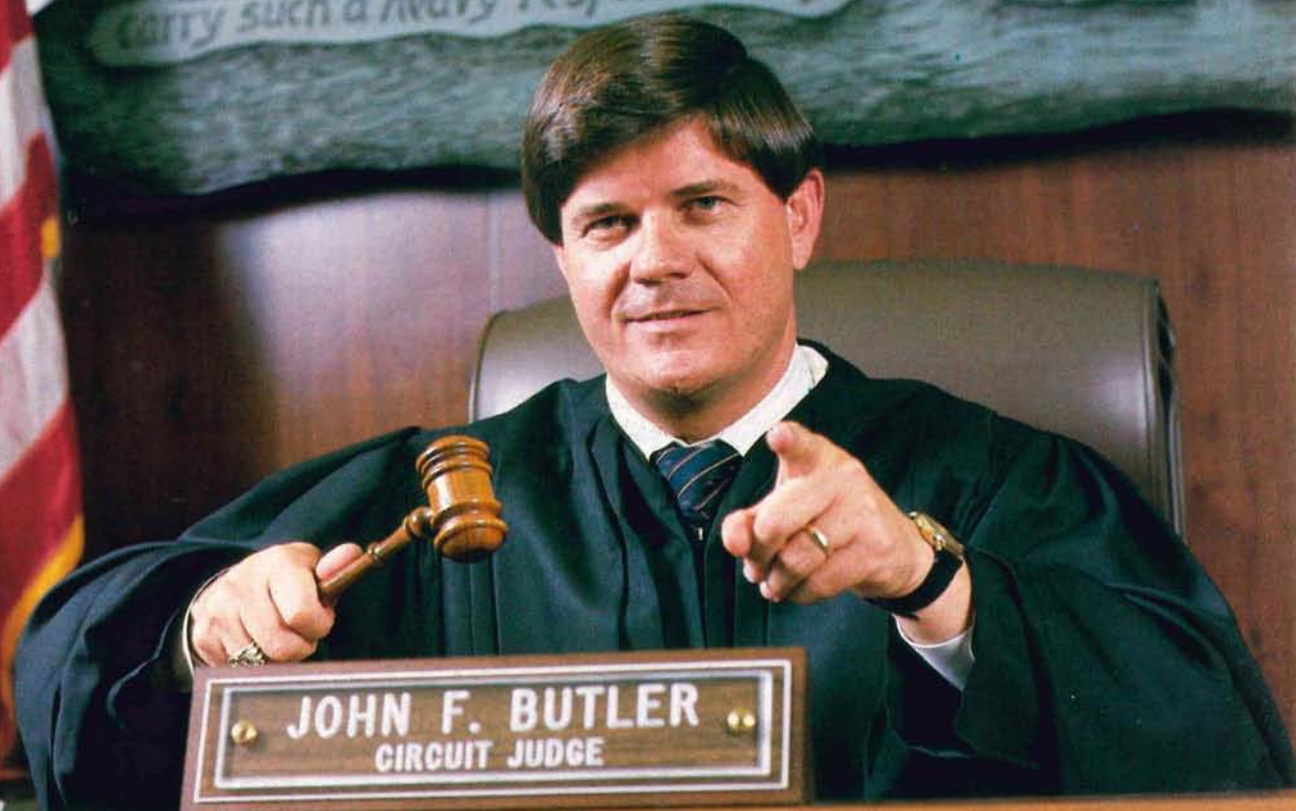


Magazine **New Wine**

August 1985 \$1.95

NOT GUILTY!

The verdict is in—you're completely free
from condemnation.



Living without guilt

Overcoming the taskmaster within

Now that you're free from guilt

Is self-worth unchristian?

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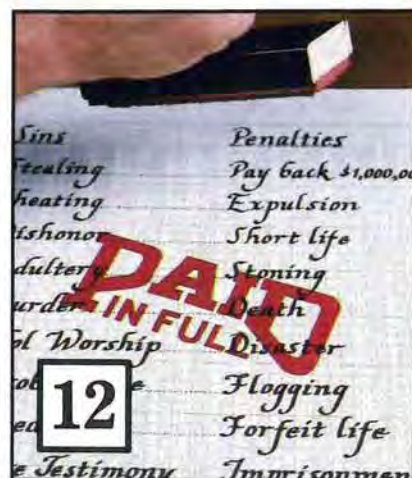
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Cover Photograph: Jimmy Necaise

The mire that keeps God's people from His purpose

"Present Tense"

BY BRUCE LONGSTRETH

Have you ever had one of those dreams where a monster chases you and you try to run away but can't? You feel his steamy breath on your heels and hear the snap of his slimy green fangs, and your heart races but your feet don't. You're wearing concrete shoes and can't seem to move.

This dream is a wide-awake reality for many people. They are harassed by unseen monsters that threaten to swallow them up. They are frozen in current tensions or in what I call the "present tense."

Present-tense people are guilt-ridden victims who live in fear of the monster of past regrets and the monster of future fears. They worry about what has already happened and dread what may happen if they are ever released from the present bog that binds them. They are easy to identify by their complaining, "If only I had done this differently," or in the next breath, "What if I try and fail again?" Worst of all, they languish in this present tense, suffering tremendous guilt and condemnation about their inability to experience a joyful and productive Christian life.

People who are mired in the present tense arrived there from several places. Some had parents who persistently manipulated their obedience with "shame on you" so that now they only feel good when they feel bad. (I don't think I've ever heard a parent say, "Shame off you," which

seems to be more in line with the ministry of Jesus.)

Others may have had pastors who constantly preached a thou-worm-Jacob message, failing to include Jacob's dramatic conversion when the Lord changed his name to Israel and he became a man who had power with God.

The relatives of Lazarus were mired in the present tense by resentment. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (Jn. 11:21 NAS). And then in verse 32, Mary said the same thing. They may have felt guilty, wondering, *Did we do all that we could to prevent this tragedy?* To free them from their hopeless perspective, Jesus spoke a redemptive word: "If you believe, you will see the glory of God" (v. 40 NAS).

But present-tense people usually don't believe they'll see anything good, let alone the glory of God in their situation. They even prefer to feel guilty and use their guilt to gain sympathy—that is, until they meet someone who confronts them. "If you want to sit there in your self-pity and depression, that's up to you. But God's purpose in Christ Jesus still waits for you and you can have it if you'll get up and get moving."

Simon Peter—that patron saint of the inconsistent and outspoken—could have remained mired in the present tense. But the guilt he felt over his cowardly denial of Jesus during the events

that led to the crucifixion was dispelled when he asked forgiveness and let the Lord lead him back into fellowship and give him fresh insight and direction for his life.

In this issue of *New Wine* we're dealing with guilt—that miry bog that keeps God's people from moving on. First, Bob Mumford tells us that in regard to guilt we are our own worst enemies. An "internal pharaoh" demands things from us that the Lord never intended. Then, Don Basham reminds us of the complete salvation the Lord provides for His people. His death removed our guilt of sin once and for all.

Joseph Garlington shares with us how the Lord has qualified us to serve Him and that we need not fear being unworthy to minister for Him, because He has given us His life.

We have also included in this issue two excellent testimonies about deliverance from guilt. One is by a schoolteacher in Michigan who had an abortion ten years ago. She shares a touching account of how the Lord used a young boy in one of her classes to minister forgiveness. And on the lighter side of guilt, Lionel Whiston, a ninety-three-year-old minister, recalls his family's deliverance from guilt when he confessed his own wrongdoing.

Our desire in this issue is to release from guilt's present tense those who regret the past, fear the future, and feel miserable about their present condition. May God grant all of us the grace to move into His eternal now! □



Bruce Longstreth is editor of *New Wine* and *Fathergram*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Holding Satan Back

Don Basham's insights into spiritual warfare have helped me to protect my family from the enemy for a number of years now. "Spiritual Warfare in the Home" (June) is not only timely, but also timeless in its application. One thing I've discovered that I would like to share that was not covered in his article is "preventative warfare." This is the warfare waged after the enemy is defeated, and we practice it in my home primarily at night. When I put my children to bed, I pray for their minds to be off limits to any fears or deceptions from the enemy. I also pray for emotional, physical, and spiritual regeneration while they sleep. As a result, my children have not had "things" return that have been kicked out.

Dwight Borum
Louisville, KY

Interview Insights

The interview with Connie

Marshner (June) is superb—one of the finest of its kind I have ever read. More such interviews are very worthwhile.

Rousas Rushdoony
President, Chalcedon
Foundation
Vallejo, CA

Confirmation From a Friend

I so enjoyed the article "Welcome Home" by Elizabeth Schenkel (June). I know this family, and I so admired Elizabeth's taking on the extra work and responsibility of caring for her husband's grandmother, who was quite set in her ways and needed a lot of understanding and love. It just goes to show that "where there is a will, there is a way." Your June issue also contained some very timely and wonderful articles on the Christian family. How true it is that the family is the backbone of our nation.

Naomi Loomis
Covington, KY

Manning the Home Front

The pressures that work against being a man in our society are tremendous. There is always the urge to let up and compromise because of the pressures. Derek Prince's article "Who's in Charge Here?" (June) strengthens my heart to continue in faith meeting the responsibilities of being a husband and a father. One of the first teachings I ever heard about God's role for men in the home was given by Derek Prince. I am glad that he continues to sound the clear call of the Lord for His people.

Glen Scofield
Kalamazoo, MI

Putting Talents to Use

Thank you for the excerpt "Call to Excellence" (June) from Dee Jepsen's book. Within it were so many pieces of sound advice that it would be difficult for any woman to read it and not feel challenged to higher standards in some way. For me personally I was most impressed by the need to use my talents in the home, and to use them with excellence.

I'm known as an organized person, and yet lately I've been feeling a great sense of frustration in several areas in the home that are not organized, such as receipts and coupons. Mrs. Jepsen helped me to see that I haven't properly used my "talent" for organization, but rather "buried" it in frustration. Learning that one is accountable to God for something is always sobering, and seeing how that applies to my home gives me new incentive to use that with which He has entrusted me.

Nancy Scofield
Kalamazoo, MI

Care and Feeding of Visitors

My first response to Thomas Goetz's "A Hug From Sister

Wilma" (May) was a reaction to the humorous side of the article. But beyond a funny story about a Baptist's first experience with an exuberant, hugging Pentecostal was real insight to be gained. I realized the Lord wanted me to have a greater sensitivity to visitors coming into our church. After fourteen years of establishing myself in nondenominational habits and surrounding myself with people of a similar life-style, I've long forgotten the insights of the outsider. I'd like to have both a new sensitivity to visitors and, as Sister Wilma, the willingness to be loving enough to break down a few walls.

Ricki Dieterich
Euless, TX

Comforting Words

New Wine has been a source of blessing and encouragement every month—not only to me, but also to the women's Bible study we've had in our neighborhood every Monday morning for the past three years. The article "The Day Nathan Drowned" (May) was especially timely this month. Not less than a week ago I was with a friend when her daughter choked on a piece of candy. Several minutes passed before she was breathing. The Lord told us both we had to lay aside any guilt over this incident, but my friend is experiencing all the feelings that Nathan's mother had. The article has been a comfort to both her and me.

