

# Magazine New Wine

June 1981

## Handling Disagreement

Dealing with our differences redemptively



The Other Side of the River  
A Betrayer Forgiven  
How to Get Angry the  
Right Way

have upon God's people, a group of Christian leaders gathering in 1971 in Seattle, Washington, adopted the following Statement of Ethics which was reaffirmed in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1975 at the height of the "discipleship" controversy.

### Ethics for Christian Leaders

- 1) We believe that God has set us in positions of leadership within the Body of Christ, either as leaders within a local congregation, or as preachers with a ministry to the Body of Christ at large, or in a combination of both these ministries.
- 2) So far as we are able, we will seek at all times to keep our lives and ministries sound in respect of ethics, morals, and doctrine.
- 3) We will acknowledge and respect all others who have similar ministries and who are willing to make a similar commitment in respect of ethics, morals, and doctrine.
- 4) If at any time we have any criticism or complaint against any of our brother ministers within the Body of Christ, we will seek to take the following steps:

ministers, or alternatively, before the local congregation to which our brother belongs.

In following these steps, our motive will be to retain the fellowship of our brother and to arrive at a positive, scriptural solution which will maintain the Body of Christ.

Until we have done everything possible to follow the steps outlined in Number 4, we will not publicly voice any criticism or complaint against a fellow minister.

In our general conduct toward our fellow ministers and all other believers, we will seek to obey the exhortation of Scripture to "follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

This resolution still stands today as a reliable way for disagreeing Christians, both leaders and laymen, to handle responsibly the differences we will inevitably encounter with dignity rather than dishonor and division. Christians *can* disagree with one another in a way that maintains our loyalty to each other and, even more, our unity in Christ, that quality which

Disagreement is always a potential threat to the unity that Christians are to pursue with one another. Improperly handled, it can provoke unsubstantiated gossip, irresponsible criticism and outright antagonism among Christians. All



# EDITORIAL

of these impede God's plans for His people, inviting the reproach of a watching world and postponing the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer for His followers in John 17:21, 23: "...that all of them may be one, Father...so that the world may believe that you have sent me...May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you loved me."

Recognizing the destructive and disgracing effects that irresponsible criticism and division

First, we will approach our brother directly and privately and seek to establish the true facts.

Second, if thereafter we still find grounds for criticism or complaint, we will seek the counsel and cooperation of at least two other ministers, mutually acceptable to our brother and ourselves, in order to make any changes needed to rectify the situation.

Finally, if this does not resolve the criticism or complaint, we will seek to bring the whole matter before a larger group of our fellow

will ultimately verify the reality of Jesus' lordship over a watching world.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Leggatt".

Dick Leggatt  
Managing Editor

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June 1981

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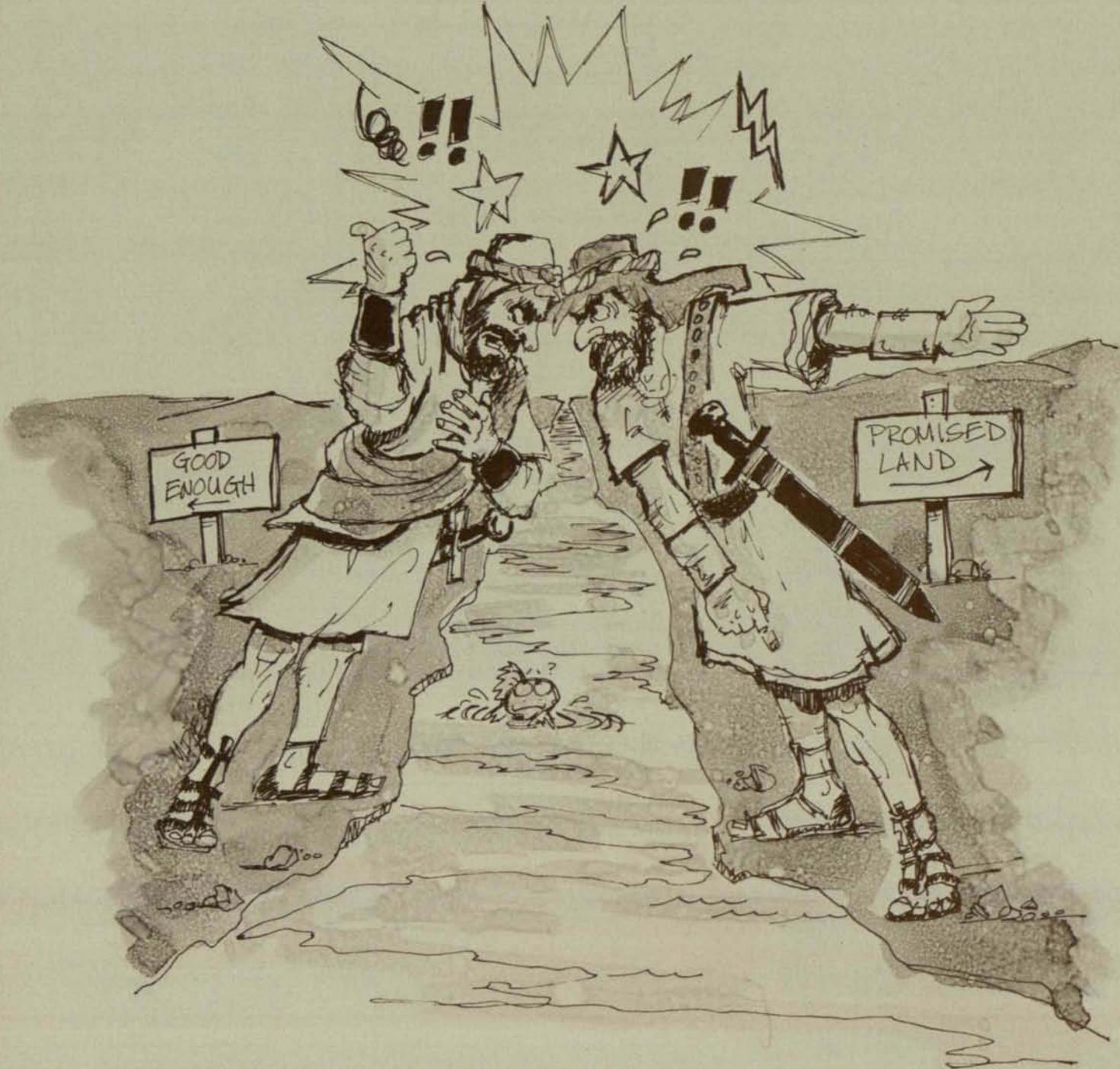
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# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER

by Don Basham



**IN THE EARLY YEARS** of my charismatic experience I thought that maturity had to do with how much faith I could muster. Either all of my prayers would be answered or I would be so much in the Spirit that things wouldn't

bother me.

The years since have modified my understanding of spiritual maturity. I know now that prayer doesn't solve every problem. Even spiritually mature people still have problems.

I appreciate a definition of maturity Charles Simpson once gave: to be mature is to be able to act redemptively in every situation—and those situations that create the most problems for us involve relationships. The mark of a mature

Christian is his ability to handle his problems with other people.

In this article we will talk about dealing constructively with the accusations, suspicions and condemnation that come out of our misunderstandings with one another.

### Israel's Dissension

A story from the Old Testament serves as a good illustration of the causes of misunderstandings, as well as the proper way to resolve them. In the thirty-second chapter of Numbers we find the children of Israel near the end of their forty years of wilderness wandering. They were poised on the bank of the Jordan to enter the Promised Land. Moses' life was nearly over and his call from God nearly fulfilled when he was approached with a request.

Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle; and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying...

...the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan (vss. 1-5).

Moses, however, reacted nega-

tively. For forty years his intention had been to bring all the children of Israel across the Jordan into Canaan. He also remembered how the spies' evil report discouraged the people once before from entering the Promised Land. So he chastised the two and a half tribes with a lecture:

And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben,

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**Many times misunderstandings come because we feel our future welfare or destiny or goal is being jeopardized by what is happening.**

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Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?

Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.

For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them....

And the Lord's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the Lord, was consumed.

And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel,

For if ye turn away from after

him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people (vss. 6-9,13-15).

Moses heard what Gad and Reuben were saying from a prejudiced perspective, caused by an unhappy experience forty years before.

We can understand why Moses felt as he did, but he was misinterpreting the situation. So the tribes

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of Gad and Reuben moved to prove to him their loyalty.

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And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place....

We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward (vss. 16-19).

The nature of the problem was this: Gad and Reuben and half of Manasseh interpreted their destiny differently from the other nine and a half tribes. They saw their calling in God to be a different calling and their place in God's kingdom in a different geographical location from the other tribes. They became a misunderstood minority; they became a group of non-conformists.

The story continues in the book of Joshua. The two and a half tribes occupied the cities east of the Jordan and built pens for their cattle and homes for their kids. Then the men, forty thousand of them, went



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on to fight the war to conquer Canaan with the other nine and a half tribes of Israel. When the battles were over Joshua gave them permission to go back to their inheritance across the river.

On their way home to Gilead, before they crossed the river, Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh decided to erect an altar on the land that belonged to the other nine and a half tribes. To the surprise of the two and a half tribes, the altar they built became a point of great misunderstanding and contention.

And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them (Josh. 22:12).

The majority immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion that the minority was rebelling against God. On the basis of what they saw and heard, the nine and a half tribes came to the drastically wrong conclusion that Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had rebelled and had fallen into apostasy and were going after Baal. In order to defend their "true faith," they were ready to go to war and slaughter their brothers. They



would defend the true altar at Shiloh and put down those rebels—all for the glory of God, of course.

We must understand that the

ground had been laid earlier for this hasty response; the suspicions were already present. Why? Because these two and a half tribes wanted to settle on the "other side" of the river. Even though forty thousand men of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had fought beside the other tribes to prove their bravery and their loyalty, still they were "different."

Fortunately, some cooler heads prevailed before they went to war. They chose the son of the priest and ten elders—each one a head of a tribe—as a council to talk with Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. But even the delegation was angry and had already made up its mind about the problem.

And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord? (vss. 15-16)

In addition to prejudice and half-truths, an attitude of superiority was a cause for the wrong conclusions drawn by the nine and a half tribes. Listen to their "invitation":

Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the Lord... (vs. 19).

Now all of this came as an utter shock to Gad and Reuben and half-tribe Manasseh. They were utterly dumbfounded to think that the other nine and a half tribes could so completely misunderstand what they did. Immediately they

rose up to explain and to defend themselves.

Then the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh answered, and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel,

The Lord God of gods, the Lord



God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord, (save us not this day.)

That we have built us an altar to turn from following the Lord, or if to offer thereon burnt offering or meat offering, or if to offer peace offerings thereon, let the Lord himself require it;

And if we have not rather done it for fear of this thing, saying, In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?

For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord (vss. 21-25).

What happened here was a tremendous misunderstanding that almost led to the tragedy of nine and a half tribes wiping out the other two and a half tribes of Israel.

## Causes of Misunderstandings

This kind of situation—with its potential for tragedy—has repeatedly plagued the Church. Any group that has a different vision, or dares to become prophetic in its understanding or innovative in any way, immediately becomes suspect. Others, acting out of religious enthusiasm and out of mistaken or hasty conclusions, have opposed them—at times even putting them to death—“thinking to do a service to God,” even as Jesus prophesied. It is thus important for us to recognize in this story the factors that lead to misunderstanding between groups of Christians even today.

