and hope are intimately related. The moment we give up hope, experientially we don't have Christ in us. Again I want to emphasize that is not our eternal state, but that is the condition we find ourselves in the moment we give up hope.

I think one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible is Hebrews 6:17-20.

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

There are two pictures of hope in that passage, both of them very vivid and beautiful. First of all, "we who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" is an illustration taken from a practice in the Old Testament. When a man was fleeing for his life, there was one place he could go where nobody would dare touch him. That place was God's altar. The altar had four horns—one on each corner. The man would run to the altar and lay hold on the horns of the altar, and nobody dared pull him away. So the writer of Hebrews says, "When you're under real pressure and the avenger is right on your tail, flee to the altar and lay hold on the horns of hope. Don't let go because he can't touch you there."

The other picture of hope here is in verse 19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." The Holy Spirit gave me a little lecture on this. He asked me, "What object needs an anchor?" So I replied, "A boat or a ship." He asked, "Why does it need an anchor?" I thought it over and answered, "Because a boat or a ship is designed to float in water, and water is a totally unstable element. There's nothing in water to give security or stability, so if the boat is to be stable, it must have an anchor which passes from the ship through the water to some other element, such as a rock, which is stable. Once the anchor is fastened to the stable element, then the boat is stabilized."

Then I realized how much you and I in this world are like that boat. We live in an element that is totally unstable. When I see an advertisement for an insurance program that says "total security," I smile to myself. Although insurance may be a blessing, it certainly does not give total security. Neither money nor real estate nor anything else that you look at can give us stability. We are just like a boat in water. If we want stability, we must have an anchor that passes out of time into eternity. When our anchor is fastened upon the eternal presence of Almighty God, we're *secure*.

What is that anchor? *Hope*. There is something beyond the boundaries of time, something in eternity that God has laid up for us, that cannot change, cannot rust, cannot be corrupted, cannot be defiled.

Now, I believe in living in this world, but if this world were all there is, it would be very little. Paul said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). Thank God that beyond the scene of time, there is an eternal hope for every believer. Those of us over sixty can say, "Amen!" to that with real delight. The reality of eternity may seem a long way away to some of you, but it comes a lot quicker than you think. But thank God, regardless of when it comes, there is an eternal hope laid up for every believer in Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ, the hope of glory. And when you have that anchor, there is nothing in time that can upset you or unstabilize you or overthrow you. You are stable because your anchor of hope rests in Him.

We can see, then, that God has provided us with an effective defense for when the enemy tries to discourage us. When we remember to prepare ourselves daily by putting on these three pieces of armor as a defense against the attacks which will surely come, we will find God faithful to strengthen our faith and hope, enabling us to stand victoriously in His Spirit. ♥



## The Lord, Our Encourager

"Do not fear, for I am with you;  
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,  
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." *Isaiah 41:10*

But now thus says the Lord your creator, O Jacob,  
And He who formed you, O Israel:  
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name; you are Mine!" *Isaiah 43:1*

... God has said, "Never will I leave you; Never will I forsake you." *Hebrews 13:5*

## Examples of Encouragement

And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. *1 Samuel 23:16*

And all those about them encouraged them with articles of silver, with gold, with goods, with cattle, and with valuables, aside from all that was given as a freewill offering. *Ezra 1:6*

For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. *1 Thessalonians 2:11-12*

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. *Hebrews 12:2-3, 12*

## Instruction about Encouragement

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. *Romans 14:19*

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. *Ephesians 4:29*

Fathers, do not embitter [frustrate] your children, or they will become discouraged. *Colossians 3:21*

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as we see the Day approaching. *Hebrews 10:23-25*

## Fruit of Encouragement

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. *Proverbs 12:18*

A soothing tongue is a tree of life, but perversion in it crushes the spirit. *Proverbs 15:4*