Carol Aebel
Mountain Home AFB, ID

Casting Off Complacency

I just finished reading "Revival in the 1980's" (May) by Ken Sumrall. This timely message was like a ray of sunshine to my spirit and I pray my spiritual life will soon show the fruits of "receiving" this word of wisdom.

NEW WINE

I believe that discouragement and lack of progress in reaching church people sowed seeds of complacency in my own life, which led to a need for this word to repent.

Rita E. Bauschard
Erie, PA

A Family "Over There"

Your magazine and monthly Recommended Tapes by Bob Mumford are always an encouragement to us, and in some tough moments we've found answers through them. Recently, for example, my husband was teaching on "faith and finances" at a Youth With a Mission program. One evening I was flipping through some old issues of *New Wine* and came across "The Ten-Percent Solution" (March 1984) by Ron Milton. What a comfort to read those encouraging words!

So thank you so much for sending us these monthly blessings. It is precious to us and of high value. We also appreciate that we receive this for free. It helps us, because our support is less than ever, and your gift means a lot, refreshes us, and we feel that there is a family "over there" that we're part of.

Wally and Tatjana
Kuskoff
Helsinki, Finland

"Dear New Wine" is your platform to express your point of view about a *New Wine* article, to pose a question, or to disagree with a point we've made.

If you'd like to respond to a specific article, to question a writer, or to share how God spoke to you or challenged you, this is your opportunity to do it. Send your letters to "Dear New Wine," P.O. Box Z, Mobile, Alabama 36616.

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Avoiding the trap of self-justification

"But, Dad, It's Not My Fault!"

BY DICK LEGGATT

I heard the sound of breaking glass in the living room, and rushed in to see my youngest son, Ben, staring at a broken lamp on the floor.

My older boys, knowing that the delicate lamp with the glass tulip shade was special to my wife, immediately jumped on him.

"You've really done it now! You broke Mom's favorite lamp. You're in big trouble!"

I sent them on their way and decided to counter their condemning remarks with a healthy dose of mercy. "It's okay, Ben. Accidents happen."

But Ben, still smarting from his brothers' comments, blurted out tearfully, "Tell them to stop saying I broke the lamp. It wasn't my fault."

I realized then that being responsible for what he had done was more important than his need for mercy. So I took him by the arm, looked him straight in the eye, and said, "Ben, it is your fault. You were being careless."

I led him through the process of facing up to his sin, accepting responsibility, asking forgiveness, and finally putting the matter behind him. In a matter of minutes, he was cheerfully helping me pick up the pieces of glass—forgiven and free of all condemnation.

Later, as I reflected on this incident, I was reminded of the

simplicity of God's method of dealing with sin. But I was also amazed at how quickly the devil tries to complicate that method through condemnation and self-justification. To offset the enemy's work, our first job as fathers in dealing with wrongdoing many times is to remove condemnation and assign responsibility for sin. But as we do, it is important to keep these two in proper balance.

If we remove condemnation without making our children face responsibility, we dole out a cheap grace that erodes their fear of the Lord and sense of accountability. On the other hand, if we only assign responsibility without removing condemnation—the shame-on-you syndrome—we heap on unrelieved guilt, leaving our children either hopeless or on the verge of rebelling against us and God. Finding that balance is crucial to leading our families to repentance and restoration.

Probably the greatest scriptural example of that balance is Jesus' response in John chapter 8 to the woman accused of adultery. With an amazing sensitivity and wisdom, Jesus removed her condemnation with these words: "Neither do I condemn you" (v. 11 NAS). But He also presented very clearly her obligation to take proper responsibility: "Go your way; from now on sin no more" (v. 11 NAS).

We should seek that same result when we help our families deal with sin. The first step is to confront the enemy's work of condemnation and self-justification. The best antidote is for our children to honestly accept responsibility for their actions. Second is to help our children confess their wrongdoing to the Lord and receive His forgiveness—repeating the process with the person they may have hurt by their actions. Third is to joyfully confirm that their Father has forgiven them and has wiped the slate clean. Nothing takes the place of that kind of confirmation—especially when we link it with our own acceptance and forgiveness, along with a hug.

God's prescribed method for dealing with sin is amazingly simple and effective—much more so than the devil would want us to believe. If we fathers can instill that process in our children, teaching them to overcome condemnation and to accept responsibility for sin, we will prepare them to walk with God in a clean and healthy relationship for the rest of their lives. □



Dick Leggatt, a former editor of *New Wine*, lives in East Lansing, Michigan, with his wife, Cindy, and their four children.

For more on successful fathering, you may be interested in *Fathergram*, a monthly newsletter that provides insights, tips, and testimonials from fathers who care about their families. To subscribe, see the enclosed card or send \$9.95 (special price) to *Fathergram*, P.O. Box Z, Mobile, AL 36616.

THE WORD

August 1985

I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Whose Presence in the Life of Each Believer Produces the Fruit of Righteous Behavior.

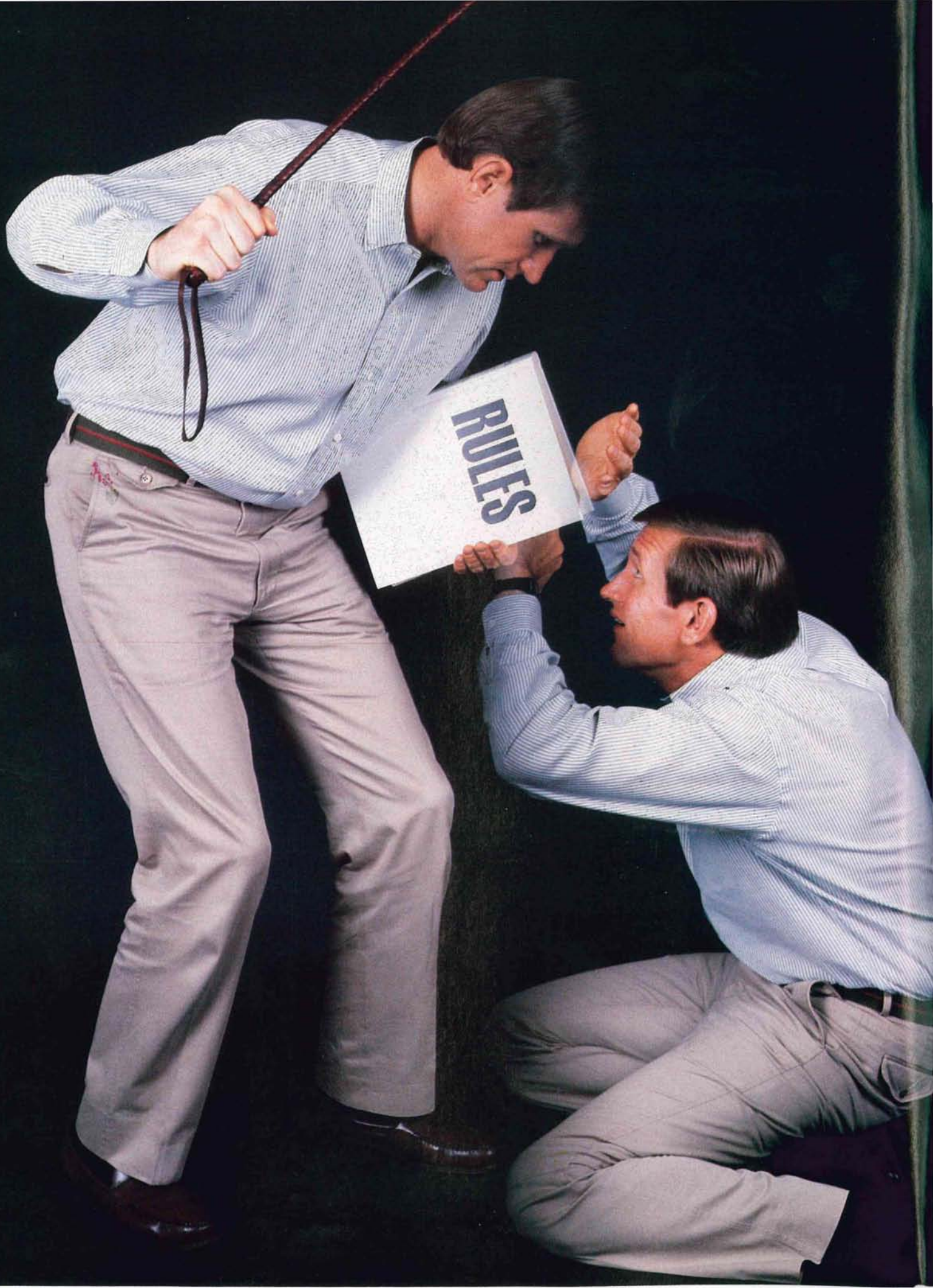
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A monthly Bible study by Bruce Longstreth



The Internal Pharaoh



How to overcome the tyrannical taskmaster of guilt BY BOB MUMFORD

Inside many Christians a war is raging, one where we say we're going to do one thing, but turn right around and do another. I decide, for example, that I'm going to fast one day, but the next thing I know I'm sitting at a table full of food and I'm feeding my face. I may enjoy myself for a while, but afterward I feel like a worm. It's a common conflict that the Apostle Paul writes about:

For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate....Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (Rom. 7:15, 24 NAS).

Paul's plea for deliverance from this conflict is a cry to be set free from what I call the "internal pharaoh." Just as Pharaoh in Moses' time was a hard taskmaster who continually made life miserable for the people of God, so our own internal pharaohs can make life miserable for us. Just as Israel cried out to God for deliverance from Egypt, so today many of us are crying out to God

for deliverance from the bondage that holds us captive. Just as God heard the cry of the Israelites and freed them from Pharaoh, so we too can be set free from our internal pharaohs.

Deliverance from our internal pharaohs isn't found in ten easy steps, but rather in an understanding of how they operate and how Jesus enables us to overcome them.

Let My People Go

To help us better understand our battle with internal pharaohs, we need to look at the Old Testament picture of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, beginning in Exodus chapter 1.

The Israelites living in Egypt multiplied until they became a threat to the whole Egyptian social order. Their strength and increasing size caused Pharaoh to persecute them, and the more they grew, the more they were afflicted. The people cried out to God to release them from their bondage, and the scripture says, "God *heard* their groanings; and God *remembered* His covenant.... And God *saw* the sons of Israel, and God *took notice* of them" (Ex. 2:24-25 NAS, italics mine).

In response, He sent His servant Moses to deliver His people from bondage. When Moses asked that the Israelites be allowed to leave, instead of releasing them, Pharaoh increased their bondage, saying to the taskmasters and foremen:

"You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them" (Ex. 5:7-8 NAS).

Moses despaired when he heard Pharaoh's response, and he cried out to God, who reminded him that He would remember His covenant with His people. The Lord then set out the conditions for Israel's release from bondage. He sent plagues on Egypt and told Moses to instruct the people to slaughter a lamb and put its blood on their doorposts to protect their families from the death angel. He then proceeded to lead the people out of slavery and into freedom.