The first factor is *non-conformity*. The two and a half tribes deviated from the “norm.” They had a vision from God that was somewhat different from the other nine and a half tribes. When somebody acts a different way from us or says something different from the way we feel or believe, immediately we think they should not be doing or saying it.

The second factor is *lack of communication*. There was a fault on both sides here. Gad and Reuben and half Manasseh were at fault because they built that replica of the altar on the other tribes’ territory in Canaan, but they didn’t bother to tell the people what they were doing.

The third factor was *hidden suspicion*, especially on the part of the “orthodox” nine and a half, that stems out of the lack of conformity of the other groups. “There must be something wrong with those men—they don’t want to go along with Moses; they want to have their inheritance on the wrong side of the river.”

A fourth factor was a *real absence of love and trust*. For years forty thousand of those Gadites and Reubenites and half tribe of Manasseh had fought shoulder to shoulder with the other nine and a half tribes in helping them win their place. Yet there was still an absence of love and trust.

The fifth factor was *protective self-interest* on both sides. Any time people turn inward and preoccupy themselves with their own peculiar little interests, the groundwork has been laid for misunderstanding and division.

The sixth factor was tribal *jealousy*.

A seventh factor was a *misreading of the evidence*. The nine and a half tribes thought, “They

The ninth factor is that *people are ready to believe the worst rather than the best*, to be pessimistic rather than optimistic.

Some humorist said the difference between a pessimist and an optimist is that the pessimist believes the bottle’s half empty; the optimist believes it’s half full. How you interpret or misinterpret a situation can create great problems, and in this situation, the nine



are rebelling; they are going to have their own altar and their own sacrifices.” But even though there was physical evidence to justify their fears, they misread that physical evidence.

The eighth factor was that *they interpreted the situation in light of previous problems*. Moses, when he first heard these two and a half tribes say, “We want to settle on this side,” said, “You’re just like your fathers who brought back the evil report at Kadesh-barnea and kept the whole country from going in and possessing the land.” Previous problems tend to prejudice people against what you are doing.

and a half tribes were prepared to believe the worst.

The tenth and final factor is *fear of the future*. Many times misunderstandings come because we feel our future welfare or destiny or goal is being jeopardized by what is happening. This fear was expressed by the two and a half tribes who said, “The reason we built this altar was not for us but for our children, because we believe that in the future your children are going to mistreat our children.”

Fortunately, in spite of all the suspicions and misunderstandings, the story has a happy ending. The

delegation from the majority accepted the explanation of the minority and the battle plans were cancelled. Nevertheless, many other stories from the history of God's people do not have happy endings. Misunderstanding has often led to tragedy in the life of the Church. Sincere Christians have been persecuted and martyred. We may ask, "Why can't God's people get along?" There are many reasons, including the weakness of human nature and the ongoing spiritual warfare of the enemy. But beyond these, I believe that God has some special purposes which He accomplishes through opposition and persecution within the Church.

### The Purposes of Opposition

When Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3 about things he has suffered, he insists that "everyone who tries to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." To live a holy life is to invite misunderstanding and persecution; it's part of the package.

We must bear in mind that, in God's plan, enemies are as much a part of His purpose as friends. But what is it that opposition is meant to accomplish?

First of all, opposition *strengthens*



Happy times don't produce strength of character; struggle and persecution and misunderstanding do.

Opposition will also work to our benefit by *keeping us humble*. The Scriptures say, "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God." But if we don't humble our-

we desire.

The fourth purpose of opposition is that it will *reveal our faults and our flaws*. Many times we receive criticism and condemnation because we're not doing things well. Especially when we are trying new ventures we will make mistakes. We would like to think that we are one hundred percent right all the time, but we're not. Persecution reveals our flaws.

The fifth thing that opposition will accomplish is to *teach us endurance*. Jesus said of the last days, "Many shall be offended and shall hate one another and betray one another, and because of iniquity the love of many shall wax cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:10-13). Persecution, betrayal and misunderstanding teach us endurance. They teach us to count the cost of what we are doing and to realize there is a price to pay for moving in the purposes of God.

The sixth purpose of opposition is that it makes us *less prone to error and more prone to exercise*

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...God has some special purposes which He accomplishes through opposition and persecution....

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*character*. Blessings and miracles are wonderful, and prayer will do great things—but in the area of human relationships prayer alone will not produce character. Neither will miracles; in fact, miracles often prevent or postpone the development of character. If you were to live by miracles all the time you would live a sheltered life where nothing evil or difficult would ever put pressure on you to change. You'd pray your way out of every squabble or crisis that came along.

selfes, God will see to it that we are humiliated. Opposition knocks the pride out of us. It helps to keep us humble.

The third thing opposition does is to make us *examine and purify our motives*. Most of us do things out of a mixture of motives. If we were never challenged then those motives would tend to become more and more selfish. We would tend to take it for granted that it was our right to make whatever decisions and do whatever things

care. Persecution and condemnation drive us to be more careful and to make sure that we are not getting into error. They make us exercise diligence in the things we are doing.

### Handling Our Differences Redemptively

In conclusion, here are twelve steps for dealing redemptively with opposition.

1. *Don't jump to hasty conclusions.* This is what got the nine and a half tribes into trouble—they jumped to conclusions that later were not borne out by the evidence.

2. *When a problem arises, delegate responsible leadership to deal with it.* The misunderstanding at the Jordan was prevented from becoming a tragedy primarily because the delegation of elders had enough maturity in the situation to talk rather than to fight. The Israelites decided to put the problem in the hands of responsible leadership.

3. *Get all the facts.* Ninety-five percent of the controversy that we find ourselves in today comes from a lack of having all the facts. Most accusations that are exchanged within the Body of Christ are full of half-truths, but they are accepted as gospel because opposing groups will not get together and ferret out the whole truth.

4. *Don't repeat rumors and half-truths.* This follows from step three. If Christians could just learn when to keep quiet, many misunderstandings could be avoided.

5. *Communicate fully.* There are times when we simply must press in to communicate with one another even though things are tense and painful because of misunderstanding.

6. *Believe the best and not the worst.* That means to attribute honest motives to the people we disagree with. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things" (1 Cor. 13:7).

7. *Allow for human error.* We are not perfect; we all make mis-

takes.

8. *Recognize and allow for legitimate differences.* The fact that we are different doesn't mean we are wrong; the fact that somebody else is different doesn't mean he's wrong. There are differences in traditions, yet we are still all Christians. If God accepts a different group, we ought to be able to accept them even if we have differences with them.

9. *Be patient.* The battle will go on for a long time. We have much to learn in the struggle, and very seldom will any of the important issues be resolved overnight.

10. *Work to build and strengthen bridges of trust.* One of the reasons why it's difficult to communicate with some people is that we have no bridge to cross over to them. There must be some bridges of trust built, and they come only through effort.

11. *Have a threefold goal in mind: acceptance, commitment and covenant.* We work first for acceptance of one another, and then on the basis of our acceptance we walk together and begin to commit

ourselves to one another. Out of that commitment we eventually come into covenant.

12. *Remember to work it out openly before God.* The things we are dealing with have to do with the Kingdom of God; there are a divine purpose and a divine will at work in it all. To work it out openly before God means to see it from God's perspective. God doesn't see our differences as right or wrong; God sees us as different children whose differences must be resolved in the light of His purpose.

In the story of Israel at the Jordan there was a happy ending because the people chose to deal with their differences redemptively. Instead of going to war, they met and talked and heard one another out. They discovered that what had seemed to be a great crisis was really a misunderstanding. May God grant that the time will come when more and more we will solve our own problems this way—then it will no longer matter that some of us find our inheritance on the other side of the river. ♣

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## Tips for Fathers

Harley Squiggums, Director of Adult Education Institute, said, "One hour in the living room with parents talking about Christian concepts is worth six years in Sunday School in terms of effectiveness." Sara Beecock, a sociologist at Rutgers, said, "There is no better invention than the family; no super-substitute exists."

The family doesn't need to be replaced—it needs to be supported! So spend more time at home, and enjoy your biggest investment. Your children need to build a healthy relationship with you.

Jesus faced many crises in His life. But one crisis He never faced was that of not knowing His Father, and what His relationship to Him was.

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Tips for Fathers are excerpts from *Fathergram*. If you would like to be added to their mailing list, write: *Fathergram*, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

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*This issue of New Wine marks the beginning of a new name and purpose for our regular feature Update. In addition to reporting occasionally on the current ministry and personal concerns of individual members of our Editorial Board, the new format will allow one of those members the opportunity to comment on the chosen theme of the month. We hope the feature's new name, "To the Point," will be indicative of its usefulness in presenting a helpful viewpoint on the topic of each issue of New Wine.*

# To the Point:

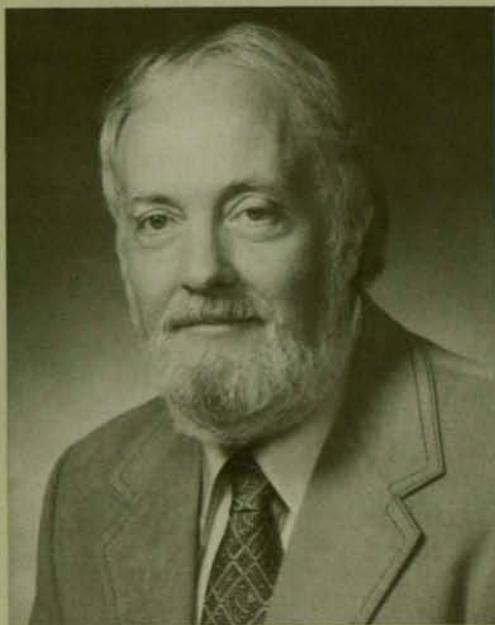
**NW:** *What do you see as some of the root causes of disagreements?*

**DB:** One cause is our tendency to assume that our own viewpoint is always the right one—and therefore if we are right, someone else must be wrong. And yet, in most cases, it is not so much a question of one party being right and the other wrong, but simply a matter of two legitimately different viewpoints. Our own experience may convince us that we are right, but another person often has his own experience that has shaped his life and thinking and has brought him to an altogether different position from ours. We see the tendency toward this type of disagreement very clearly in denominational differences among Christians. Groups holding strong convictions are certain that their own viewpoint is right, and anyone whose convictions differ from theirs must be wrong. All of us tend to do this. But if we could only hold our convictions with tolerance and love, we could make adjustments to recognize validity in a perspective different from our own. So one of the main sources of disagreement is the naive assumption that because we believe something it must be right.

Another often significant cause of disagreement is partial or incorrect information. We make a decision or form an opinion based on distorted or incomplete knowledge, then we take sides with others who are in agreement with us against those who disagree. And the two sides are primed for strong disagreement because they each have made up their minds based upon poor information. In such a situation, the more information that can be brought to the light, the less likelihood that the disagreement will continue.

A further source of disagreement common to marriages is the psychological, physical and emotional difference between men and women. Generally a woman tends to function more by what she intuitively feels and a man operates more by what he thinks, and disagreement often comes because she feels that he is insensitive while he feels that she is too emotional. Again, it is not a question of either of these unique, God-given approaches being more right than the other; rather, they are simply different. But disagreement results when men and women fail to recognize that they are not standing on the same ground, but rather viewing a situation from two different, yet equally valid, perspectives.