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. *Galatians 6:9*

# Thy Word Is Truth

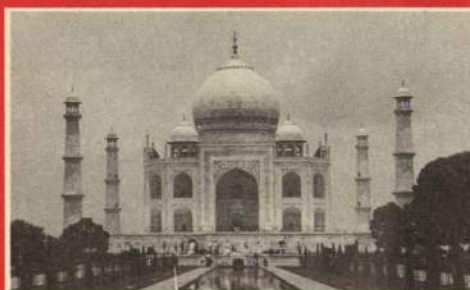
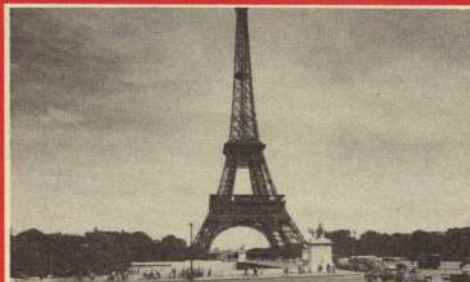
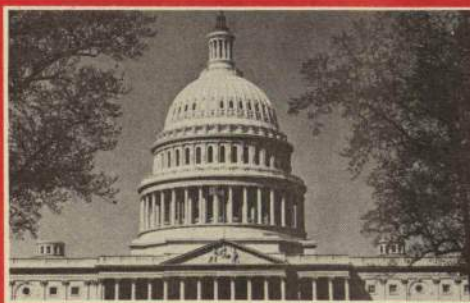
Starting with this issue, *New Wine* will carry as a regular feature selected scriptures that relate to the theme of that month's issue. We hope you find this month's "Thy Word Is Truth" a source of strength and encouragement.

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# a word to the nations



by jim reid

WE LIVE IN UNCERTAIN and calamitous times—times when nations and societies are in upheaval, desperately unstable and lacking clear direction. In this article, I want to share what I feel is *a word for the nations*—a word not of defeat or despair, but of victory and hope. In that regard, two passages of Scripture have been very much on my mind recently. The first is Jeremiah 1:4-10:

The word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

“Ah, sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak. I am only a child.”

But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child,’ you must go to everyone I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you declares the Lord.”

Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms, to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

The second passage is familiar to most Christians. It’s Paul’s defense to Agrippa in Acts 26, beginning in verse 15:

Then I said, “Who are you Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” the Lord replied. “Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant, and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I



will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."

Recently I had the opportunity to be with a close Christian companion who has been a great influence in my life over the years. This man, a real servant of God who is deeply committed to Christ, has served the Lord dynamically, ministering to thousands in conferences and teaching seminars in the United States and abroad, and influencing and discipling hundreds of men.

When the opportunity arose to reestablish fellowship and communication with this honored brother after not seeing him for some three years, I really did not know what to expect. Even so, I was not prepared for the radical and awesome change that had taken place in my friend's life.

As he shared the knowledge he had accumulated in recent years pertaining to the state of the union and the world, with behind-the-scenes facts of trends in the economic, political, and particularly the spiritual realm, covering the spectrum of Christian groups worldwide, I was deeply impressed with the accuracy of his assessments. Although I was not in serious disagreement with his facts, I saw a vast difference between his and my interpretation of those facts and consequently our manner of life, our convictions and our gospel.

I became acutely aware that his vision for the future was entirely different from mine. His response to the facts he had gathered was to begin preparations to hold out against the events he considered inevitable—riots in our streets, shortages of food and money, even the possible overthrow of our own government. He was making provisions for himself and his family by building a riot-proof structure in a remote area—stocked with armaments, fuel and foods—in which to hold out when "worse came to worst." His outlook and subsequent actions amazed me, for they offered no real answer to society. They were totally lacking in vision and direction.



Jim Reid is a graduate of Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado. For five years he pastored a fellowship in Colorado. He moved to Mobile, Alabama in 1977, where he presently serves as an elder in Gulf Coast Fellowship.

From my conversation with this dear man, I began to see for the first time the purpose for which God had brought me into covenant relationship with men of strength and fiber and commitment, and I began to give thanks to God in a way I never had before for the community of faith to which He has joined me.