Later, when they were at Mount Sinai about to receive the



Ten Commandments, God said, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex. 20:2 NAS). It's important for us to know that God understands bondage. Many people teach that the Ten Commandments are bondage, but here's a God who brought a people out of bondage and slavery and into freedom, and is now giving them His commandments, or *His thinking on what it means to be free*.

God still understands bondage; He's still the one who leads His people out of bondage. Paul says that Israel's experience is an example for us:

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us....Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. 10:1-6, 12 NAS).

Thus, we see Pharaoh's enslavement of the Israelites and their spiritual pilgrimage out of bondage as a biblical type and symbol for us. In fact, the apostle states clearly, "These things happened as examples for us."

Describing Pharaoh

Our internal pharaohs are very much like Pharaoh who persecuted the Israelites. Here are eight statements that further describe the internal pharaohs we deal with:

1. Just as Pharaoh in Old Testament times was always under the control of Almighty God, so our internal pharaohs are ultimately under His control—no matter how evil or demanding they get.
2. Just as in the Old Testament the Israelites were saved by the blood of the lamb, we in the New Testament times are saved by the blood of the Lamb—Jesus Christ. To deal properly with

guilt, it is important that we get ourselves on a sure New Testament foundation, which can only happen when we understand salvation and acceptance and the method by which we are accepted into God's presence.

3. Just as the cry of the Israelites to be free from bondage stirred up Pharaoh and caused him to intensify his persecution, so our cry to grow, mature, and be use-



What we take to be the voice of God may be an immature conscience whipping us with a sense of guilt or failure.



ful provokes the accuser and awakens our internal pharaohs. I think that's why guilt and condemnation arise in many instances—our efforts to come out from under our internal pharaohs bring an increase in the intensity of accusation.

4. There is a difference between conviction and condemnation, which we must understand if we want to be free from our internal pharaohs. Conviction comes from God; condemnation comes from the enemy. If we could always tell them apart, we would pretty well know how to handle the problem. Conviction leads to repentance; condemnation leads to guilt.

5. Often when we conquer one internal pharaoh, others take its place, and we end up dealing with a larger or more powerful enemy than we had originally envisioned. If, for example, I make some major decision of the will to deal with and conquer anger, while my attention and strength are so occupied, other internal pharaohs gain strength. Guilt, lust, or rejection begins to demand the material needed to satisfy its own appetite.

6. What we take to be the voice of God may be an immature conscience whipping us with a sense of guilt or failure. "Make more bricks! Pray more. Read more. Do more. Witness more." But after we have prayed more, read more, done more, and witnessed more, there's another voice that says, "That's not enough! Now, you have to make bricks without straw." We confuse the guilt-ridden conscience that is never satisfied with the voice of God.

7. The internal pharaoh is unconscious, unrelenting disapproval. By it we often speak to ourselves in God's name.

"Bob?"

"Yes, Lord?"

"You have done a miserable job today."

"I know that, Lord."

We think we're holding a conversation with the Lord when we're actually struggling against our internal pharaohs. We never feel as if we've done enough. Holiness is always a hope away—next week, next month, or next year we're going to achieve it. That unconscious, unrelenting disapproval dangles approval before us like a carrot on a stick.

8. There is a difference between holiness and perfectionism. God requires holiness of us, but we require an impossible perfection of ourselves. I say to my wife, for example, "Judy, that was an excellent meal."

"Yes, but the chicken wasn't done."

That's perfectionism.

Or she says to me, "Honey, that was a good teaching."

"Yeah, but I left out the fourth point."

That bondage to perfectionism makes it hard for us to receive a compliment. We feel we must say something humble, such as, "It wasn't me; it was God." We feel forced to say that because perfectionism is never satisfied. We require some things of ourselves that God Himself never requires.

Those are just some general statements about our internal pharaohs and how they work. To overcome them, we need a proper understanding of guilt, because that is where we are especially open to the internal pharaohs' attacks. When we've failed to do what we've intended to do, we are often overcome with guilt.

The Purpose of Guilt

Guilt has a bad reputation; in fact, some people simply ignore its existence. But we should not only acknowledge its presence but also realize that it serves a useful purpose.

Before I was saved, I would drink until five in the morning,

go home at five-thirty, shower, and go to work. I thought it was fun. Pharaoh was a hard taskmaster for me—always driving, crowding, demanding, and never, ever satisfied. When I couldn't take its demands any longer, my internal pharaoh ended up driving me right to God. Guilt, condemnation, and accusation all can be used in a sovereign sense to force us out of "Egypt" and into God.

Guilt can be a good thing if it serves to convict us. When the Holy Spirit convicts us about our prayer life, we are drawn to prayer. Condemnation, on the other hand, is accusatory; it makes us feel hopeless and moves us toward bondage. It's important that we learn to discern between the two.

When I was in the Navy, I knew a young man on my ship who was losing his mind. He had been married a year, but while he was in the Navy, he kept going to shore with all kinds of women, and he was overcome with guilt. One day he came to me and said, "I'm going to blow my brains out." I thought he was serious, so I took him to the Navy psychiatrist, who told him, "Your problem is guilt. What you need to do is to get an advance on your pay, go on shore, get drunk, and enjoy yourself."

So he came out of his office with a big smile on his face and said, "That's the kind of doctor I like." And he followed the doctor's orders strictly.

The next day I was on duty and found out that young sailor was down in the hold of the ship with a gun pointed at his head. He had the hammer pulled back, trying to get up the courage to take his life.

The Holy Spirit uses guilt to bring conviction, but Satan uses guilt to bring condemnation. That sailor was suffering real guilt, which could have led to



conviction and forgiveness, but the psychiatrist treated it as if it could only bring harmful self-condemnation. If we're feeling conviction from honest guilt but treat it as if it could only be the devil, we tend to become pharisaical and insensitive. Then if the Holy Spirit tells us that we're twenty pounds overweight, we cast aside the conviction He sends and say, "There is therefore now no condemnation," quoting Romans 8:1. It's so easy to reject the convicting work of the Holy Spirit!

In Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist is dealing with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and he says:

"Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham" (vv. 8-9 NAS).

The Jews to whom John the Baptist spoke were so full of pride that they wouldn't let anyone tell them anything. They reasoned that *because* they were Abraham's children, they knew it all. They had so successfully dismissed all guilt, all calls for repentance, and all accusations as unjustified that the prophets were never able to penetrate the wall around them. The Jewish people were even taught that there was a special angel at the door of hell to make sure no one circumcised ever entered.

This kind of thinking has infected much of the charismatic renewal and evangelical circles today. We're wrapped in a doctrinal isolation that says, "Anything or anyone that doesn't bring a happy message is to be rejected. If you bring me a happy message, it's from God. If you bring

a message with conviction, it can't be from God. After all, 'There is therefore now no condemnation in Christ Jesus.'"

We should acknowledge the proper function of guilt. Without it, we become insensitive, religious, unmoved, and worst of all, we remain unconvicted. I've been praying lately that God would help us once again to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, be-

cause we've become too adept at knowing how to classify conviction as condemnation. We all need the ability to make a clear distinction between conviction and condemnation when it comes to dealing with guilt.

Personal Freedom

We must also have a clear understanding of personal freedom if we're going to overcome



The key to overcoming our internal pharaohs is based on a clear New Testament understanding that our place in Christ is secure.



our internal pharaohs. In John chapter 8, we read about a group of Jews addressing Jesus:

"We are Abraham's offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is that You say, 'You shall become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, every one who commits sin is the slave of sin" (vv. 33-34 NAS).

Our personal freedom is much more limited than we think. "I can do what I want when I want" is an illusion that becomes apparent when we act in defiance of our spiritual resolve. We find that out, for example, when we say we're going to fast and end up eating more than ever.

We resemble a kleptomaniac millionaire who says she will never steal again, but the next time she's in the five-and-ten store she hides a lipstick in her pocket—even though she has enough money to buy out the store.

A young woman says, "I'm not going to fall in love with that man. It's foolhardy to go out with him again." But her carnal desire overrules her own mind, her pastor's counsel, the Holy Spirit, and a dozen other warnings. She ends up marrying the man she knows is not right for her.

We're actually much less free than we think. It's as if the members of our body can seek their own gratification apart from the rest of the body.

Four Laws

The key to overcoming guilt, lack of self-control, or any other manifestation of our internal pharaohs is based on a clear New Testament understanding that whether we're dealing with conviction or condemnation, our place in Christ is secure. We are

assured of our salvation and acceptance. Because our place is secure, when we fail we can still run into God and not away from Him. When a child fails, the last person he wants to see is his father unless he knows something about the nature of his father—that he will accept him no matter what he's done. Our acceptance in Christ does not depend on what we do. If we have a clear understanding of the Father's love, we can run into Him and not away from Him.

As we do run into our Father, we learn how He has provided for us to overcome our internal pharaohs. In Romans chapters 7 and 8, Paul describes five laws that are at work in us:

For I joyfully concur with the *law of God* in the inner man, but I see a different *law in the members* of my body, waging war against the *law of my mind*, and making me a prisoner of the *law of sin* which is in my members....There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the *law of the Spirit* of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death (Rom. 7:22-23; 8:1-2 NAS, italics mine).

Four of these five laws operate in pairs—the law of sin with the law of the members, and the law of the mind with the law of the Spirit or the law of God.

God has come to heal us by bringing the law of sin and the law of our members under the law of the mind and the law of the Spirit and of God. Paul, after asking who will set him free, says, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25 NAS).

Jesus came with the law of the Spirit to redeem the law of the mind and to bring man into har-

mony with himself. When we let Him deal with the law of the members, we find that He begins to do away with the accusations, the guilt, and the condemnation as He begins to bring the man together.

Jesus is the only one who can do that for us. He has successfully resisted Satan. When He was in the wilderness fasting for forty days, Satan came and said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Mt. 4:3 NAS). Jesus' answer shows that His members did not rule Him: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (v. 4 NAS).

Our internal pharaohs will seek to rule our wills, our minds, our members, our affections, and our physical bodies, but because of Jesus' work, we can bring them under the dominion of the Spirit. We can defeat our internal pharaohs, and as a result we can overcome temptation, begin to develop spirituality and character, leaving no room for guilt or condemnation.

When we find ourselves in the conflict of these laws—when we are not practicing what we would like to do, but doing the very thing we hate—we must refuse the voice of our internal pharaoh, who says our shortcomings and failures mean we are under condemnation. Instead, we must be sensitive to the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and turn and run into Christ Jesus, who has set us free from the law of sin and of death. □

Bob Mumford has served as dean of Elim Bible Institute in Lima, New York, and as a pastor, evangelist, and seminar teacher. Bob, who travels widely in ministry to Christians of all backgrounds, has also written a number of books about the Christian life. He is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors and resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Judy. They have four children, Beth, Keren, Bernard, and Eric.

Living Without Guilt

God sent His Son to clear our account, enabling us to walk free from condemnation.

BY DON BASHAM

Guilt is one of Satan's major weapons in his ceaseless campaign to rob Christians of their joy and confidence. We're made to feel guilty if we're poor, and guilty if we're prosperous. We feel guilty when we're sick, and guilty if we have our health when others around us are sick. We not only feel guilty about bad things that happen, we feel just as guilty that we don't deserve the good things that happen.