## Don Basham



**NW:** *How does the devil, the “accuser of the brethren,” work on us to cause disagreement?*

**DB:** One of the prime tactics of the devil is to play upon our weaknesses. He is a past master at knowing where those weaknesses are, and so he tempts us and attacks us in areas where our liabilities lie rather than in areas where we are strong.

We see this in our relationships with others. The accuser knows that when we are feeling insecure or touchy or anxious in certain areas of our lives, we are in a vulnerable state already and our fuse is likely to be short. So he will play upon those areas of insecurity, causing us, for example, to misinterpret a harmless remark from someone as something antagonistic or underhanded and to explode emotionally about it.

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In the physical, it's like a guy who has a big bruise on his arm. Normally if someone patted him on the arm he would not think anything about it. But with a big bruise there, he screams out in pain when someone touches the sensitive area. So if we are already upset or tense about something our fuse will be shorter than usual, and we will almost be looking for someone to offend us or hurt us. And when someone makes a perfectly innocent observation with no intention to offend or criticize, we will immediately react in a negative way.

Out of simple curiosity, or just making conversation, a man may ask his wife, “Honey, where did you buy this roast?” But if she has had a bad day, she may interpret his question as criticism and respond by saying, “Why? What’s the matter with it?” Because she is already feeling sensitive she reacts in a negative way, and all of us have seen ourselves react the same way when an already sensitive area is touched in us.

**NW:** *Can you give us some tips on how to spot disagreements developing and prevent them from becoming larger than they need to?*

**DB:** Well, it is much easier to list points that are helpful than it is to do them. Having said that, I would suggest that one mark of our maturity as Christians is our ability to refrain from overreacting in a confrontation. If someone else is overreacting because of his emotional pain or has lost his temper, we need to bear with that person and realize that he is not in control of his words and emotions at the time. Just realizing that his heated remarks and his overreaction will be blown way out of proportion would be one way to keep from being drawn into a disagreement. Another would be to recognize that the devil is the source of many confrontations. Since we are involved in spiritual warfare, it may very well be that Satan, “the accuser of the brethren,” is goading or stirring up one brother or sister against another, using that person to make accusations and sow discord. Knowing this makes us less likely to give in to the devil’s scheme and to be used by him ourselves. Remembering that a spiritual war is going on will give us a healthy “wartime mentality” that disciplines us to handle disagreements wisely. Just knowing this helps us to adopt a perspective that keeps us from being shocked or surprised when the devil attacks or accuses us—not only individually, but in our relationships with family and friends, in the place where we work and in our church groups.

**NW:** *What are some other concerns in preventing and curtailing disagreements in the Body of Christ?*

**DB:** Another concern that needs our attention is the matter of integrity among Christians. It seems that many Christians have the attitude that they are free

to say anything they wish about anyone without having to be accountable for what they say. To repeat gossip or express negative opinions without any sense of accountability for what we have said is wrong. We need to realize that we have a responsibility toward the brother or group we are criticizing or condemning because they are a part of the Body of Christ who may need our help, understanding, prayer and support.

One of the great tragedies in the Church is the way its members attack one another. When this occurs in the Body of Christ, it's like a person punching himself in the face because his fist doesn't like what his face looks like. Such attacks on one another are the tragic result of a misinterpretation of "freedom in Christ" to mean unlimited license to criticize and malign anyone we choose. Although we *are* free in Christ, we are not free to assassinate one another verbally.

One thing God is showing us about commitment in relationships is our responsibility to bear one another's burdens rather than tear one another down. When someone else is going through a difficult time, we need to be supportive rather than condemning. The Bible makes it clear that we ought to do to others what we want done to ourselves. No one likes to be on the receiving end of wild accusation, yet most of us seem to enjoy talking about others in that way. This must grieve the Holy Spirit.

So our lack of integrity and failure to speak responsibly about one another as Christians, evidenced by character assassination and gossip, is another area of difficulty that we must correct.

**NW:** *Are there any other things we can do to curtail disagreement?*

**DB:** I would say that another way to curtail disagreement is to keep "short accounts." By that I mean being more honest with one another and recognizing the need for proper confrontation—speaking the truth in love. As Jesus described it in Matthew 18, if you have something against your brother, go and make it right with him. Our tendency when someone has offended us is to complain and gossip to someone else instead of dealing directly with the person we ought to talk to. This tendency causes our "accounts" to build up. In other words, we take our resentments to the wrong person or into our own hearts and keep them there until sooner or later an explosion comes.

Scripture says, "Don't let the sun go down on your wrath." We need to make it our practice when we have been offended to deal with it as quickly as possible, confronting our offender graciously in love and saying to him, "What you said really hurt me, but I want to make things right with you. I don't want this to come between us." Unfortunately most

of us feel that it's more "spiritual" or religious never to react or object, and we let all our hurts build up and fester inside us. Not only is this hard on our emotional and physical health; it eventually ends in some kind of angry explosion. We need to recognize our need to confront one another honestly in love, speaking graciously to clarify and adjust situations so that we can be healed and reconciled.

Reconciliation ought to be a regular part of our lives. The more we are truthful, the better off we are. The longer we let hurts fester, the more they get blown out of proportion. When a big explosion does come, there is a rupturing of the relationship which is difficult to heal.

Another related area that enables us to handle disagreement properly is our allowing for the differences in others—in other words, giving people room. In our relationships we tend to form a mental image of what a person should be like, creating a niche in our minds for them to fill. The problem is, people seldom fit perfectly in that niche, and when they don't live up to our expectations of them, we get offended or judge them harshly. That is what happens when we don't give people room to be what they are, and that includes making room for their weaknesses and bad days. I once heard a man say, "We want to be saved by grace, but we want the other fellow to be saved by works." We judge others by their behavior but we want God to give us plenty of room and to understand our weaknesses.

What we need is a combination of qualities: acceptance; tolerance; forbearance; quickness to forgive; and enough flexibility to allow people to be what they are, rather than what we think they should be.

We need to realize that this is a time of unprecedented spiritual attack, especially in the area of our relationships with one another where the accuser of the brethren is running rampant, stirring up accusation and suspicion in the Body of Christ. But being aware that this is a time of intense attack, when tempers flare easily and accusations are wild and unrealistic, will help us to adjust to it. Another helpful realization is that there is always adequate provision from the Lord in terms of the whole armor of God talked about in Ephesians 6. Knowing that there is a war going on, we need to keep our armor on—particularly, in light of our topic, the helmet of salvation which protects our head and our mental attitude. Simply stated, we need to guard our thought life, taking care to refrain from condemning or criticizing or believing the worst about someone. We must give the other person the benefit of the doubt, believing the best about him, just as we would expect him to do for us. Such an attitude will help restore integrity to the Church and help us to prevent or properly resolve many of our disagreements.

# THE WORD

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-17

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Ephesians 4:25-27

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. . . . You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. James 4:1-3

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven

times." Matthew 18:21-22

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. Titus 3:10-11

Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them

your courts; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the Lord. Zechariah 8:16-17

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach,

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## Handling Our Differences

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tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you. 2 Chronicles 20:17

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. James 1:19-20

Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city. Proverbs 16:32

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. Colossians 3:15

"These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in

not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth. . . . 2 Timothy 2:23-25

His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. Ephesians 2:15-16

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin. 1 John 1:7

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1

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**JUDGING** is a prominent concern in the Bible, yet it is a difficult subject to understand. Multitudes of professing Christians—partly through ignorance and partly through disobedience—often act

contrary to scriptural teaching in the way they judge or fail to judge. Confusion arises from the fact that some scriptures warn us not to judge while others instruct us *to* judge. In this article we will ex-

amine this apparent Biblical paradox about judging and provide a principle which will help us discern in any given situation whether or not to judge. Using this principle, we will identify some areas in which we are responsible to judge, and others in which we are not.

### **The Scriptural Paradox About Judging**

In the Sermon on the Mount,

# **To Judge or Not to Judge**

**by Derek Prince**

Jesus told the multitude:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again (Mt. 7:1-5 KJV).

What Jesus emphatically says here is "Don't judge; for if you do, the judgment with which you judge will come back to you."

On the other hand, we find some scriptures that say we are obligated to judge. In John 7:24, Jesus is speaking to the people about His claim to be the Messiah. He says, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." Here Jesus instructs us to judge righteously and justly. So we can see that although some scriptures warn us against judging, others specifically exhort us to judge.

### **Judging and Ruling**

How are we  
to understand this



paradox? I believe there is a basic principle that resolves the apparent contradiction. The principle is this: *Judging is a function of ruling.* In Scripture, judging is never divorced from ruling. The unity of these two functions originates in the very nature of God Himself and is imparted from God downward into the human race, for Genesis 18:25 tells us that God, who is the *Ruler* of all the earth, is also the *Judge* of all the earth. We must never divorce judging from ruling, for they go hand in hand. It is this principle which will help us to understand when we should judge and when we should not judge.

Basically, the connection between judging and ruling involves four factors which go together: 1) responsibility, 2) authority, 3) judging and 4) accountability. The following shows how these four principles are interrelated.

First of all, wherever we have responsibility we must have authority. Otherwise, our responsibility cannot be discharged. If you give your eldest daughter the responsibility of baby-sitting the younger children then you must give her enough authority to do the job. Otherwise her job is impossible and a mockery. Where there is responsibility there must be adequate authority to carry out the responsibility.

Conversely, if a person has authority without responsibility that person is a despot. And that situation of course is typical of many governments around the world

today. Responsibility without authority is ineffective, but authority without responsibility is despotic. The two must go together.

As we have seen, where we rule we are obligated to judge, because judging is part of the authority and responsibility of ruling. Every ruler must judge where he rules. But we must also bear in mind the next two areas: where we judge we are going to be judged by the ultimate Judge. In other words, all judges are ultimately *accountable* to the Judge of all the earth. An illustration of this is in Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Because our rulers have responsibility for our souls they must have authority with the responsibility. Otherwise they exercise responsibility in vain. So we are told to obey those who are responsible for our souls. Because they have responsibility and exercise authority they will also have to exercise judgment. And being judges, they will one day give an account for the judgment that they exercise. So the four related aspects of judging and ruling that are in this one verse are responsibility, authority, judgment and accountability.

### The Extent of Our Authority to Judge

We have seen that when we have responsibility, we must have authority; and when we have authority, we are obligated to judge. But we are still faced with the prob-

blem of knowing the extent of our authority and responsibility to judge.

Basically three kinds of limits are typical of all judgment. There is a limited *area* of authority, there are a limited number of *people* under that authority, and there are only certain *acts* that are to be judged by that authority. Outside the proper area or with other people or with different acts there is no authority to judge. So we must ask three questions: In what areas are we authorized to judge? Whom are we authorized to judge? And for what acts may we judge them? The extent of judgment is not clear until we have answered all three questions.

Before we discuss the extent of our authority to judge, let me emphasize one matter that we are *never* responsible to judge: We are never responsible for the final evaluation of anyone's character or conduct, including our own. Some Christians think they ought to decide just who's going to heaven and who's going to hell. Basically, that is not our worry. We must leave it to God.

Why is the Lord the only one who can judge in this area? Because no one else knows all the secrets of men's hearts and motives. We are not able to judge accurately or fairly, so we are not required to judge or make a final evaluation of the absolute value of anyone, including ourselves.