My personal appraisal is that even though the gravity of these times warrants our sober consideration, in the midst of it all God is giving His people who have come into covenant relationship, certain dynamic truths and principles—in simple terms, *a word for the nations*. I'm persuaded that ahead of us are unprecedented days in which we will have the ear of people who will ask us as they did Peter, "What must we do to be saved?"

### WHAT WILL WE SAY?

God is giving us an eternal word to answer the foremost questions of mankind's existence and purpose. When conviction fell on Peter's audience in Acts 2—as they realized that they had killed the King and rejected his Kingdom—and they asked him that question, "What do we do now?" he gave no pat reply from the crusty halls of Judiac religion. Rather, Peter responded with a positive word—a revolutionary word: "Repent—change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in yourselves instead of rejecting it. Be baptized—be joined and immersed—into Christ's Body, the Church, and receive and live by the Spirit of God rather than the fallen spirit of humanism."

Peter's reply is an apt word for our generation as it was for those Jews, for we too have "killed the King" by our rejection of His rule over us. Here's the word: Be restored to a covenant relationship with God and be united in covenant relationship with His body of redeemed people. Those who responded to Peter's word immediately came into covenant relationship with the Spirit-filled Kingdom of disciples Christ had left to carry out His will here on earth. In Acts 2:41-47 we see they found new life in vertical relationship with God and horizontally with his earthly body. In the context of these two primal relationships man can find salvation in a Kingdom which cannot be shaken or destroyed. The eternal word speaks of an eternal Kingdom.

For the most part, the majority of Christian workers, church members and spiritual leaders in America today are oblivious to this word, and they are going about business as usual. It's much like



Israel in Jesus' time, when the general attitude was, "All things remain as they are." At that time Israel was under Roman domination, a slave to the most powerful government then known to mankind. By all appearances Rome was firmly entrenched as a government and an institution that no one could challenge or change. Little did those Jews know that while they were resigning themselves to the belief that "all things remain as they are—nothing is going to change," the very seeds of change had already been sown and were sprouting throughout the Roman empire. Little did they know that their own country would be utterly destroyed. Like the ostrich, they had buried their heads in the sand, hoping and pretending that nothing would happen.



Many Christians in America today are in the same state of mind. Church goes on as usual. And yet a growing number of leaders in upper echelons of Christian thought and opinion have pulled their heads out of the sand and are acutely aware of impending changes threatening our land—that our freedoms are not fully guaranteed and our way of life may soon be restricted. Some of these men see how certain aspects of Christian thought and doctrine no longer seem adequate, and these leaders are stalked by fear, alarmed by an inability to accomplish the dreams and visions that so charged their pulpits not many years ago—dreamed of discipling the nations, reaching the lost, and spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Rather than seeing the gospel spread and kingdoms and nations brought into compliance with God's will, they have seen their own neighborhoods ransacked by hoodlums, rapes committed in the very shadows of their church buildings, marriages broken that were initiated at their altars, suicides among their own disciples, and they feel a real sense of

panic and frustration, as well as a loss of faith and vision for the future. As a result, many are coming to the place where the right word needs to be spoken to reinstall\* and reinstall their faith, vision and purpose—motivating them toward an *outward* thrust of the gospel rather than an *inward* retraction to a hold-out mentality.

### THREE VOIDS

As I perceive the situation, there are three voids in many Christians' lives today that seriously hamper them. *Number one is an inaccurate understanding of the nature of the Church.* In the past fifty years the proclamation of the "born again" brand of gospel has put such a strong emphasis upon the individual's relationship to the Lord that many have not adequately understood the need for horizontal relationships with one another. As a result, it's understandable that these people feel fear and frustration—they don't have the assurance that brothers are standing with them and that they are not alone. Many times people have been more committed to an organization or structure than to one another. The pastor of the average church often feels more commitment to the denomination he serves than to his congregation. This spawns a feeling among the people that they are simply members of a church as they would be a member of a social organization, with no sense of being joined to a pastor who genuinely cares for them.