Although we all battle against guilt, God's intention is for His redeemed children to live free from it. The key to that is having an absolute assurance of our salvation, knowing that we permanently belong to Him in this life as well as the life to come. Without such an assurance we will never experience fullness of life in the kingdom of God, and the devil will hound us until the end of our days.

Many years ago when I was a student in Bible college, a classmate and I decided to attend a Pentecostal tent revival, more out of curiosity than anything else. The evangelist was a man about forty years of age, totally committed to old-fashioned, Bible-thumping preaching. Several times during his sermon he paused, glared at the congregation, and said, "If I were to drop dead tonight, I know for sure I'd wake up in heaven." Then he added, "Brother! Sister! If you were to die tonight, would you go straight to heaven? Are you sure you're saved? You need to know for

sure."

On the way home afterward, my classmate complained, "I never saw such arrogance in all my life! How could that evangelist stand there and tell us he knows he's going to heaven? I'm trying my best to serve God. I've accepted Christ and I hope to go to heaven when I die, but I'm not so conceited as to say I *know* I will. No man has a right to boast like that!"

Through the years I've discovered that millions of sincere people who have professed faith in Christ struggle with the same uncertainty. Of course, they call it humility rather than uncertainty. But that very uncertainty provides the chink in their Christian armor that allows the devil to pierce them with guilt, which in turn prevents them from experiencing the joy of their salvation and the power and victory they are entitled to as believers.

Too many Christians who profess that "Jesus paid it all" act and live as if "Jesus *almost* paid it all." But the Scriptures offer such overwhelming, abundant proof of the total sufficiency of Jesus' death on the cross in our behalf that it's hard to understand why so many Christians still seem to doubt that it can be all right not to feel guilty. Paul writes, for example, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1 NIV), and "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in

Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1 NIV).

The Meaning of Justification

If we have truly accepted Jesus Christ, we shouldn't have to feel guilty about anything! But still we do because we fail to understand the full meaning of justification. Webster's dictionary says that *justify* means "to release from the guilt of sin and accept as righteous." To be justified, then, is to be made righteous, and no righteous person needs to feel guilty. As Derek Prince has defined it, "*Justified* means 'just-as-if-I'd never sinned.'" Jesus justified us by His sacrificial death on the cross. Once we fully accept His sacrifice, in God's sight it is as if we never sinned.

The story is told of two derelicts in a bowery mission who heard the message of salvation for the very first time. One said, "It's too good to be true," and returned to his bottle. With tears in his eyes, the other derelict said, "It's too good not to be true!" and falling on his knees, he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ. Four years later he sailed to Africa as a missionary.

Our stubborn desire to create our own righteousness coupled with skepticism that God really loves us enough to have paid the full price for all our sins makes us say in effect, "Yes, I know Jesus died for my sins, but...." We then open ourselves once more to feelings of guilt and unworthiness, and foolishly strive to establish some measure of righteousness



Sins

Stealing.....

Cheating.....

Dishonor.....

Adultery.....

Murder.....

Idol Worship.....

Disobedience.....

Greed.....

False Testimony.....

Penalties

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Expulsion

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Stoning

Death

Disaster

Flogging

Forfeit life

Imprisonment

Eternal Damnation

by our own efforts to be good.

We Can't Save Ourselves

Christians who have not accepted that Christ's atonement is sufficient must get rid of the idea that we can do anything to save ourselves and realize there is no such thing as "our own righteousness." Paul writes:

Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one....There is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:9-10, 12 NIV).

He adds later in that same chapter, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (v. 23 NIV).

Because we have all sinned and broken the Law, we are all guilty in God's sight and are deserving of death. The only way we could ever attain a righteousness of our own—and thus be free from guilt—would be to keep every single commandment and never sin. But that is impossible. In fact, Paul goes so far as to say that the Law wasn't given for us to keep, but rather to reveal that we are accountable to a righteous God and to show us our own sinfulness (see Romans 3:19; 7:5).

Thus, our total inability to keep God's commandments lays upon us all a righteous application of guilt. We are sinners guilty of transgressing God's law. We cannot save ourselves, atone for our sin, or establish our own righteousness. But what we cannot do for ourselves, in His great love, God did for us in sending His own Son to die and pay the price for our sin.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might pos-

sibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:6-8 NIV).

Why, oh, why, then, do so many of us still try to establish a righteousness of our own? We, like Adam and Even, try to cover our sin with fig leaves of works. We engage in futile efforts to establish our own righteousness, to cover our guilt, and to make ourselves presentable and acceptable to God. I have found four common "fig leaves" we use.

Four "Fig Leaves"

First, we try to make ourselves righteous by attempting to excuse our guilt. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors are all aware of the tremendous burden of guilt carried by many people. But in their counsel most professionals do not emphasize the need for confession of sin, admission of guilt, repentance, and forgiveness. Rather the emphasis is on the destructive nature of guilt and the need for accepting ourselves as we are, evil behavior and all, to excuse the sin and not to accept the guilt. "Don't feel guilty! Everyone is like that. So don't be so hard on yourself." Sinful behavior is accepted as "normal."

The second fig leaf is our setting aside moral absolutes. "Good and evil are relative; what society accepts and condones is what is right." We give innocent-sounding names to bad practices in hopes of making ourselves seem righteous. Adultery is "sleeping together." Homosexual activity is identified as a "meaningful, caring relationship." Abortion is called "free choice for women" or "removing fetal tissue."

Third, we try to cover our guilt by fleeing into self-indulgence. Freedom and fulfillment are to be

found in gratifying every material wish and every sensual desire. "If it feels good, do it!" And we don't even have to use cash; all it takes is the right credit card. As the television commercial says, "MasterCard international! So worldly, so welcome!"

A fourth way we attempt to establish our own righteousness is by simply denying all accountability. "No matter what I did, it's not really my fault. My parents didn't really love me; it's their fault. My teacher made fun of me; it's his fault. My boss didn't promote me; it's his fault. It's my wife, my children, my poor metabolism, my neighborhood. It's my church's fault. Someone else, everyone else is to blame. It's not my fault. I'm not responsible."

But garments of fig leaves can never cover our guilt or make us righteous before God. Twelve layers of fig leaves would not have helped Adam and Eve escape accountability. When they heard God approaching, they still hid themselves among the trees. No matter how hard he tries, man can never cover his nakedness before God; he can never justify himself. Guilt must be dealt with another way.

Shedding of Blood

After God pronounced judgment on Adam and Eve and just before He expelled them from the garden, He did one more thing. He replaced their garments of fig leaves with garments of animal skins (see Genesis 3:21). For the first time blood was shed in the garden of Eden. Animals were sacrificed so that the nakedness of Adam and Eve might be covered. We see in that act a foreshadowing of things to come. Later, when the Israelites were in Egypt, they were spared the death of their firstborn if they placed the blood of a sacrificial

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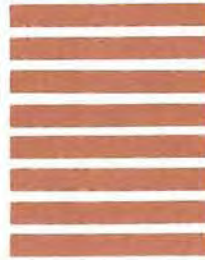
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live a life free from guilt is to take our realization that we are saved by faith and not by works and use it as a shield against the fiery darts of accusation that are continually hurled at us by Satan. When Jesus knew Judas was on his errand of betrayal, He told His disciples, "The prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me" (Jn. 14:30 NIV). In other words, there was nothing in our sinless Christ that the devil could justly accuse Him with.

If we can only accept it, this is exactly where we stand—because of our justification by Jesus and our righteousness in Him. When the devil tries to accuse us and lay guilt on us, we do not have to listen to his railing accusations, no matter how many of our failures and sins he dredges up from our past. We can justly say to him, "The price has already been paid for that. I have been forgiven and made righteous by my faith in Jesus Christ. I refuse to

accept any guilt for the sins Jesus died to redeem me from."

The devil knows if he can make us feel guilty, we will shut ourselves off from the transforming power of God. We will short-circuit our connection with the divine power source, Jesus Christ. If we doubt our righteousness in Christ, we become double minded. James describes the plight of the double-minded man: "That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord" (Jas. 1:7 NIV).

Many times the only barrier between a person and the miracle he is praying for is his struggle with guilt and feelings of unworthiness. Once it is understood that we are indeed guiltless, righteous, and deserving in God's sight (because we are clothed with the imparted righteousness of Jesus Christ), then our faith can soar and we can accept with rejoicing the healing, deliverance, or any other provision God longs

to give us.

Keep Short Accounts

A third thing we can do to live a life without guilt is to keep short accounts. Up to now we have dealt mostly with Christ's atonement for our past sins. But the same saving grace also applies to the sins we commit today and the ones we may commit tomorrow. Paul tells us:

"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 (Eph. 4:26-27 NIV).

From these verses several things become apparent. Paul is saying that although it is possible to get angry and not sin, it's more likely that when we are angry we do sin. When that happens we need to deal with it immediately, "before the sun goes down." If we're honest before God, we must admit most of our anger is unrighteous rather than righteous, and in our unrighteous anger we do all sorts of mean, selfish things to others as well as to ourselves. I believe Paul is telling us to make things right with God and one another before the day's end. If we don't, we're "giving the devil a foothold."

A good healthy habit for all Christians is to review our day with the Lord before we go to sleep. Lying in bed, we can quietly recall the events of the day, thanking God for the good things that happened, as well as acknowledging and asking His forgiveness for any selfish, mean, unloving word we may have spoken or deed we may have done. By "keeping short accounts," we leave no room for the devil to gain a foothold. Nothing unforgiven or perverse dwells in us for him to use to make us feel guilty or to separate us from God.

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A Liberating Truth

As we walk out these truths and begin to get free from guilt, I believe it's important that we keep in mind the liberating truth of who we are in Jesus Christ and why God wants us to live as beloved children, secure in our knowledge of His love for us, secure in the knowledge that we belong to Him forever. The best way I know to illustrate this is by comparing it to family life.

My wife, Alice, and I have been married thirty-five years and have reared five children. All are married and have children of their own now. God has been merciful, for all are happily serving the Lord and all are married to mates happily serving the Lord. We have eleven precious grandchildren and when I see you I'll be glad to show you pictures!

The point is, from the moment those children were born into our family, they were ours! For good! We made sure they understood that as a basic, continuing fact of family life. From our standpoint as parents we knew that nothing could ever alter the precious fact that they were ours. As they were growing up we loved them, cared for them, and protected them. We praised and encouraged them when they were obedient; we disciplined them and encouraged them when they were disobedient. But never once did we withhold our love and never once did we believe they were any less ours, even when they were rebellious or disobedient.

Most of all we would have been horrified if they had believed they had to earn the right to be called our children. Their right to be a part of the family, their right standing, their "righteousness," was never dependent on their behavior; it was a birthright. It was a gift; they could never have earned it. We would have been grieved beyond measure had any one of them at any time come to

us and asked, "Am I being good enough today to be called your child? Have I done enough good deeds to deserve to be in the family for one more day?"