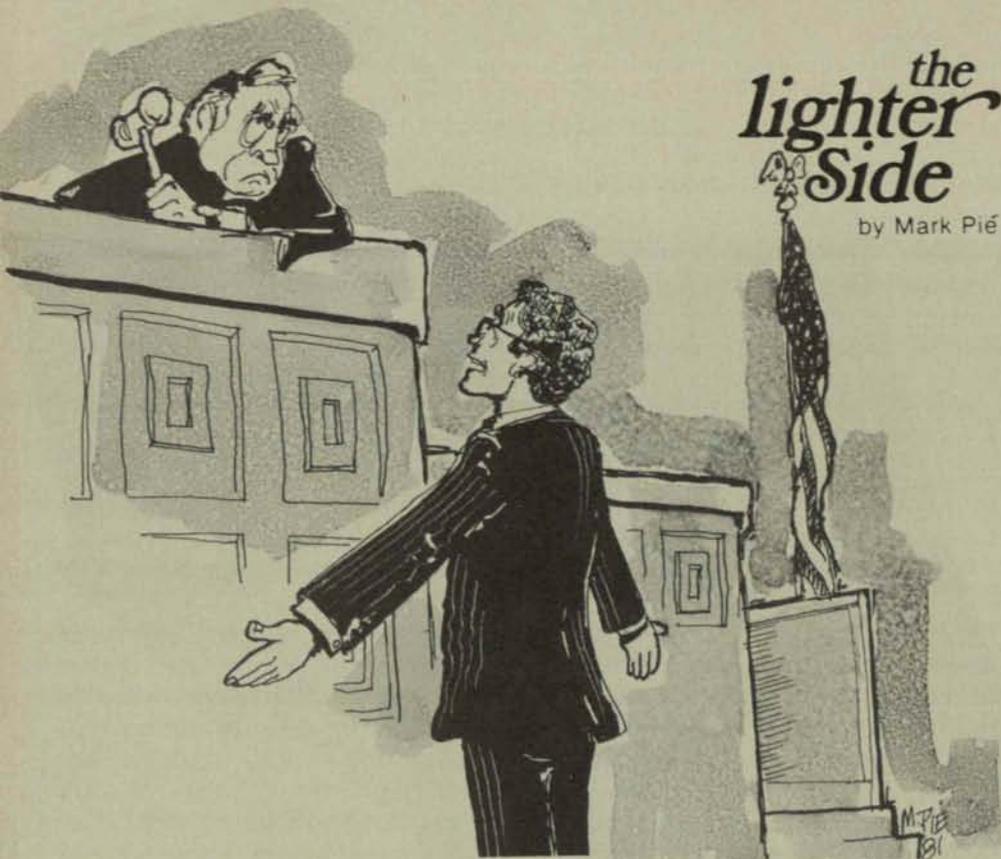
Now that we have settled the matter of not judging someone's ultimate destiny, let's return to our question about the extent of our authority to judge. Where, whom and what are we responsible to judge?

### Judging Ourselves

The first answer to that question is this: *We are responsible to judge ourselves.* Now we must remember not to make a final evaluation, even of ourselves; but we must judge ourselves by the standards of God's Word in our *con-*



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Don't you think your sentence of "ninety-nine years in the electric chair" is a little harsh?

duct. It seems to me that essentially every judgment we are required to make is a judgment of *conduct*, not an absolute evaluation of a person's worth. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11 we read about this kind of self-judgment.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the cup.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (vss. 28-32).

Paul, speaking here of the Lord's Supper, warns us to examine ourselves before we take it. If we don't we are liable to bring

upon ourselves sickness and even untimely death. We have the option to preempt God's judgment. He won't judge us in those areas where we have judged ourselves. There are three alternatives: 1) Judge ourselves and we won't come under God's judgment. 2) Fail to judge ourselves and we will come under God's judgment but we will be spared God's judgment on the world. 3) Refuse those two alternatives, and we will be judged with the unbelievers. But in one way or another, all of us will be judged.

If we are responsible to judge ourselves, then how are we to do it? We must judge ourselves by the standard that is revealed in the Word of God. We are not to judge ourselves by our feelings, by the opinions of society or even by our own estimate of ourselves. Instead we are to judge ourselves by the clear teaching of the Word of God. By this standard we are responsible to judge our own *conduct* and re-

lationships. Am I at peace with my brother and my sister? Do I harbor bitterness or resentment in my heart? Have I said things that were untrue or uncharitable about another believer? Those are ways in which we are obligated to judge ourselves. And if we take our obligation to judge ourselves seriously, we'll have much less time to judge others whom we're not supposed to judge.

### Judgment in the Family

The next sphere of judgment is the family. The husband and father is responsible to judge his wife and children. In 1 Timothy 3:4, Paul says that one qualification for an elder of the church is that he "ruleth well his own house." Because the father rules his household he is obligated to judge it.

What is a husband or a father required to judge? Because *conduct* is the main area of judgment, I think a father is expected to judge conduct that affects the welfare of those for whom he is responsible. If I see my children always indulging in soft drinks and ice cream, I'm obligated to discipline them, because I'm responsible as a father to see that they grow up healthy.

I'm also obligated to judge conduct that affects the honor and the order of our home because I'm going to be held accountable by God and by the neighbors for it. If my children are rude and undisciplined in front of strangers, it ultimately reflects on me as a father and it proves that I'm not fulfilling my function.

### Judgment in the Church

The next area of judgment is the primary one dealt with in the New Testament. It is the church—the corporate body of believers. First of all, the leaders of the church are expected to judge those they lead. It is clear from the passage in Hebrews we discussed earlier that in the church, leadership must exercise authority and maintain discipline. In fact, a

church whose leadership does not do these things is not in a scriptural sense a church.

But judgment is not merely the responsibility of the leaders. In another sense, the whole church is responsible to judge. We must bear in mind that the Greek word for church, *ekklesia*, was normally used to mean "governmental assembly." The very essence of the church is to be governmental. Without government there is no church. And ultimately—although a church is under the judgment of its leadership—the whole church must also accept responsibility for judgment. I am not talking at this point about individuals judging; in most of the areas where we are responsible to judge we do not judge individually. We judge collectively. Most of the time when the Bible says "you must judge," the "you" is plural, meaning that the congregation of believers is responsible to judge.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 we find what it is that we are responsible to judge: the *conduct* of fellow believers. Do you realize that the church has the obligation to judge your conduct? In the church at Corinth, a member had taken his father's wife. Paul said that such a man had no place in the church; he judged him. But even though Paul's judgment was given as an apostle, it depended on the endorsement of the church. That was why he wrote them and told them to pronounce judgment on the man when they gathered together. It was to be a collective action of the whole body.

The epistle goes on to say that the form this corporate judgment would take was the exclusion of the offender from the fellowship of the church. Believers were not even to eat with such a man. But Paul warned the church not to extend such judgment to the world outside the church.

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye

judge them that are within?

But them that are without God judgeth (vss. 12-13).

Paul says it is not our business to judge the world. But it *is* our business to judge our fellow believers because we are answerable for them, just as a father is answerable for his family.

What else are we responsible to judge besides conduct? The second area in which we are responsible to judge is *disputes between believers*. The Scriptures are quite clear about this. In Matthew chapter 18 Jesus says that if our brother wrongs us, we are to discuss it privately with him. But if he refuses to make matters right, we are to take it to the church.

At this point, the church must collectively judge the matter. If the offending brother refuses to accept the judgment of the church, the church is told to treat him as an unbeliever. It is frightening to realize that the one who will not accept the decision of the church loses his right to be treated as a Christian. It is also frightening to realize how few churches are competently exercising the authority vested in them to judge.

What else are we required to judge as the church? I would say *doctrinal error*. In Romans 16:17 we read: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause

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**Remember:** Friday, June 5, is a national day of prayer and fasting.

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divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." If people whose doctrine is incorrect raise doctrinal issues and they become a source of division in the church, we must note those people and refuse fellowship with them. So another basis for judgment is doctrinal error that breeds division in the church.

## Areas Where We Should Not Judge

Next, I want to list some areas in which we are *not* responsible to judge. We could list an infinite number of these, but here are a few.

1) *We are not responsible for the final judgment of anyone's character, including our own.* As we have seen before, this is God's responsibility alone.

2) *As individuals we are not responsible to judge our fellow believers.* If we must judge another believer, we must do it collectively as a church and not as individuals. Unless his conduct affects our conduct (and then we must confront him privately first), it is not our business to judge another believer. It is outside our jurisdiction.

3) *We are not responsible to judge other people's children.* Although it is tempting to do so, other peoples' families are not in our jurisdiction unless their conduct affects us personally. Most of the people I've seen who judge other people's children would be better occupied correcting their own.

4) *We are not responsible to judge other Christian groups.* In New Testament times this problem didn't arise because there were no other Christian groups, unlike the multitude of denominations we have today. But unless we are hav-

ing trouble with the members of another church, it is not our responsibility to judge them. If we are convinced a situation needs to be dealt with we should go to our pastor and let him go to their pastor.

## Five Requirements for Proper Judgment

When we do have responsibil-

ity to judge, how are we to do it? Most judgment by Christians I have observed transgresses the rules given in Scripture. I believe there are five requirements for proper judgment:

1) *Judge righteous judgment.* Jesus said this in John 7:24. Never be unrighteous in your judgment because you will be held accountable by God for every matter you judge.

2) *Judge on the basis of proven facts.* It impresses me that when the Lord told Abraham in Genesis 18 that He was on His way to inspect Sodom and Gomorrah, He didn't merely accept the bad reports of those cities (presumably from angels) without verifying them for Himself. Even the Lord wouldn't judge without going to see the situation for Himself. How dare we if God doesn't?

3) *The accused must be allowed to face his accusers.* In John 7:51 the Sanhedrin, the Jewish legal council, was discussing the bad reports they had heard about Jesus and were even exaggerating those reports among themselves. One honest man, Nicodemus, spoke up: "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" It is not scriptural to judge anyone until you have let him speak for himself to your face.

4) *There must be at least two reliable witnesses to any wrongdoing.* Deuteronomy 19:15 says, "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity . . . at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." We are never to condemn a person on the testimony of only one witness. The minimum is two; more desirable is three.

5) *Witnesses are accountable for their testimony.* The commandment against bearing false witness appears in the Bible right beside the commandments against murder, stealing and committing adultery. Yet I must say multitudes of Christians bring false witness against fellow believers without

any sense of guilt whatever. But God places them in the same category as murderers, adulterers and thieves.

In the Old Testament, when a criminal was sentenced to death, by law the first ones to carry out the punishment were the witnesses against him. What was the point of that? If we carry tales about someone and it brings trouble, we must stand behind what we have said. We are not free to accuse someone and then say, "I didn't really mean it."

Furthermore, according to Old Testament law, if a man was found to have brought a false testimony against someone to have him tried for a particular crime, then the false witness himself would receive the punishment for that crime, which in some cases was death. That would make one hesitate to bear false witness, wouldn't it? Though God's penalties have changed somewhat since Old Testament days, His hatred of being a false witness never does.

So these are the five basic requirements for just judgment: 1) It has to be righteous judgment. 2) Judgment must be based on proven facts. 3) The accused has the right to face his accusers. 4) Judgment must be on the basis of at least two reliable witnesses, preferably three. 5) Witnesses are accountable for their testimony, and if their testimony is false they deserve the punishment which would have come to the accused had their testimony been true.