*Void number two is the absence of an understanding of the nature and character of the Kingdom of God.* The gospel has far more dynamic implications for us than just the prospect of eternal life in heaven when we die, although that is gloriously included. The gospel we have come to love and appreciate is one whereby we are made citizens of God's eternal Kingdom *here and now* on the earth, brought into the Kingdom through new birth, and into individual maturity by ministries which promote unity and stability, and finally into a corporate maturity wherein we will reign on the earth as the Body of Christ, with Jesus Himself as our Head. The Kingdom of God is not postponed to some mystical future time—it's here and now.

Contrary to this glorious hope, many Christians are preparing shelters and hideouts where they can feel secure from impending difficulties. They are no different than those past generations who had a hold-out mentality and hid themselves in caves. There is a whole sector of Christianity that is hoping



Jesus will come and rescue them before it's too late.

I do not share that mentality. I don't believe Jesus is coming to rescue a Church that's depleted, divided and disgraced. He is coming for a *Church victorious*, a Kingdom which cannot be shaken. God is in our midst, ordering our ways and our lives, disciplining us as he did the twelve, and equipping us to be people whose lives are governed by Kingdom principles. We are to be people overseen by God—appointed servants whose authority is not imposed, but recognized and thankfully received.

## COVENANT

*The third void I see is in the principle of covenant in our relationship to God and man.* This country was founded by people who knew the principle of covenant. They bound themselves both to God and each other by deep and sincere covenants.

Contemporary society considers covenant to be old hat, out of date, unnecessary. It is thought to be a severe limitation on our freedoms. The Church, which you would expect to espouse the virtue and necessity of covenant for the solidarity of society, has so emphasized the priesthood of the believer and the individual aspect of salvation that she no longer binds herself by covenants.

Organizational or doctrinal ties can never replace the bonds of spiritual covenants. The Church, the family, and the society of God are established and maintained by the entering and keeping of the New Covenant.

Even a casual look at the family, the Church, and society in general would reveal the shocking truth that the ability to walk or live in covenant is no longer considered relevant. Churches will cling to their doctrines, experiences or structures while refusing even to talk to each other. We must recover the desire and the ability to deny ourselves and walk in covenant unity with each other and with God.

## SPEAKING OUT OF EXPERIENCE

Now I want to ask you this question: If indeed God is giving us a word for the nations, isn't it essential that it first become incorporated in our own lives? A word for the nations must first be a word for you and me. It's time to review and assess the degree of our obedience to the commands God has given us the past several years. Do we really love Jesus Christ above all other loves? Is He in a place of preemi-

nence right now in your life and mine? Do we truly obey Him, or do we just store His words to us on the shelf like so many religious books? Do we really seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first? Do we really desire Him to govern us, or do we just want Him to help us when we need Him? Do we really desire right relationship with Him and with all of His children here in the earth?

Might it be possible that God is allowing this generation of people the world over to try every form of belief and every avenue of experience until they come to a place of total frustration, total bankruptcy, and cry out as those thousands did at the conclusion of Peter's message, "What must we do to be saved?"

Up to this time, many have *not* been asking, and we have been guilty of answering questions that no one is asking. I remember witnessing several years ago to an extremely perceptive and intelligent young man who seemed interested in my testimony as I shared it with him. At the conclusion of my presentation, he thanked me and said, "I really appreciate the time and interest you've shown. It just so happens that while your hobby is religion, my hobby is golf." It crushed me that he would interpret the central purpose of my life as a hobby.

I'm convinced that a day is approaching when people will regard Christianity not as a religion, but as the only alternate solution to their questions, problems and desires.