But, of course, they never did that. They were secure, and are still secure in the knowledge that we are a family forever.

What's more, that is the assurance we are entitled to as Christians, as born again believers in Jesus Christ. We have been born into the family of God, and are children of our heavenly Father. Because we have been bought with a price, and are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, because we have been forgiven, because we are His, we can live our lives without guilt. And no one can snatch us out of our Father's hand. Oh, I suppose we could jump out. We could choose to leave God's family if we wanted to, but who would be so foolish?

Because of God's love and faithfulness, we have the same assurance Paul testified to when he wrote:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39 NIV). □

Footnote

¹Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1971), p. 461.

Don Basham holds bachelor of arts and bachelor of divinity degrees from Phillips University and its graduate seminary in Enid, Oklahoma. He is chief editorial consultant for New Wine and the author of several books, including Face Up With a Miracle and Deliver Us From Evil. Don resides in Mobile, Alabama, with his wife, Alice.



Charles Simpson on work

Next Month in New Wine: Work—Burden or Blessing?

Charles Simpson says that with a clear vision of what God has called us to do and a proper understanding of the biblical work ethic, we will enjoy our vocation and be fruitful in it.

John Beckett, owner of a large manufacturing company, writes that secular work is not a second-class calling.

Dick Iverson makes a case against Christian "Lone Rangers" and "Freddie the Freeloaders." God gives each member of the Church an opportunity to contribute his talents and gifts.

Plus a profile of Mississippi's Outstanding Young Farmer for 1985, and a humorous look by John Stanko at some of the jobs God has used to prepare him for his present work.

All in the September *New Wine*



A woman discovers the prescription for

Bumperstickeritis

BY DAWN HAMILTON

The pastor told us to tell someone, "God loves you and so do I." I turned around to look at the woman seated behind me. I mimicked the pastor's words, but felt foolish because they sounded so insincere.

As I turned my attention back to the service and the preacher, he was speaking from 1 Corinthians chapter 13—Paul's message about love. When he was done, the woman behind me tapped me on the back. "I know it's Sunday," she said, "but I'm new in town and I need a ride to the airport."

Oh, no, I thought, irritated. "Well, the airport is about thirty miles from me," I answered. "Is there any other way you can get there?"

"The person who promised to take me backed out. I just thought maybe you could," she replied. "Don't bother. I'll ask someone else."

How many times had I said "I love you" with no real meaning behind it? I thought of the bumper sticker on my car, "Honk if you love Jesus," and I remem-

bered the day someone honked at me and I returned a dirty look.

When church was dismissed, I hurried as fast as I could to leave. On the steps outside stood an old friend. "How are you?" I muttered as I walked past.

"If you're really interested, I'll tell you," she replied.

I had expected her to say, "Fine, thank you," as people usually did. Because I was in a hurry, I said, "I'll see you again," and went on my way.

Was I really as shallow as the Corinthians whom Paul had admonished? Was I really a "sounding brass" or a "tinkling cymbal?" Suddenly I realized that my love only extended to people and places meeting my approval and convenience.

I drove home remembering the man who had lost a small son in a bike accident. I bounced up to him, saying, "He's in the best possible place with the Lord." How horrible those words seemed now. We all knew that statement to be true but not the way I said it.

That and other pet phrases I'd tossed at people plagued me over

lunch. "Smile—God loves you" was another of my favorites. "Let me know if there's anything I can do to help" was my cry whenever a church member was in difficulty. I knew there were many kind things I could have done, such as offering rides, baking cakes, baby-sitting, or shopping. The list went on and on, but I knew if I just asked the question, "Will you let me know?" the chances were they never would. Then later I could say, "Well, I asked."

The clichés and lingo I'd been using lacked the ring of truth—and I knew it. I suspected I was clear as glass to a lot of people. How meaningless my words were if I did nothing to show real interest in others.

I looked at the pin on my jacket as I hung it in the closet. "God first, you second, me third." I had a button on the jacket next to it. It said, "D.B.I.W.M.G.I.F.W.M.Y." I loved to be asked what the letters meant so that I could proudly reply, "Don't be impatient with me. God isn't finished with me yet." I removed the buttons and threw them into the wastebasket.

From now on I was going to walk my talk. I would wear no button, sport no bumper stickers, and think twice before spouting Christian clichés. I would only promise help if I was ready to act.

I wondered how the visitor from church made it to the airport. I prayed there would be another time when I could be the real Christian I wanted to be. For the first time, 1 Corinthians chapter 13 made a lot of sense to me. □

Adapted from "Those Christian Cliches," October 1984 Seek, © Standard Publishing Company.

Dawn Hamilton is a New Wine reader who lives in Wayzata, Minnesota.



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THE WORM COMPLEX

Important steps toward making self-worth a reality in your life

BY EARL WILSON

Joan is nineteen and by most people's standards is bright and attractive. But she has trouble admitting to herself that she has any value. She told me a long and bitter story about trying to share good feelings about herself with her parents when she was a child. Her parents responded, "Remember, Joan, there is nothing good in you. God is the only per-

son that is good."

Joan submitted to her parents' view although something within her told her they were wrong. As she grew older and became more conscious of her own sin and shortcomings, the voice within grew ever more faint. Finally, at a time when she was struggling the most, she attended a meeting on campus where the speaker said, "You will never

have peace of mind until you accept the fact that you are totally rotten. Nothing in you is good. You must die to yourself. You must recognize that you are a worm."

Joan met with the speaker after the meeting and tried hard to recognize her worthlessness, as he directed. She felt better for a time, but then the bottom dropped out. Somehow being



"dead" only made her feel like she wanted to die. She wasn't experiencing any of the new life that was supposed to come from the death of the old person. She was falling fast, and she had no inner resources to pull herself up with. She gave up her faith for a time and decided to "live like hell." After six months of defying her former beliefs, she decided the answer might be found in psychology. Joan wanted desperately to understand her confused feelings.

Discovering Self-Worth

In working with Joan and others I have learned several important steps toward making self-worth a reality.

Acknowledging feelings. Discovering self-worth usually begins by acknowledging feelings. Low self-esteem is usually accompanied by fear and anger which must be faced openly and expressed openly to God. It also helps to talk to someone who will listen. Anger does not need to be acted on, but it does need to be acknowledged. You need to become aware of the ways in which fear, anger and other emotions affect your view of self.

Taking a new look at God. Once anger and other emotions are brought into the open, it is imperative to take a new look at who God is. When we are disappointed by people, interestingly enough, we often make God the object of anger, fear and rejection. The God we perceive is not the God of Scripture but a lesser being created out of our frustration. When our God is small, we also will feel small and insignificant. When I feel low, I am helped by David's words in Psalm 121:1-2:

I lift up my eyes to the hills—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of

heaven and earth.

Tearfully Joan said, "God, you are OK. I'm just denying you because I'm afraid."

Taking a new look at self. Joan had not only reduced God, but also herself. She had to learn to be honest with herself about herself. If you want to discover self-worth, you must learn to tell it like it is. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Who is this person God has made? Self-worth does not come from viewing only our strengths. It comes from seeing that we have strengths even when we feel weak. Joan was depressed and couldn't get herself together. She didn't need to become less. She needed to see that God had made her a worthwhile person and had given her valuable gifts. What she needed now was guidance to help her decide how to use the worth she had.

Avoiding the comparison trap. From the beginning of time men and women have wanted to know all and do all. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree in order to acquire all knowledge, to become equal with God. Later Cain killed Abel, jealous because God preferred his brother's sacrifice. The issue in both instances is comparison. We are all tempted to eval-

We are all tempted to evaluate our self-worth by comparing ourselves with someone else, but this is a great trap.

uate our self-worth by comparing ourselves with someone else, but this is a great trap. Comparisons are a curse for someone who is trying to understand and accept himself or herself. Paul the apostle offers a blunt warning.

We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise (2 Cor 10:12).

I hope that one additional Scripture will clearly alert you to the comparison trap. In Galatians 6 the apostle Paul gives instruction on how to restore a brother who is caught in a sin. In this passage we are told that we are to examine ourselves because each person must learn to be responsible for himself or herself. "For each one should carry his own load" (v. 5). The remarkable part comes in verse 4. Paul writes, "Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else."

The passage clearly says that as we examine ourselves, God intends us to boast about ourselves. We can be really proud of what he is doing in us and what



God intends us to boast about ourselves. We can be really proud of what He's doing in us and what He's enabling us to do.

he is enabling us to do. (Isn't that what team captains or coaches are for?) Once again, though, the warning is sounded. We are to rejoice in ourselves alone—not in comparison to others. People don't usually have trouble with pride when they look at themselves by themselves. It is only when they make comparisons that they are overcome with pride.

If you challenge the you-must-be-a-worm approach as I have done, you still need to understand what the Scripture means when it says we must die to self. Dying to self needs to be understood in light of the biblical teaching about servanthood and self-worth. We will look at a key passage in both of these areas.

On Being a Servant

Entering the reception area of my office, I could hear Gail, my office manager, singing as she arranged supplies in the storage room. The tune caught my attention, and I paused to listen. The words were from the Gospels: "If you want to be great in God's kingdom, you have to be the servant of all."

I smiled as I thought of those words and Gail's life. She truly has a servant's heart, and yet she does not suffer from low self-esteem. She knows who she is and doesn't feel less when she serves others. Serving others is a choice she makes, and it seems to increase her self-esteem rather than tear it down.

Jesus deliberately chose the

servant's role in order to care for us. By his death he made our return to God possible, and by his unselfish life he showed us how to live. Did he have to give up his self-esteem to do that? I don't think so. Even at age twelve he said, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Lk 2:49). This sounds to me like a positive affirmation of worth. Jesus knew who he was, even though he accepted the lowly servant role.

Philippians 2:1-4 shows us how trying to be like Christ should affect our behavior:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

The biblical imperative to be a servant of God and others is clear. We, like Christ, are to serve. But worms are not usually good servants because they do not have the strength of character to look out for the interests of others when they are struggling for psychological survival themselves. Scripture does not teach that you have to be worthless before you can be a servant. This idea is a human invention. It's not God's.

The Source of Self-Worth

I have found that many Christians have trouble saying, "I am worthy; I am capable." We are taught that it is wrong to accept credit for the things we can do. But this presents a problem. To deny that you are worthy is to label the Creator's work unacceptable. When God finished his creation, including man, he was satisfied: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen 1:31). It is unfor-

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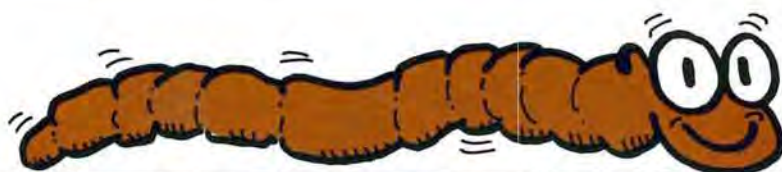
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fortunate that we do not maintain that same satisfaction with ourselves. We are made in God's image and likeness, and we have been given dominion over the rest of creation. God would not give you and me such responsibility without giving us the capacity to carry it out.