### **Sitting in the Judge's Chair**

There is one final question. If we judge when we are not authorized to judge, what does that make us? In 1 Peter 4:15 it says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters." What are you and I when we judge where we are not authorized to judge? We are *busybodies*—and we are catego-

rized with the murderer, the thief and the evildoer. The word in Greek for "busybody" means someone who makes himself an overseer over matters which have not been given him to oversee. We must not act as supervisors over matters that are not ordained for us.

In James 4:11-12, we find a warning that is the key to our attitude about judging. We are not permitted to speak evil of others—even if it's true.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?

If we speak evil of our brother, we flout the law, because the law forbids us to do it. And we judge the law because we put ourselves above God's law. In effect we make ourselves a judge above God.

In a secular court of law the whole court revolves around one chair—that of the judge. When the judge eventually enters the room, everyone must rise, showing respect for the office of judge. Usually there is some kind of barricade to prevent people in the court from having direct access to the judge.

Now imagine that I am sitting in a court and the judge has not yet come in. His chair is vacant and the room is silent and solemn. Suddenly I get out of my seat, push my way past a guard, and presumptuously sit down in the judge's chair.

That is exactly what we are doing when we judge matters that God hasn't given us to judge. We would never dare to do such a thing in a secular court of law. How much less should we dare to usurp the judgment seat of God.♥

**ANGER** is supposed to be a useful emotion, one that supports our Christian lives. Unfortunately, for many of us, anger is not our servant but is rather a slave master. It has become something that leads us into sin or plunges us into depression. However, this condition need not persist. By the power of the Holy Spirit and the strength that comes from Christian personal relationships, an angry Christian can

change fundamentally. The Lord wants us to be characteristically peaceful, so that we can respond righteously and with love in every situation.

We all need to be transformed by yielding to the Holy Spirit and living in the Body of Christ. We also need to learn how to get angry in the right way. If your experience is similar to mine, you will understand that being baptized in

# How to Get Angry the Right Way

## Changing Anger From a Master Into a Servant

by Bert Ghezzi



the Spirit or living in a community church does not guarantee that we will always handle anger correctly. We need wisdom in responding to the angry reaction we feel inside. Grace and right relationships can change our angry responses so that we can get angry without sinning.

There is a threefold strategy for handling anger in a particular situation: (1) Do not repress anger; (2) Express it righteously; (3) Settle things quickly. This is a biblical approach, conforming to the pattern in Paul's instruction to the Ephesians: (1) Be angry; (2) Do not sin; (3) Do not let the sun go down on your anger (Eph. 4:26).

### Do Not Repress the Anger

*Be angry.* That seems to be a scriptural command. The wisdom behind it should be obvious. Pushing anger down fails to deal with it. The force that may do a great deal of damage when released in a fit of temper may do equivalent damage when repressed. The angry reaction does not dissipate but is expressed as cold anger and depression, internalized mirror images of hot anger and loss of control. While hot anger is no more or less righteous than cold anger, it is easier to deal with. The person who expresses his anger knows what he's dealing with and so does everyone around him. Repressed, indirectly expressed anger, however, is very hard to handle.

The repressed angry person falls into subtle wrongdoing: he avoids people, giving others "the silent treatment," deliberately reneges on responsibilities, spouts negative jokes, and acts out of self-pity. Often he does not realize that

his actions result from repressed anger. His behavior may bewilder his immediate associates: What is going on? Did I do something wrong? Neither the angry person nor his associates are in a position to resolve the problem.

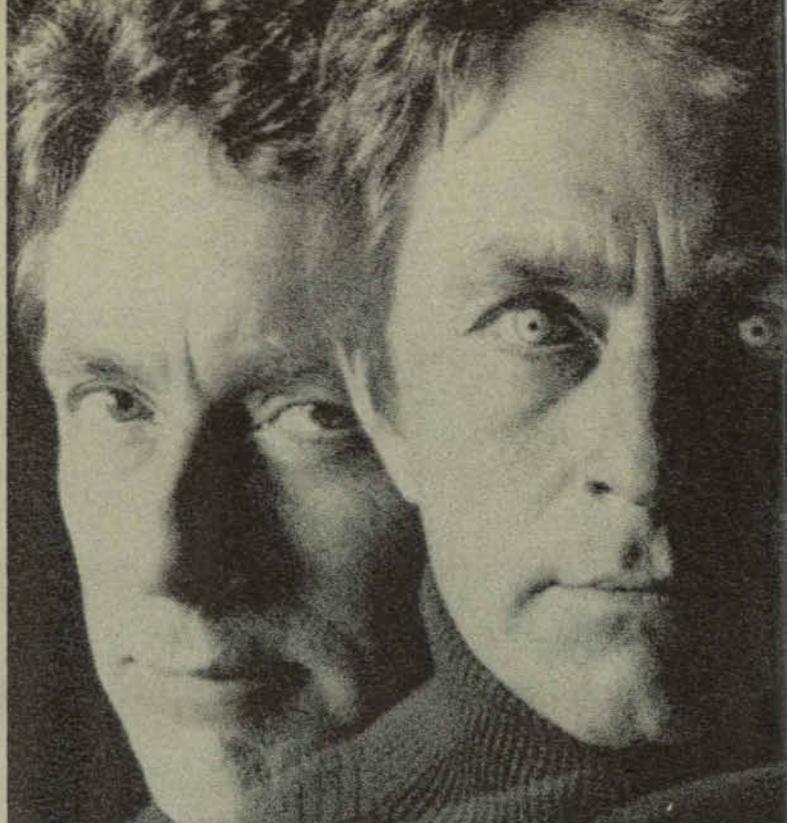
My file contains a letter from a friend that is to the point here. Patti explains how repressing her anger affected her and how she began to change it.

"As a child I got angry a lot, threw a lot of tantrums. As I grew older I kept it all inside, except at home (ask my folks!). When I came into Christian community even that outlet was taken away.... All of this anger had to come out some way—and there was lots of it. Often it came out in situations totally unrelated to the one that originally made me angry. I felt I shouldn't get angry so I kept it in, until I couldn't keep it in any longer. I'd

get irritated or react subtly in a not-so-loving way to a situation that ordinarily wouldn't have made me angry. It was always subtle and a lot of times people didn't know what was going on—they weren't even sure I had done anything wrong. I think women especially pick it up (which can be uncomfortable if you live with a group of Christian women, as I do). I realized that the anger I repressed was affecting my relationships with others.

"One of my close friends helped me identify the sources of my anger and to see the truth about these things. She also encouraged me to let my anger out as soon as it was there—and if I sinned in the process, to repent for the action. She assured me that this approach would be better than having the anger sit there and eventually seep out and poison my relationships. This way I had an opportunity to let my friends know what was really going on. I haven't totally overcome this difficulty, but now that I understand what is happening and am able to let my anger out, I am getting on top of it much faster."

Unrighteous as it is, even losing one's temper at least offers the



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chance for immediate repentance and repair. Pushing anger down out of reach sets us up for unredressed wrongdoing. But losing our temper is not the necessary alternative to bottling it up inside. We can let it out without sinning.

### **Express Anger Righteously**

Do not sin. Anger does not have to be let out in bursts of temper nor does it have to impel us to do harm to ourselves or others. When anger rises in us in response to wrongdoing, we can address the situation and make the people involved aware of our anger.

In fact, Christians would integrate anger more effectively into their lives if they allowed themselves to get angry more. The main problem for Christians is not too much anger, but too little. We do not get angry enough at the right objects. I live in a town that flaunts its sin; as a city we would get high marks on all the New Testament lists of wrongdoing that merits the wrath of God. Idolatry, adultery, murder, and all their perverse companions—you name it and our town has it to the nth degree.

What do you suppose is the

most common cause of the anger Christians experience as they drive around this city? I'd guess the unavailability of parking spaces, long traffic lights, and other inconsiderate drivers—in that order. We become angrier over inconveniences and failure to get our own way than we do over the numerous public offences that provoke the judgment of God. Expressing more overt anger for the right reasons will go a long way toward helping us get anger to be our servant.

When it's inappropriate to express anger directly, we can channel our anger constructively into determination to have things change, endurance, forbearance, or readiness to fight past the obstacle. . . .

Whatever the object of an angry reaction, we must be in control of how we express our anger if it is to be righteous anger. It is possible to communicate anger with great force and effect without losing one's temper. We must repent for uncontrolled anger, but not for anger over wrongdoing, vigorously expressed but under control.

### **Settle Things Quickly**

"Don't let the sun go down on

your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). Some people have asked me how literally they should take this injunction to clear up unrighteous angry exchanges before going to sleep. My response has been to encourage people to take it for what it says. Christians are always well-advised to settle disputes and quarrels as quickly as possible. If unrighteous behavior or anger rooted in hostility are allowed to settle in, they can easily destroy relationships. They won't simply disappear. Unrepentant wrongdoing accumulates poison like a festering abscess. Early and expeditious attention to the infection is the best medicine. The sooner we deal with disruptions in our relationships the easier it will be to control and channel our anger.

A large body of scriptural teaching exists that deals with repairing broken relationships. However, beyond my exhortation to repair wrongs quickly, I cannot present the whole teaching here.

### **Willpower Is Not Enough**

It can seem contradictory to tell people to control their anger or channel it constructively, after advising them not to repress it. Repression is strictly a willpower approach to the emotions. When we're having an undesirable reaction, we get in there and gut it out. The human will has a lot of muscle, but not enough to discipline the emotions by itself. The strategy I recommend has more clout. You cannot express anger under control or channel it into patience without exercising your will. But the will is not the sole agent. Our partner in the process of getting anger to work right is the Holy Spirit. When we recognize this central fact, we are able to deal with anger more freely, without the tension that occurs when we try to muster our will to subdue it.

Christians who actively discipline emotions such as anger are exercising the authority they have

as sons and daughters of God. Grasping this truth helps to dispel the idea that control or channeling is mere willpower or repression. The biblical definition of "son" includes the expectation that a son possesses and exercises his father's authority. When the owner of the vineyard sent his son to deal with the tenants, he was confident that they would see the father's authority in the son and obey him (Mt. 21:37). Those who by faith in Jesus Christ have become sons and daughters of God have his authority and should exercise it in their lives.

Exercising authority conjures up visions of achieving things by sheer willpower. This need not be the case. I can exercise my authority as a son to control or direct my anger without having to use a

forceful will. For example, if I am getting angry because I am not thinking correctly, I can exercise authority by remembering the truth. Suppose I suspect without any evidence that someone has deliberately done something to offend me. I can remind myself that I must always expect good and not suspect evil. Or if I am angry due to pressure, I can exercise authority by reviewing my priorities and altering my commitments. Neither of these activities involve repression or brute willpower. They are active approaches, stemming from my authority as a son of God.

I have distinguished between an angry reaction and our response and have talked about responding righteously or channeling our anger. Does this mean that whenever we express anger it ought to

be deliberate and intentional? Definitely not. We could be tempted to believe that we're supposed to reflect carefully about each situation and decide meticulously on the right behavior. This will be the case only for a period of time as we retrain ourselves to express anger righteously. But the goal is to be able to become angry in the right way without thinking about it very much. When anger is working well in our lives, we should be able to express it instinctively in the right way. The truth about anger and the Holy Spirit will make it possible. ♥

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## A personal message from Ern Baxter



Ern Baxter



David Duplessis

It is distressing and disheartening to have to say to Christians in our day what the Apostle Paul said to Christians in his day—"There is jealousy and quarreling among you" (1 Cor. 3:3, NIV). However, it is as true now as it was then. Paul urged a solution to this scandalous situation "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:10). Jesus Christ had commanded His disciples to "love one another" and He had prayed "that they may all be one" (John 17:21). "Jealousy and quarreling" among Christian disciples was and is a behavioral denial of the lordship of Jesus Christ. Peacemakers are promised blessing by our Lord. Peacebreakers can expect divine displeasure.