Only one other question faces us: If men *were* to come and say, "What must we do to be saved?" would we give them God's answer or just a religious reply? I pray that God will so incorporate and incarnate His word in us as the people of God that our lives become visible demonstrations of its truth. Then when we speak, we will have a voice of clarity and authority, a voice which cannot be repudiated. In response to the word we speak, many will be saved and to people genuinely seeking some explanation of the modern events and facts that concern them, we will not hand depleted and bankrupt theories. Instead we will say, "We do have an answer. We can teach you how to live."

I thank God that He is building a body of people who have heard His word and are doing it. It is thrilling to see God put His word in a people. Being in control of world affairs, He has set the divine stage, whereupon Satan's players have performed and failed, and now has called forth His people to demonstrate His love and the abundant life He offers through the Kingdom of the eternal Son whom He sent. ♥



# Letters to the Editor

Praise the Lord! He has given Mrs. Gundlach much wisdom on practical nutrition. I am a dietitian and spend much time counseling people on what to eat. The frustration involved is that most of the patients do not first eat of the bread of life and drink of the living water. We need the knowledge to choose foods which have not been robbed of all nutritional value, but we need more of God's wisdom in how to dine in love and harmony with family and friends. May we learn to incorporate the three.

Debbie Troupa  
Greencastle, IN

My neighbor's April issue of your magazine found its way into my mailbox today. I've read the whole issue and think it's either an excellent magazine or it hit me where I am right now. Anyway, I would like a subscription please. Truly the Lord works in mysterious ways.

Mrs. R. J. Wolf  
Sierra Madre, CA

I knew when merely seeing the title of April's *New Wine* that it would be tremendous. I've read more than half of it in just an hour because I simply could not put it down. I needed a confirmation of the importance of physical and mental fitness. After having let my physical fitness program lie for six months and being under condemnation for half that time, *New Wine* has now encouraged me to become the physically, mentally and spiritually fit Christian the Lord wants me to be. I appreciate this issue more than I can say.

I particularly needed to hear Dr. Cooper's word about turning loose my life to let God direct it. My heart's desire is to serve God in missionary service in addition to being a wife and mother. By letting God direct my life, I'll be able to serve in His way and not by my own efforts.

Barbara Phillips  
Knoxville, TN

Last night my husband and I had a talk. I told him how I didn't seem to be able to get any answers from God and was confused that perhaps I was not living the way God had in mind. One incident kept coming up; my daughter had a bad cold and, listening to her cough one night, I suddenly got down and said, "God, You can do it; please heal her." Not five minutes later she coughed again and with that cough my faith flew out the window. I realized last night that I was angry at God for not doing that "little thing" for me, for my daughter. I even found myself thinking, "If He loves kids so much, why won't He make her feel better?"

The *New Wine* (April's) magazine has been here for a few days—unread. This morning my husband picked it up; as he was leaving he said, "Bob Mumford's article is pretty good; if you get a chance, read it."

Well, I did and it opened all the windows and let that putrid odor of mistrust and resentment fly right out. Bob said, "Love God for who He is, not for the benefits" and "That mentality of regarding God as the head butler. . . ." That's all I've done lately. He told me exactly what was wrong. ". . . when a person gets to the place where God won't do what he thinks He ought to, a lot of wrong attitudes begin to surface—like resentment and anger." Thank you, Bob. Thank you, Lord.

Please don't stop being soft to God every month. You have no idea how many people are touched by every issue. May God be with you every day.

Franceann Paulman  
Somerville, CT

I wanted to include a thank you for your very special magazine that has ministered to me in so many different areas! I was so excited to see April's issue packed full of information about exercise, also to see that Dr. Cooper is a Christian! Almost three years ago I began running with the help of his Aerobics program, and am still at it!

Also, several years ago, Derek Prince had an article about his personal family life and was exhorting the Body to consider adopting as a way to enlarge God's family. That article confirmed a prayer of mine to begin fostering and gave us that extra push we needed to begin this ministry. Today we have our second foster child living with us and the blessings for our lives have been very rich.

Linda Dodd  
Phoenix, AZ



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