Scripture speaks directly about self-worth and adequacy:

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant (2 Cor 3:4-6).

The issue in this passage is not competence; that is taken for granted. The issue is, who is the source of our competence? The last part of verse 5 nails it down: "Our competence comes from God." How can you read these verses and say you are unworthy, inadequate, incompetent? At times you may feel woefully inadequate; however, by trusting God and moving forward even during periods of self-doubt, you

When people step out into the difficult areas of life, they discover that God has made them out of good material.

will find that he has given you more competence than you realize. I believe that one reason the positive-thinking movement has made an impact is that it challenges people to step out. When people step out into the difficult areas of life, they discover that God has made them out of good material.

True identity is not found by becoming a worm, but rather becoming a self-respecting servant who realizes that God has enabled him or her, and who therefore doesn't have to rely on

selfish behavior in order to survive. When a person reaches this point, self-worth becomes a wonderful reality. How long has it been since you have been able to say "I like being me"?

Listen carefully and you will hear God say, "I like who you are, and I like who you are becoming." □

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Profile



Finding self-worth came easily for Earl Wilson, something he gives his parents credit for. "There were very positive attitudes there of belief—belief in me without the typical pressure to change the whole world overnight," he says.

His interest in the search for self-acceptance comes from working with others who are struggling to find their own worth. Earl D. Wilson, Ph.D., is associate professor of clinical and counseling psychology at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary and director of Lake Psychological and Counseling Services in Milwaukee, Oregon.

Besides *The Discovered Self*, he has written *Sexual Sanity*, *The Undivided Self*, *You Try Being a Teenager*, and *Loving Enough to Care*.

He and his wife, Sandy, have five children and live in Oregon City, Oregon. □

We can spend a lifetime getting ready
to do God's work, but in fact, we're already

QUALIFIED!

BY JOSEPH GARLINGTON



This past year I've been taking some courses at a seminary where I've been introduced to a rare form of people called full-time, perpetual students. They're the kind of students who hang one degree after another on their wall. The more they study, the more they want to study, because remaining in the theoretical environment of school releases them from having to do something with what they have learned.

Now, of course, I have nothing against academic study or degrees, but there comes a time when not only students, but we too have to break away from the theoretical and jump into the practical. As we watch for the "proper time" to move out in God's purposes, the tendency is to wait for one more lesson or seminar, for one more word, for one more prophecy, or for one more encouragement before we actually do the things we've been taught to do.

It's possible to spend the rest of our lives getting ready to do the work of God, never realizing that God has made us qualified all along.

I often go into the kitchen late at night and just stare in the refrigerator, trying to figure out what I want to eat. I am hungry for something, but just don't know what.

A lot of Christians are like that. They're hungry for something, but don't know what. They're excited, but don't know why. They're dissatisfied, but don't know why. They want to do something, but don't know what.

In recent months I've felt that God is bringing us to a place of divine dissatisfaction where we are anticipating something He wants to do in us—something far beyond our own expectations about ourselves. Many of us have spent years attaining knowledge about the things of God, and now

He wants us to put into action what we have learned.

Why don't we move out and make the break from the theoretical to the practical? The main reason is that we labor under a false sense of unworthiness. We continually think, *I'm not worthy*, and fail to take action.

Another seminar won't qualify us. In fact, all the seminars in the world won't qualify us, because our worthiness is not based on accomplishments. Rather, we are qualified simply because God saved us. The phenomenon of the new birth is that God makes a statement about us. He says, "You are righteous. You are justified. You are redeemed." He makes that statement the moment we open our heart to Him, and in that moment we are no less redeemed than the person who has been so for twenty years.

God Has Called Us

We can overcome our sense of unworthiness and walk in our qualification by understanding two points. First, we must believe that God has called us to do something. In Ephesians 4:12, Paul talks about the equipping of the saints. He isn't talking about specific facts and information, but simply the knowledge that God has called us.

I was recently preaching a series on faith, and after a few nights, the Holy Spirit asked me, "Now that you've preached that, what are you going to do?" He was asking me to do something, but I really didn't know what. So I risked. I stood in front of the people, opened my mouth, and out came these words: "Does anyone here have scoliosis?" Now I didn't even know what scoliosis was—it was just a word that came to my mind.

Three women raised their hands.

What do I do now, Lord? I

wondered.

First I needed to find out what scoliosis was. I invited the women to the front and asked one of them, "Would you turn around and tell the audience what scoliosis is?" She explained that it is a curvature of the spine.

I laid hands on one of the women and began praying for her. As I did, I felt something shift in her back. "What couldn't you do before I prayed for you?" I asked.

"I couldn't do this," she said as she reached down and stretched from side to side.

During that prayer time God healed her back, but I don't believe it would have happened at all if I hadn't realized that He wanted me to do something.

The second point we must understand is that when we step out into what God asks us to do, we shouldn't worry about the results. In the past, I haven't prayed for people because I was afraid they wouldn't get healed. But as Kathryn Kuhlman once said, "If you don't worry about the glory, you don't have to worry about the blame."

The more we worry about how unqualified we are, the less God will be able to use us. One time I decided that if I fasted enough, I would be successful in ministry. So I went on a two-week fast, locked myself in my study, listened to Christian music, and read the Bible. On a Sunday morning I came out ready to minister, but there wasn't a sick person in church. No one needed anything! Nothing happened because I tried to make myself worthy enough for something to happen.

If we accept that God does want us to do something and that we are not responsible for the results, we can begin to take action. I have found three insights that have helped me to be properly motivated as I've stepped out in-

to what God has called me to do. I call them an existing reality, a persistent illusion, and an unavoidable conclusion.

An Existing Reality

True reality is looking at everything from God's point of view. When we do, we see ourselves as capable and qualified. In Colossians 1:9, Paul says:

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (NAS).

Before we pray for someone or move in something God has told us, we tend to examine ourselves from our point of view, asking, "What is my motive?" But Paul says to go ahead and do what we believe God wants us to do, and then let the Lord speak to us about our motives.

If we continually examine ourselves for the rest of our lives, we'll probably be in trouble for the rest of our lives. Paul tells the Corinthians, "I do not even examine myself" (1 Cor. 4:3 NAS).

It is only when we look at things from God's point of view that we can see ourselves as qualified. Paul says, "...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12 NAS). The word *qualify* here means "to be made fit, to be made capable, and to be made sufficient to do something." Qualification often has the idea of meeting minimum standards, but when God qualifies us, He goes beyond the minimum standards and He abundantly qualifies us to do whatever it is He has called us to do.

I found that out some time ago when I was preaching in Atlanta. I was leading a meeting



where God was healing people, including one woman whose collarbone was broken in three places. It was quite a miraculous time.

Way in the back of the church was a woman sitting in a wheelchair. I never looked at her because I figured a wheelchair was out of my league. Finally, as I was closing the meeting, I asked, "Does anyone else need prayer?"

Someone said to me, "There's a woman back there in a wheelchair and she's in real pain. She wants to know if you'll pray for her."

I told the Lord then, "If I go down on this wheelchair case, we're going together." Several of us began to pray for her. She had been bitten by a spider, had two operations, and had been told that her leg needed to be ampu-

tated. She had been in constant pain for three months.

As we were praying, she started trying to get up out of the wheelchair, which frightened me. I could see the headlines: "Woman Trying to Get Out of Wheelchair Breaks Neck on Altar Rail." So I asked her to please sit down, but she kept trying to get up, because the pain in her legs was gone! The next day she was back at the meeting walking around on crutches and praising God.

Her healing was not because of anything I did. God had called her there and ordained for her to be healed, and He had already equipped and qualified the body of Christ to pray for her.

A Persistent Illusion

The second insight is what I call a persistent illusion, that stubborn belief that grace is not free and that we have to do something to earn our qualification. In Acts chapter 8, Simon wants to buy the power of the apostles. He mistakenly thinks the gift of God can be purchased or earned.

It is a common human perverseness that lets us think we can get what God wants to give us by working for it. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God" (NAS). I'm not qualified because I do the right thing all the time—I'm qualified because He made me adequate.

If God didn't give us what we deserved when we deserved it, why should He give it to us now? God didn't wipe us out when He should have wiped us out—before we ever became participants in the kingdom of His beloved Son. So why should He do it now?

Because there's nothing we can do to earn our qualification, God can use us whether we are

"worthy" or not. I learned that a few years ago when I was scheduled to have surgery on my gums. I had people all over the country praying for me, but I still had to have the surgery. A month later the doctor asked me to pray for his wife. I thought to myself, *God didn't heal me; surely He won't heal her.* I didn't have a speck of faith. But she was healed nonetheless, and the Lord chided me with a scripture because of my unbelief:

What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar (Rom. 3:3-4 NAS).

It doesn't make any difference if we feel full of faith. We're not doing it anyway. God is, and if we would believe that God could do it, it would liberate us.

In recent prayer meetings, I have been asking people to break into small groups to minister to one another. I explain to them that they are qualified, and that they can pray for one another. Tremendous things have happened, but still their tendency is to gravitate toward the front where the leaders are. I just send them back to their group, where they then get healed or freed. There aren't any superstars—just Jesus.

The Unavoidable Conclusion

The third insight is the unavoidable conclusion. It is very simply that once we see things from God's point of view and accept His free gift of grace, He can use any one of us.

Here are some suggestions for getting ready to be used of God: 1. *Be prepared.* Get ready in your spirit to move out. Begin saying, "Lord, show me where to go. Show me what to do. Show me



how to do it."

A woman taking an art class met another student who had terrible arthritis in her knees. One day she asked if she could pray for her, and she did, but the woman wasn't healed. After every class for several weeks she prayed for the woman's knees, but nothing happened, and after a while she began to get disappointed. One day she didn't have much time because she had an appointment right after class, but feeling obligated, she quickly said, "Lord, heal these knees."

When she arrived home from her appointment, the phone was ringing. It was the woman she had prayed for. "I've got to tell you what happened," she said. "When you put your hands on my knees, they got fiery hot and uncomfortable. And now all the

pain is gone."

The time she least expected God to move is when He did. The key was that she was prepared to obey the Lord.

2. *Be willing to imitate.* If you've never seen anyone do it, then you're going to have to be original. But if you have seen someone do it, just remember how it was done. Do it the same way. When the disciples prayed for the sick the first time, they must have done it the way they had seen Jesus do it. Later on, they got original, and when their shadow fell on people in the streets, they were healed.

3. *Be persistent.* Not everyone gets healed when I pray for them, and not everyone will get healed when you pray for them either. The key is to be persistent and not to quit praying. Be prepared to fail occasionally and then be prepared to go on again. Be persistent, and pray with expectation.

4. *Be willing.* Let the Holy Spirit have an entirely new expression in your life. Let Him have the freedom to do something different.

If you're sensing that divine dissatisfaction that makes you feel as if there's something you should be doing but you don't know what, tune into God. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to do, and out of the adequacy that comes only from Him, step out and believe you can do it. Your prayer may be just the answer for someone else, and someone else may have just the prayer for you. □



Joseph Garlington, senior pastor of Covenant Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. He and his wife, Barbara, live in Pittsburgh.