Among the peacemakers in our time is a group of dedicated men who are pressing the need for unity. David DuPlessis is their honorary (and active) president and Ron Haus is president. These men are joined by a number of committed colleagues, and together they are pursuing ways and means to effect functional world-winning unity among God's people, especially among Christian leaders. These men identify their undertaking as "John 17:21."

Charles Simpson, who is a member of the Central Committee of John 17:21, and myself as a guest met with the John 17:21 leadership in San Diego this past January. The openness, candor and objectivity with which problem areas were discussed was refreshing and hopeful. Attempts at healing divisions in the past have so often been marked by emotion, vested interests and self-righteous tantrums that it was a welcome relief to discover a body of men who could dialogue with deference, dignity and decorum.

The conference closed with a unique communion service in which we were reminded of the privileges and requirements of our covenantal relationship with God and one another.

Ern Baxter

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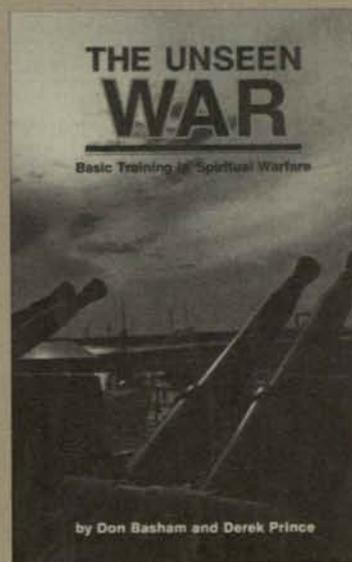
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## A Betrayer Forgiven

by Corrie ten Boom



*During the German occupation of the Netherlands in World War II, Corrie ten Boom and her family risked their lives to hide Jews who were being arrested and shipped off to concentration camps. Their underground operation was highly successful until the family was reported to the secret police by one of their own countrymen. The betrayal resulted in the imprisonment of Corrie's entire family and the eventual death of her father and sister in concentration camps.*

*In her book *The Hiding Place*, Corrie gives an account of those dark years. The following excerpt from that story tells how her sister, Betsie, helped her in the struggle to forgive the informant, Jan Vogel, when they learned his identity from a fellow prisoner in the concentration camp.*

AT 6:00 IN THE EVENING there was another roll call, then we marched back to our various sleeping barracks. Betsie always stood in the doorway of ours waiting for me; each evening it was as though

a week had passed, there was so much to tell one another.

"That Belgian boy and girl at the bench next to mine? This noon they became engaged!"

"Mrs. Heerman—whose granddaughter was taken to Germany—today she let me pray with her."

One day Betsie's news touched us directly. "A lady from Ermelo was transferred to the sewing detail today. When I introduced myself, she said, 'Another one!'"

"What did she mean?"

"Corrie, do you remember, the day we were arrested, a man came to the shop? You were sick and I had to wake you up."

I remembered very well. Remembered the strange roving eyes, the uneasiness in the pit of my stomach that was more than fever.

"Apparently everyone in Ermelo knew him. He worked with the Gestapo from the first day of occupation. He reported this woman's two brothers for Resistance work, and finally herself and her husband too." When Ermelo had

finally caught on to him he had come to Haarlem and teamed up with Willemse and Kapteyn. His name was Jan Vogel.

Flames of fire seemed to leap around that name in my heart. I thought of Father's final hours, alone and confused, in a hospital corridor. Of the underground work so abruptly halted. I thought of Mary Itallie arrested while walking down a street. And I knew that if Jan Vogel stood in front of me now I could kill him.

Betsie drew the little cloth bag from beneath her overalls and held it out to me, but I shook my head. Betsie kept the Bible during the day, since she had more chance to read and teach from it here than I did at the Phillips barracks. In the evenings we held a clandestine prayer meeting for as many as could crowd around our bunk.

"You lead the prayers tonight, Betsie. I have a headache."

More than a headache. All of me ached with the violence of my feelings about the man who had

done us so much harm. That night I did not sleep and the next day at my bench scarcely heard the conversation around me. By the end of the week I had worked myself into such a sickness of body and spirit that Mr. Moorman stopped at my bench to ask if something were wrong.

"Wrong? Yes, something's wrong!" And I plunged into an account of that morning. I was only too eager to tell Mr. Moorman and all Holland how Jan Vogel had betrayed his country.

What puzzled me all this time was Betsie. She had suffered everything I had and yet she seemed to carry no burden of rage. "Betsie!"

I hissed one dark night when I knew that my restless tossing must be keeping her awake. Three of us now shared this single cot as the crowded camp daily received new arrivals. "Betsie, don't you feel anything about Jan Vogel? Doesn't it bother you?"

"Oh yes, Corrie! Terribly! I've felt for him ever since I knew—and pray for him whenever his name comes into my mind. How dreadfully he must be suffering!"

For a long time I lay silent in the huge shadowy barracks restless with the sighs, snores, and stirrings of hundreds of women. Once again I had the feeling that this sister with whom I had spent all my life be-

longed somehow to another order of beings. Wasn't she telling me in her gentle way that I was as guilty as Jan Vogel? Didn't he and I stand together before an all-seeing God convicted of the same sin of murder? For I had murdered him with my heart and with my tongue.

"Lord Jesus," I whispered into the lumpy ticking of the bed, "I forgive Jan Vogel as I pray that You will forgive me. I have done him great damage. Bless him now, and his family. . . ." That night for the first time since our betrayer had a name I slept deep and dreamlessly until the whistle summoned us to roll call. ♡

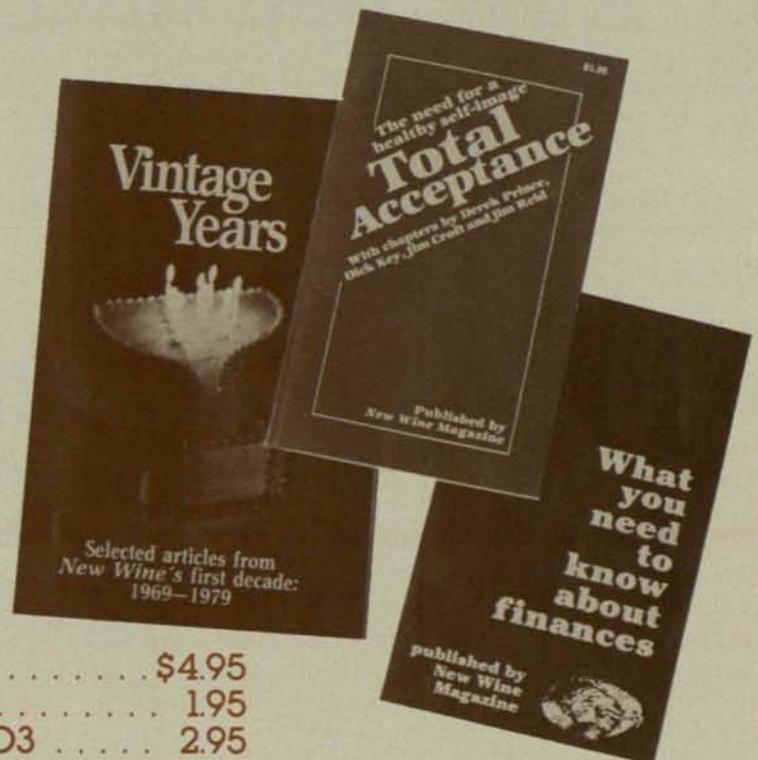
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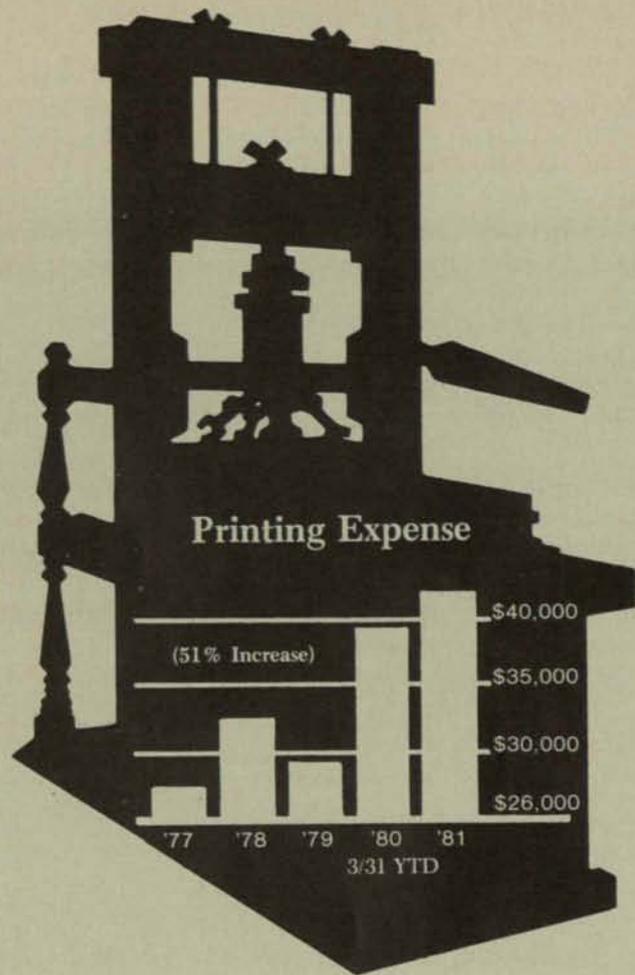
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with our readers, we feel comfortable in letting you know about the financial realities we face in these precarious times.

Let's face it: with inflation and rising interest rates eating away at the dollar, *the money we have today just doesn't go as far as it did in the past few years.* You undoubtedly know from working with your own personal budget that costs have increased drastically. For you, the most noticeable increases probably have been in the cost of food, transportation and housing. For us, the most dramatic increases have been in printing costs, postage fees and salaries.

But while the average American income, according to U.S. government figures, has grown 46.4% in the last six years, *New Wine's contribution income has only increased 10% in that same time span.* That means the average reader who made a \$10.00 contribution in 1976 only increased his giving to \$11.00 today. Had his contribution increased in proportion to the average income, that contribution would have been about \$15.00.

The bottom line, taking into consideration the devaluation of the dollar, amounts to more than a 25% decrease in our financial support as compared to 1976. *Obviously, a continuation of this trend would seriously hamper our ability to serve our readers through the ministry of New Wine.*

## MEMORANDUM

To: All *New Wine* readers

Re: The sensitive subject of money.

In this day and age of high inflation, *the subject of money is a sensitive one.* As you know, very rarely do we bring that subject up to our readers and we assure you that *New Wine* is not planning to change from this low-key approach to one of high-pressure financial tactics. Those who make up *New Wine's* leadership believe that *New Wine is more than a magazine—it is a ministry,* and as such, we are committed to sending our magazine to *everyone* who requests it—regardless of whether they contribute financially or not.

*New Wine* has been successful over the years, in great measure because of the generosity of our contributors. The gifts you have made in the past have allowed the ministry of *New Wine* to reach out into every nation of the world. It's obvious, too, that without this consistent financial support from the majority of our readers, it would be impossible to continue the ministry of *New Wine Magazine.* Because of the unique family relationship we have



Av. Salary

Average National Salary

vs.

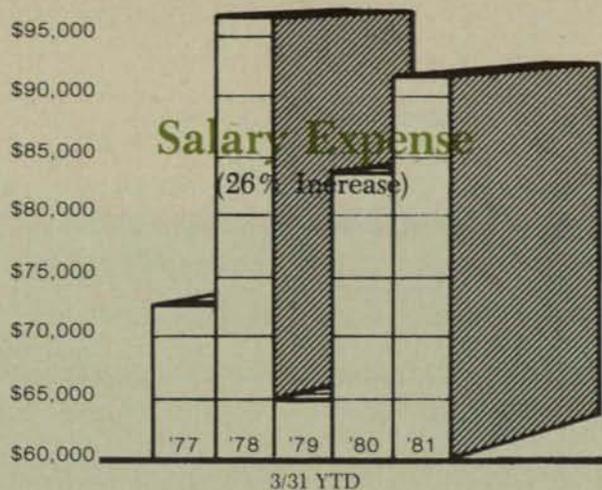
Contribution Increase

1976-1980



Av. Contribution

\*Bureau of Vital Statistics



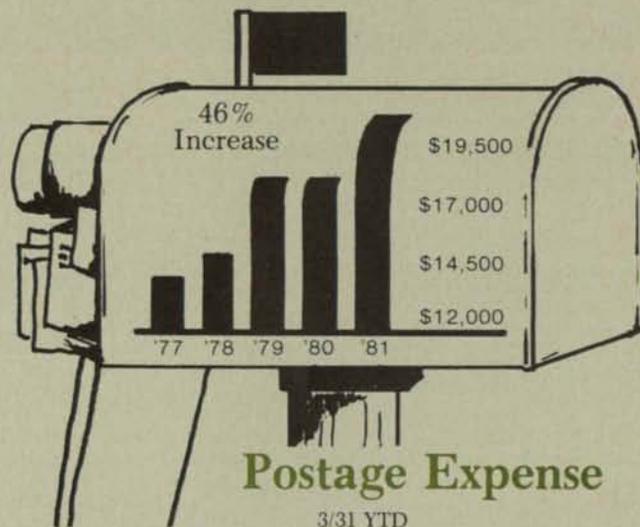
We believe that our responsibility to our readers is to see that we faithfully administrate the finances you contribute. Although we can do very little to curb increases in printing and postage expenses, *we have continuously worked to hold down those areas of expense that are within our control.* One such area where we have had good success is in personnel. Today, due to the creativity and dedication of our employees, *we are handling more work than we did five years ago but with 25% fewer staff members.* Although salaries have increased 26% since 1977, if our experience had been typical of other businesses, we would have seen an increase of 40%, especially in light of the increase in the cost of living.

### HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION HELPS

There is no set subscription fee to receive *New Wine*, but all contributions, no matter how small, are always appreciated. We recommend a contribution of at least \$15.00 to adequately pay for sending you *New Wine* for a year. When you contribute more than what it costs to send *New Wine* for a year those additional funds help us send *New Wine* to missionaries, prisoners, retirees on fixed incomes, and others who genuinely are unable to contribute and also to thousands of foreign readers who, because of international currency restrictions, are prohibited from supporting the ministry of *New Wine*. By your extra contribution *you also take an active part in helping us financially support the work of our overseas representatives* in Australia, who publish *Restore* (*New Wine* to people of Australia, New Zealand and the South Sea Islands), and in Costa Rica, who publish *Vino Nuevo*, the Spanish edition of *New Wine* which goes into approximately 10,000 households in Central America, South America and Spain as well as to Spanish-speaking Christians in the U.S.

In addition, your contribution beyond our recommended amount plays a vital role in helping us work toward *New Wine's* future growth. An immovable reality that we must face is that *our ability*

*to grow as a magazine and increase our distribution in new directions is dependent upon the funds we receive above and beyond present operating expenses.* With a little extra effort, *you can play a big part in helping us.* For example, an additional \$5.00 contributed by each *New Wine* reader in 1980 would have underwritten the cost of sending *New Wine* to 15,000 overseas readers for a year. After that, there would have been enough left over in that additional \$5.00 to introduce *New Wine* to 80,000 new readers in our own country. So you can see that *just a little extra effort by each member of the New Wine family* would make it possible for us not only to maintain our present service, but also to grow and reach out to a larger number of readers.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

We hope that what we have shared will help motivate you to take a more active role in supporting the ministry of *New Wine Magazine*. In deciding how to respond, it might be helpful to ask yourself this question: *"Have my contributions to New Wine reflected the benefit I have received from reading it?"* With this in mind, we encourage you to use the postage-paid envelope in the magazine both to *communicate* with us and make that "extra effort" contribution. In so doing you will help *New Wine* to continue and further its ministry of providing encouragement and practical guidance for successful day-to-day living.

We appreciate all of you for your love and support and we pray that God will richly bless you. Please keep us in your prayers.

Sincerely,

George P. Gundlach  
Administrator

# More Than Just Talking: The Art of Communication

by Dick Williams

"THAT ISN'T  
what I said."  
"That's what I  
*thought* I heard  
you say."  
"You don't  
understand."

Do any of these statements sound familiar? The inability to communicate is the number one problem in interpersonal relationships.

Our conflicts with others usually occur when we don't understand what they are thinking or how they are feeling.

Communication is more than just talking. It is the entire process by which we share with one another to gain understanding. Each person is a combination of thoughts, emotions, experiences and personality, and people are always changing. Who I was yesterday, I'm not today. Who I am today, I won't be tomorrow. That's why communication is an ongoing process.

We often think of communication as simply getting our point across; we focus on presenting our

viewpoint so that the other person hears our perspective. In a conversation, we wait impatiently for the other person to finish talking (without really listening to him) so we can voice our opinion. More often than not, this type of exchange produces conflict rather than mutual understanding.

From a biblical perspective, the basic meanings of communication are "something said" (*logos*) and "to hold in common" (*koinonia*). By combining the two, we can arrive at a clear definition. Communication is the art of conveying information and meaning by speaking or writing in order to gain a common understanding. This does not necessarily mean we agree with one another, but it does mean we understand each other.

### Problems in Communication

Why do we have so much difficulty relating to one another? To answer that question, we must go back to the beginning and examine the first human relationship—that of Adam and Eve. God's intention was that man should not be alone (Gen. 2:18), so He created woman to be a helpmate and companion for him. Evidently, the relationship among the three (God, Adam and Eve) was one of perfect harmony and fellowship, as God came every evening to commune with them. Adam and Eve were secure in their relationship with God and with each other.

Then came the serpent bringing temptation. Disobedience and sin followed—and at that point, es-

trangement came into the world. The total fellowship they had experienced now gave way to the separation which was to characterize their existence. When Adam failed to obey God, three things happened to him: he lost touch with God, with his human companion Eve, and with himself.

Adam and Eve's response to the guilt resulting from their sin was to hide (Gen. 3:10). Ever since, hiding has been characteristic of human relationships. It is abundantly evident in our communication when we do not say what we mean or mean what we say. Hiding has become a common defense mechanism in our lives which neither assuages guilt nor resolves problems.

In his book *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am*, John Powell lists five levels of communication<sup>1</sup> which have proven useful in helping people objectively evaluate how well they communicate. (To simplify remembering the levels, I have reversed his original numerical sequence.)

*Level One: Cliche level.* This is the shallowest and least risky type of encounter. We use words such as "Good morning. Did you sleep well?"; "Nice to see you; how have you been?"; "It sure is cold out today!" At this level we don't share anything of ourselves and we remain safely behind our protected (or projected) image.

*Level Two: Reporting facts about others.* We share information about what others have been saying or doing. The husband tells

how things went at work today; the wife gives a brief report about the kids or about a telephone conversation she had—strictly information. These are commentaries on the facts. At this level a lot of people end up gossiping about others. The focus is on others with no sharing of ourselves. There is still very little personal risk involved.

*Level Three: Sharing our ideas and judgments.* The risk factor increases at this level because the other person may not agree with our opinion. As we relate what we think, we test the waters carefully to be sure we are safe. The manner in which we share reflects how secure we feel. If we sense the other person doesn't agree with us, we have to quickly make a decision whether to hold our ground or retreat to a safer place. Many who are unwilling to risk confrontation adjust their position in order to avoid conflict and keep peace.

*Level Four: Sharing our feelings or emotions.* At this level, we expose ourselves, revealing what lies behind our ideas and judgments. The risk factor is considerable because if the other person reacts negatively toward us, we can get hurt. Now he begins to know the real person—the way we think and feel. When we share our feelings, we are no longer protected; we are exposing what we really are like on the inside. Usually the degree to which we will open up with another person depends upon the degree to which we feel secure in our relationship with that person.

*Level Five: Unguarded freedom to be completely honest with one another.* It takes years to cultivate this kind of relationship, and our capacity to relate at this level is limited. At best we will only experience this level of emotional intimacy with a few people in our lifetime. The risk factor is no longer prevalent because we have learned to trust one another. Yes, hurts will occur, but if the trust relationship is genuine,



Dick Williams, his wife, Karen, and their six children live in Downers Grove, Illinois, a western suburb of Chicago. After Dick attended Bible school in Canada, he and his family moved to Chicago in 1968 where he became associated with Ern Baxter, who was then pastoring in Chicago. Dick has been building a community of believers in the Chicago area since 1970. In addition to serving as senior pastor of Christian Fellowship in Chicago, he gives oversight to leaders of several other churches.

reconciliation will take place which will only deepen the solidarity of our lives together.

### Emotions May Block Communication

One of the basic needs of each of us is acceptance, and most of our experience is a mixture of acceptance and rejection. Some of us, unfortunately, experience more of the latter than the former. To experience some rejection from infancy onward is virtually inevitable, even in the best of families, and there are two basic responses we can have to rejection: forgiveness or closing up emotionally. It was the latter pattern that Adam and Eve chose as a way of handling their failure, and it is by far the most common tendency today. Closing up brings about an emotional deadness in us marked by a loss of spontaneity and responsiveness. If this pattern of defensive response to rejection continues, eventually a condition arises which amounts to a paralysis of emotions wherein the person, in effect, has built an impenetrable wall around his emotions. For some people the wall is so high and thick that it seriously impairs their ability to deal with reality.

Because much of the spiritual warfare we experience is in the mind and emotions, such improper emotional responses will eventually block our communication. Hidden suspicions, unfounded assumptions, conclusions drawn from incomplete knowledge of the facts, will foster feelings of rejection in us, and out of those feelings of rejection other negative emotional responses will develop: feelings of insecurity, inferiority, resentment, worthlessness, despair and a host of others. If we allow ourselves to be taken captive and ruled by these emotions, our communication will seldom be beyond the third level—that of sharing ideas and judgments—mentioned above. Until we come into wholeness (see 1 Thess. 5:23), our communication

with others will be continually frustrated. Those negative emotions will act as a continual barrier to meaningful relationships with others.