PAUL

BY DEBORAH BARBER

Paul had one of those dimpled grins that grandmothers brag about, a twinkle in his eyes that mothers worry about, and a demeanor that teachers such as me just shied from.

Paul was one-hundred-percent boy. The worst punishment I ever found to inflict on him was to keep him in for recess. His activities varied from soccer to kick ball to quite a mean-spirited dodge ball. In the spring he lived and breathed for Little League, and I could always count on a play-by-play account of the previous night's game.

But for all his little-boy "macho" image, there was a side to Paul that was the antithesis of what he appeared to be at first glance.

Paul had the kindest heart of any student I have had in eight years of teaching. Never once did I hear him say an unkind word to another child, and he would go out of his way to console someone whose feelings were hurt. He always made a point of telling me when a fellow student needed some extra attention. He wrote little "love notes" to me through the year and was forever complimenting the other students and me. I could always count on Paul to make a new student feel welcome.

He had already found a tender niche in my heart long before that one "special" day arrived that I'll always remember.

An Anniversary

It was February 28, 1984. But before I explain, I need to go back ten years to February 28, 1974.

On that day I had an abortion.

At the time it seemed to be the only solution to a major problem.

Since then, I had come to know the author of life, Jesus Christ, in a personal way. I had repented of that sin and felt no guilt for it because of His forgiveness. But I still felt a little anxious as this ten-year anniversary approached.

I realized that there were a couple of ways to approach this day. I could be morose and wallow in self-pity, mourning my loss, or I could rejoice in the forgiveness and new life that Jesus Christ had given me. I chose to rejoice, and the Lord blessed me in a way I will never forget.

On that Tuesday morning, armed with prayer, joy, and gladness, I settled into another school day. As the children were doing their usual before-school activities, Paul came over to my desk.

"Miss Barber," he said, "I have treats to pass out today. Could we do it just before lunch?"

"Sure, Paul," I replied. "What is the special occasion?"

With his biggest, most dimpled grin, he giggled and said, "It's my birthday. I'm ten years old today."

I will never forget the feelings that washed over my heart in that instant—and it was only an instant. I felt a fusion of intense sadness and uplifting joy. As Paul walked away I felt a sense of loss for my baby more abysmally than at any time in my life. In Paul I could see everything I had destroyed.

But in those moments of loss I also felt a deep joy—a joy that came as I realized that my

Father in heaven loved me so much that He created Paul; that as I was breaking His heart by killing one of His creations, He was depositing in a child born on that same day an extra measure of love; that at the moment when I would experience my greatest pain, I would also know the depths of my Father's love and forgiveness. It was all because of a boy named Paul.

Thank You, Paul

This unassuming bundle of energy changed my heart more completely than all the tears and repentance of the previous ten years. And for that I have some thanks to say:

Thank you, Paul, for showing me that life goes on, that life and death are a continuum, that we can never look back, but we have to nurture the life God has given us.

Thank you, Paul, for so freely, innocently, and openly loving those around you.

Thank you, Paul, for living your life in a joyful, energetic way. It's contagious—you released a part of me to leap and run alongside you and all children.

Thank you, Paul, for that big, big smile on your birthday. I really think you knew somewhere deep inside you that wrapped in your ten-second smile was forgiveness, healing, and joy. I received it all and saw a glimpse of my Father's heart on that day.

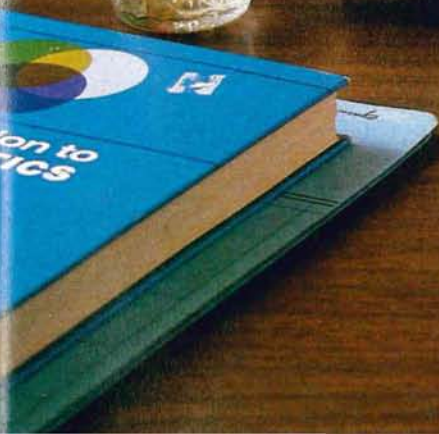
And, last of all—thank You, Father, for Paul. □

Deborah Barber is a schoolteacher who lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

"This unassuming
bundle of energy
changed my heart more
completely than all the
tears and repentance
of the previous ten
years."



Dear Teacher
Thank you for
letting me celebrate
my birthday
Love,
Paul



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It's a special message that every New Wine reader will want to listen to—not just once, but again and again.

Introducing New Wine Tape of the Month

Here's a chance to listen to each of our teachers on a regular basis by joining New Wine Tape of the Month. All of them are featured here—Don Basham, Ern Baxter, Bob Mumford, Derek Prince, and Charles Simpson.

It can be a life-changing experience. If you have heard them, you'll know exactly what we're talking about.

"I have never received a New Wine Tape of the Month that did not challenge me, interest me, provide new perspective, or change me in some way."

—Wayne McNamara, Bowling Green, OH

You know what reading the articles by these men in New Wine Magazine has meant in your life. Wait until you hear them speak on tape. It's a whole new experience—an exciting way to learn God's Word. It's almost like being right there with the teachers.

Their messages come alive for you. You discover things you've never known before. You just seem to see things from a more godly perspective.

"God has used you to teach us well and to widen our vision to become more like His."

—Rita Donnelly, Rochester, NY

It also seems as if each month's topic deals with the situation that you're facing right then. We hear this comment from our listeners time after time.

"This month's tape was God's answer to my prayers asking for boldness to take a stand concerning the many issues confronting us today."

—Gloria Schultz, Wausau, WI

What you'll learn from the tapes

Had you received some of our recent tapes, you would have learned:

1. How to wage war against Satan and win. Do you struggle with depression? with temptation? The problem may be spiritual.

2. How to become a more godly man or woman. Most Christians want to become more like the person God desires them to be, but they don't know how.

3. How Christian parents should care for their families. In the middle of a culture of broken homes, there are answers that are practical and encouraging for both mom and dad.

4. How to find new freedom in praise and worship. You also would have heard creative and fresh insight on how to express your love of God more deeply.

5. How to pray with greater joy and purpose. Do you have trouble knowing how to pray? Like any form of communication, prayer is developed with time. We've offered some straightforward suggestions and ideas on how to improve your prayer life.

6. How to establish Christ's reign in your life. Do you believe that one day the kingdoms of this

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world will become the kingdom of our God? There are practical ways to establish Christ's reign in your life, in your family, and in your nation.

As you can see, New Wine Tape of the Month regularly features topics that are vital to your Christian growth. And future tapes will continue to meet your needs with the same solid, practical teaching.

"I appreciate the in-depth teaching each month. It helps bring me to maturity as I apply the lessons to my life. Thank you."

—Evelyn Ziuchosch, Reno, NV

An invitation to try New Wine Tape of the Month

We would like you to hear just one representative cassette from the New Wine Tape of the Month program. The tape is by Charles Simpson on the very important subject of prayer.

It's called "Our Place in Prayer," and many consider it a classic. Charles delivered this message in Washington, D.C., to over one thousand people at an Intercessors for America conference.

To get this FREE tape, all you have to do is check the box on the special New Wine Tape of the Month card in this issue, or on the response form on page 19. Mail it in the envelope, and we'll enroll you in the New Wine Tape of the Month program. Remember, send no money.

Each month you can expect to receive a new, specially selected tape by one of our teachers—for just \$5. If at any time you decide to cancel, we will understand. In any case, you may still keep the Charles Simpson classic tape on prayer.

So act now. Send no money. Just check the box on the special card and drop it in the mail, or order on page 19.



IT'S CHARLES SIMPSON'S LIFE- CHANGING MESSAGE "OUR PLACE IN PRAYER."

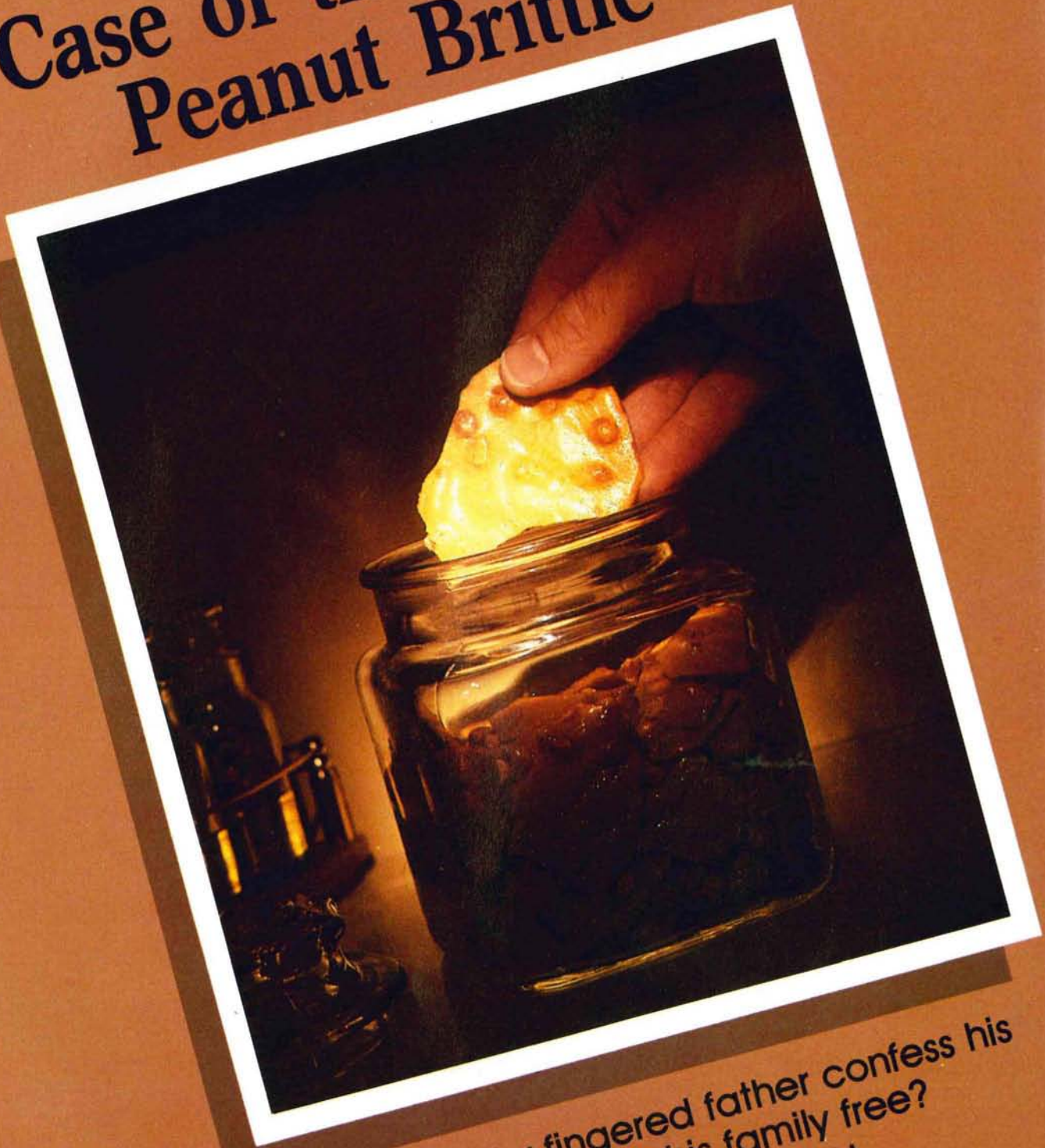
"Charles's message on prayer was more helpful than anything on the subject I've ever seen or heard."