Paul refers to these powerful emotions in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 as strongholds:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

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**. . . we have to make friendship a priority in order to build it, realizing that friendship doesn't just happen—it takes time.**

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Paul is speaking in this passage about warfare—the warfare that goes on in the hearts and minds of individuals where strongholds of human fear and rebellion have reinforced our resistance to God's will. But Paul reminds us that such strongholds can be torn down and destroyed, not by fleshly weapons, but by the might and power of God.

### The Need for Time and Honesty

In a practical sense, what does it take to pull down these strongholds and have meaningful relationships and friendships? The answer consists of two basic ingredients: time and honesty. The first requirement, time, means that we have to make friendship a priority in order to build it, realizing that friendship doesn't just happen—it takes time.

My wife and I were married a long time before I began to understand Karen's need for fellowship with me. I would set aside time out of my busy schedule to talk with her. However, having spent time

in meaningful communication on Tuesday, I could not understand why she was hurting on Friday. Hadn't we had a good talk on Tuesday? Slowly I learned that we needed to have fellowship more often if we were going to "stay in touch" with each other. A lot would happen in our busy household in four days, and we needed to share more than just facts—we needed to share our thoughts and feelings. I had to learn that God had made us with natural differences, such as my wife's desire to know details. She didn't feel I had really communicated unless I had shared things fully with her. From my perspective I could be in a



four-hour meeting, then come home and give her a "complete" report of what happened in five minutes. Or I could attend a three-day conference and share it all with her in fifteen minutes. But somehow that didn't satisfy her—it didn't make her feel a part of what I had been doing. Obviously, the way to avoid such genuine feelings of frustration was to take more time to fellowship with each other.

Four of our six children are teenagers, and I have had to learn to spend time with them, even if they don't seem to open up during that time. Often when we have spent time together, I come home wondering if they really enjoyed it. Later I would learn from Karen how they told her what a good time we had together. Regardless of whether there is any noticeable reaction, time together is essential for building secure relationships of mutual trust and understanding.

We have come to recognize that family priorities should come ahead of ministry responsibilities. On several occasions, it has been necessary for me to advise a leader of a group to temporarily lay aside his duties in order to strengthen his family relationships. Once the pressure of constant ministry is removed, the leader is able to begin adjusting his priorities, diverting toward his family much of the time that used to be taken up in helping



others. Slowly the husband and wife can begin to face the fact that they have been too busy and have neglected each other by being overly occupied with "ministry." Freed from the distractions involved in leading others, they look to each other for fellowship and gradually rediscover how to share their thoughts and feelings with each other. Friendships and relationships take time.

### Honesty in Communication

Honesty is the other basic ingredient necessary for building friendships. The Scriptures call this "walking in the light": "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1:17). Here we see that fellowship (communion) is directly related to our being honest with one another. When we have areas which are hidden (darkness), real understanding breaks down because we are withholding truth from one another. Of course, this does not mean we ought to share *everything* with *everyone*. Remember that our capacity to experience level five communication is limited to a few people.

Honesty in communication has two parts: effectively *sending* a message and making sure the listener accurately *hears* the message. Our responsibility in communication is to be factually and emotionally honest. Although the emotional strongholds mentioned earlier may prevent us from being totally honest, we are still obligated to walk in the light. Some of the areas of darkness in our lives come from the fact that we aren't sure ourselves how we are feeling; but until we open up in the areas we are aware of, the darkness will continue.

In Ephesians 4:27, we are warned not to let the devil gain a foothold. Two verses prior to this, Paul identifies the precipitating factor in allowing such a foothold: falsehood. We must speak the truth to one another if we are to avoid Satan's infiltration in our lives.

The other part of honesty in communication is *listening*. Giving our *undivided attention* is essential for the other person to feel that what he has to say counts. It is easy to be preoccupied with unrelated thoughts while the other person is talking since most of us have the capacity to hear at a rate several times faster than someone normally speaks. Our thoughts wander if

we do not give the speaker our full attention, and as a result our responses will be superficial. If someone is sharing what is important to him and he senses that we are not really listening, the message we convey is that what he has to say is not important. Many people eventually go to a counselor for therapy because they know that such a person really listens to them. What all of us need is someone—whether a psychiatrist, priest, pastor or good friend—who cares enough to let us share our thoughts and feelings.

Often those speaking don't even want or need answers; they just need to express what is inside them. Each of us has a need to be heard, to be taken seriously, to be understood—as the Scriptures attest by the volume of verses concerning "hearing." The Amplified Bible beautifully captures what Jesus said: "He who has ears to hear, let him be listening, and consider and perceive and comprehend by hearing" (Matt. 11:15; 13:19, 43). Proverbs 18:13 says, "He who gives an answer before he hears, it is folly and shame to him."

Poor listening convinces the speaker that the listener doesn't care about him, and that can lead to conflicts. Once a conflict develops, it is even more essential to listen properly; for how well a person disciplines himself to listen in conflict situations will largely determine whether the conflict will be resolved or accelerated. The threat of cutting off communication—refusing to listen—is a powerful weapon in conflict.

It is obvious from what James says that he understood the need for listening in conflicts: "Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19).

### The Problem of Expressing Anger

A special problem in communication is inadequate expression of

## Just Around the Corner

# The Media

A look at the media's influence on our lives.

the emotion of anger. Improper expression of anger can be both cause and effect of communication blockage. For instance, we hesitate to share our feelings with someone if we know he doesn't handle his anger well. All of us get angry at times. Anger is a God-given emotion which serves as a motivator to get us to resolve conflicts, and anger is not a sin unless it is expressed wrongly.

Unrighteous anger can be manifested by either "blowing up" or "clamming up." When we blow up, we usually attack the other person with wounding remarks. That is sin because we are commanded to build one another up and not tear one another down. "Blowing up" destroys communication because it literally invites the other person to react in a similar fashion, which results in communication breakdown.

"Clamming up" is just as sinful, though seemingly "nicer." When we give someone the silent treatment, we are saying in effect, "I won't even acknowledge that you exist. You are nothing." This kind of anger turns to resentment which stops communication cold. The Apostle Paul was obviously trying to prevent both of these kinds of communication blockages when he wrote these commands: "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Eph. 4:26).

### Steps Toward Effective Communication

In light of the many potential

problems facing us in the area of communication I want to conclude this article with the following four steps to improving communication:

1) *Have a solid relationship with the Lord.*

If we know we are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6) we will be secure and thus able to receive God's love. If we know He accepts us, we can learn to accept ourselves. As we find our identity and sense of self-worth in Him, our wounds begin to heal (Is. 61:1) and the strongholds of negative emotional responses we talked about earlier begin to be demolished. Instead of living with the hurts of rejection and striving to gain acceptance by our own actions, our security in God allows us to build relationships without feeling it is too risky to do so. As we base our relationships with other people on our relationship with God, we see more clearly the reality of Acts 17:28: "In Him we live and move and have our being."

you grow spiritually to be honest with you. Because of their love and responsibility for you, they can sensitively give you much insight into any defensive or harmful factors in the ways you communicate. To search for these destructive communication patterns by yourself is like searching for something you know nothing about. You have no good description of what to look for because you have known no other way. That is one reason God has given us others to walk with us and objectively help us to be more Christ-like.

4) *Take the initiative to restore broken communication.*

According to Matthew 5:23-26 and 18:15-17, we should initiate the settlement of conflicts, whether we feel we have been wronged or someone else feels we have wronged them. Any time we notice that communication has broken down, we should take the responsibility for acknowledging that fact and do whatever is necessary on our part to set it right.

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Anger is a God-given emotion which serves as a motivator to get us to resolve conflicts. . . .

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2) *Examine your own "strongholds" or emotional blind spots.*

When you notice yourself pulling away emotionally from others stop and ask yourself: Why do I feel so threatened, rejected, hurt or overly sensitive? Immediately reach out to God and ask Him to help you view your situation from His perspective. If you can draw deeply upon the love and acceptance God has for you, you can respond to others with openness and grace, rather than counter-attacks or withdrawal.

3) *Utilize God-given oversight.*

Emotional strongholds are not easy for us to detect by ourselves, much less to tear down. Allow the people God has provided to help

Although this list is by no means exhaustive and there is much more we could discuss for a thorough examination of communication, I have attempted to define effective communication and to point out some of the root causes of communication problems, drawing some principles of healthy interaction from scripture. May God provide the grace we all need to communicate effectively with one another and with Him.♥

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<sup>1</sup>From *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* by John Powell, S. J., © 1969, Argus Communications, Niles, Illinois. Used with permission.

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# Dear New Wine,

## Bridging the gap

We are Catholics and have never before received a "Protestant" periodical. But there isn't one issue of *New Wine Magazine* that doesn't contain a beautiful article we agree with and that opens our hearts. Keep it up!

Mr. & Mrs. Mark Helminiak  
West Chicago, IL

## The Jezebel spirit

I am a program chairman and resource lady for Pro-Family Forum of Northern Virginia, so I especially appreciate the interview with Mahesh Chavda entitled "Binding the Strong Man." Mr. Chavda gave me a key expression—the *Jezebel spirit*—which perfectly describes what we confront as we pro-family types contend with the women-libbers and abortionists. Now I can pray more specifically against the Jezebel

spirit that works in them.

Mrs. M. T. Hockman  
Alexandria, VA

## Making a statement

I want you to know that your March '81 issue was excellent. It helped me to see more clearly the balance between the responsibility of the individual to God and the responsibility to walk in covenant with other believers. I think Bob Mumford was correct when he said effectively, "Now that the wine has aged, it has become more palatable to others, but also to those of us whom God has crushed to make the wine." It is good to know that the sense of community you have been working on is becoming a living and vibrant statement to the body of Christ.

Gurney D. H. Hunt  
Freeville, NY

## Disturbing issue

I have been greatly disturbed by your April issue *Warring Kingdoms*. Perhaps the article that disturbed me the most was "The Enemy Within" by Dan Wolfe. I can agree that we live in a "Me First" generation where the emphasis is to grab all the "gusto" you can in life because you only go around once. However, many parts of this article are very misleading if we consider the person of Jesus Christ and his unconditional love expressed through grace. I hope that articles of similar nature will not be appearing in *New Wine*

unless there is room for others that offer and show that the teaching presented is not absolute but opinion.

Pastor John C. McBride  
Sidney, OH

## Identify the enemy

April's *New Wine* is one of the best. It is such a shame Christians are so ignorant about their enemy. No marine would ever go into battle not knowing about his enemy. Christians seem to be unaware there is even a battle! Every article this month is outstanding. The one on self-love showed me a side of this subject I was unaware of.

Dale L. Broam  
Laurel Bay, SC

## Pass it on

For the past three years I have had the unexplainable privilege of growing and enjoying every issue that you have put out. I can truthfully say that my growth here in prison has been mostly due to your wonderful articles and teachings. And as I am not able to pay for these issues while in prison, my receiving them has been entirely due to your generosity and concern for those seeking Christ to the fullest in their lives.

Thomas M. Kachmarik  
Tenn. Colony, TX

*Editor's note: It is because of the generosity of you, our readers, that we are able to send New Wine to those who are unable to pay for their copies of the magazine.*

**P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616**

The editorial policy and purpose of *New Wine* is: (1) to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to all nations, (2) to work with all Christian ministries for the maturity and unity of His Church, (3) thus making ready a people prepared for the coming of the Lord. 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. *New Wine* is a non-subscription magazine supported by the voluntary contributions of those who believe in its mission. All

gifts are tax deductible. A tax-deductible receipt for contributions is available at year-end upon request. *New Wine Magazine* is under the 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.

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