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The Case of the Missing Peanut Brittle



Will a sticky-fingered father confess his
guilt and set his family free?
BY LIONEL WHISTON

As I knelt at the altar, I prayed sincerely, "God, will You make me the person I ought to be? Will You make me the father, the husband, the man that You really want me to be? Come inside, into my thoughts, my emotions, every part of me."

I was offering myself to God as completely as I knew how. Suddenly, a thought flashed through my mind: *What about the peanut brittle?*

Shocked by the incongruity of the notion, I said, "God, be serious! I'm asking how I can dedicate myself more completely to You. What's a little candy?"

But God knew what He was saying.

It was a custom in our family on Friday evenings for one of the children to go to the candy store and pick up some peanut brittle or gumdrops as a weekend treat. This was a well established family tradition. My wife and I liked candy as much as our three children did, but not wanting to overdo a good thing, we instituted this custom of a modest splurge.

The candy was for everyone; it was ceremoniously placed in a dish and passed from one member of the family to another. And it was understood that no one was to take the candy alone. I always said, "If you take a piece 'on the sly,' no candy for a month."

But I fell into the habit of regarding myself as "above the law" where the candy was concerned. After the children were in bed on Friday night, my sweet tooth would find its way down into the pantry for a piece or two of "forbidden fruit."

Of course, it's the easiest thing in the world to rationalize sin out of existence. I knew I wasn't playing fair with the family, but I pacified my conscience with such thoughts as, *Who paid*

for it? Who made the rule? Who needs that bit of extra energy more than I do?

I ate the candy from time to time, snitching little pieces here and there, week after week. I never thought anything about it because I could always rationalize it. But now God was talking to me, and the peanut brittle stuck to my mind, as it had so often stuck to my teeth.

"What about the peanut brittle?" I knew God was not only asking about the peanut brittle. He was also saying, "I want you to tell your children about it."

Pulling Rank

I realized a confession would be difficult, because I projected only a positive image of myself to my children. I often talked with them about my boyhood, never telling them the bad things I had done, only the good things. My wife too had a habit of pulling out a report card that boasted mostly straight A's. We were leading from strength, pulling rank on them, as if we were doing much better than they were. Using our prerogative as parents, we talked to them in this way, giving them an inferiority complex and a low self-image. They could never quite catch up to their parents—just as I felt I had never been able to catch up to my parents.

Now God was telling me, "I want you to tell your children about the peanut brittle."

When we got home from church, I announced to my family, "I've got something to tell you." My wife and children gathered around the fire after dinner as I looked for a place to hide. Finally I managed to get it out, stumbling through my awkward confession.

"I've got something to confess to you," I said sheepishly. "I've been stealing the candy. I've been a thief among you and

I'm sorry about it. From now on, I intend to abide by the same rules that I give you. Will you forgive me?"

I thought, and hoped, that one of the children would say, "That's okay, Dad. You work hard and you have a right to favors like that."

But no one spoke up.

In the silence, I felt as if I were a condemned prisoner waiting for the judge to pronounce the sentence. After a minute or two, the children asked, "What will we do this afternoon?" anticipating our customary time together on Sundays after church. When everyone had gone out of the room, I thought to myself, *That's the end of that.* But it wasn't.

A Mystery Solved

A few days later, my wife, Irma, and I were in the living room taking advantage of the late-evening quiet to catch up on some reading. The silence was suddenly interrupted by sobs coming from a bedroom. It was our ten-year-old daughter, Ruth. Irma went into the bedroom and there was Ruth with her face buried in her pillow. She was sobbing her heart out. Irma picked up young Ruthie, brought her into the living room, and put her on my lap. The tears were flowing and her cheeks were swollen.

"Ruthie, what's the matter?" I asked.

"I am the thief," she said through her sniffles.

"What thief?" I asked in astonishment. "What did you take?"

"The cake."

Irma raised her eyebrows and shook her head in bewilderment. I pursued the matter. "What cake are you talking about?"

"The chocolate cake!" More tears.

The chocolate cake! Suddenly, everything made sense. Seven months earlier, on a Saturday

morning, my wife had made a three-layer chocolate cake for the weekend. She iced it and put it on

a plate in the refrigerator. That evening when Irma began to prepare dinner, she noticed that the

cake was missing, and so was the plate. They had completely disappeared.

"Don't look at me, Mom," said sixteen-year-old Lionel. "I didn't even know you made a cake."

His brother, Bill, also vehemently denied guilt. "Sure, I thought of taking a piece, but I just took some of the frosting. That's all. I thought you were taking it to a church supper or something."

Little Ruth's plea of innocence was most persuasive of all. "Mama, I know you're trying to teach us to be like Jesus, so I didn't touch it."

What could we do? We knew that Junior Markham, the "pest" who lived across the street, had been stealing things from the lawn. He had taken different items and we had once actually caught him in the act. But he had certainly reached a new low to come right into the house and open the refrigerator! Oh, did we give him a dirty look the next time we saw him! And, of course, we were proud of our three little "angels."

"I Was Afraid"

Now, seven months later, here was this little tyke on my knee, sobbing out her story.

"Ruthie, what happened?" I asked.

"I wanted to give a party for my friends, so I took the cake and a bottle of ginger ale out of the refrigerator," she sobbed. "We ate all we could. I put the leftovers under my bed and I ate a little bit each night till it was all gone. Then I broke the plate and threw it away so that you wouldn't find out."

Fresh tears flowed and Ruth said sadly, "I haven't been able to say my prayers ever since. I wanted all the time to tell you, but I was afraid if I did, you wouldn't love me anymore. I decided that if I waited until I was



Looking at young Ruthie, I realized how much we were alike. I too found it difficult and costly to be honest.

twenty-one and then told you, we'd all laugh about it together."

Looking at young Ruthie, I realized how much we were alike. I too found it difficult and costly to be honest, especially with my wife and children. I too had been afraid I might not be loved if people knew my faults and the mistakes I had made.

I kissed Ruth's swollen eyelids and new love for her welled up in my heart. "I stole things when I was your age too," I told her. "Sometimes I even took money from my mother's handbag."

"Even now," I shared, "I have trouble being honest. Remember the peanut brittle?"

"Uh huh," she said tremulously. "When you told us about that, I knew I'd have to tell you about the cake."

So here we were together—not a righteous father and a naughty little girl, but two sinners, two thieves. And by mutual confession and God's forgiveness, we had passed from the fellowship of sinners to the fellowship of saints. As I put my arm around her, Christ was there between two thieves—just as on Calvary two thousand years ago.

That's the miracle. As long as I had been leading from strength, pulling rank as a father who was always right, who always knew the answers, there was distance between Ruthie and me. Yet when I came, not in my righteousness and in my strength, but in my weakness, I was able to lay down a bridge and Ruthie could walk over it.

More Confessions

The next day during family prayer Ruth courageously told her story to her brothers, prompting similar confessions on their part. One of the boys owned up to cutting corners on his piano practice; the other admitted that he had falsely claimed to have finished his homework on more

than one occasion. The entire experience resulted in the creation of a new, stronger family bond as each person realized he was part of a fellowship of forgiven sinners.

A tremendous principle is laid bare in this episode that the world does not know. The world leads from strength—the country with the most missiles and bombs is the one that is on the right path. The man who has the largest salary, the woman who has the finest career, the person who has the best car all lead from strength. But while the world leads from strength and pulls rank, Jesus leads from weakness. He has the strength to lead from weakness.

In His everyday life there was honesty, openness, and self-disclosure. He was able to say, "All things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you" (Jn. 15:15 NAS), and "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9 NAS).

The incarnation—Christ's coming to earth in human form—is God's master stroke of communication. It is duplicated, or at least echoed, whenever men are willing to be transparent in love with one another, lay down their lives in costly openness, and become vulnerable. Others can then walk into the hearts laid open for them, and enter into the presence of God. □

Adapted from Are You Fun to Live With? by Lionel Whiston, ©1984 Life Enrichment Publishers.



land, Maine.

Lionel Whiston has served in the pastoral ministry for more than fifty years. He has written several books, including Enjoy the Journey and For Those in Love. He and his wife, Irma, live in South Port-

Did You Know?

Did you know you can tell a book by its cover?

We hope you can tell a lot by *New Wine's* covers. Each month we put a lot of thought into what's on the outside of our magazine to let people know what's on the inside. It's all part of our effort to reach out to as many people as possible.

In the coming months you're apt to see *New Wine* in a lot of new places. We've made arrangements for it to be sold in bookstores so that people who aren't familiar with the magazine's teaching can benefit from it. If you need additional copies of a current issue, you can save time by picking them up from your local bookstore. If they don't carry *New Wine*, ask them to do so. They can order it through Spring Arbor Distributors.

You may also soon see *New Wine* in your doctor's office as many doctors, dentists, and other health-care professionals include *New Wine* in the reading material for their patients. It's an effective and practical way to introduce people to a personal walk with the Lord. You might consider giving a gift subscription to your doctor as part of your evangelism outreach.

We put a lot of effort into each issue of *New Wine*, because we want to reach as many people as possible with teaching that will help them grow in their relationship with the Lord. We thought you'd like to know. □

Jesus called them hypocrites and blind guides

Portrait of a Phony

BY DON BASHAM

Most seminary graduates enter their first full-time pastorate longing to lead people to new and more noble heights. They are soon dismayed, however, to find the congregation applying the sermons to everyone but themselves, and the board of elders determined to resist pastoral vision and insights at all costs.

Sadly, such resistance often indicates prideful satisfaction that leads to phoniness. *Webster's* dictionary defines a phony as one whose life is "marked by empty pretension," a "fake."¹

A ministerial survey in the denomination I served revealed the average preacher left the ministry after seven years and two pastorates. I believe most men left because they were fed up with the phoniness. And phoniness is all the more devastating to the body of Christ, because those who suffer from it seem oblivious to their condition.

Through the years I've met my share of phonies. An elder in a church I pastored years ago could pray prayers that would move people to tears. But for more than twenty-five years he dominated the whole congregation by his narrow convictions and violent temper. When I confronted him, he flew into an even greater rage. "That's not anger," he roared. "That's righteous indignation!" My challenge didn't help at all. He didn't change and I ended up with a nervous stomach and high blood pressure. Phony! Hypocrite!

Then there was the woman so wealthy she could have bought

the church seven times over, but she contributed only fifty dollars a year. On the first Sunday of every year she came to church to deposit her check in the offering plate "to set a good example for the others." Phony! Hypocrite!

I also remember a prosperous businessman who refused to tithe. "Because I'm a Christian, everything I have already belongs to God," he claimed. Phony! Hypocrite!

Phoniness was a problem in Jesus' day as well. It's interesting that when priests were so numerous that they had to cast lots to see who would serve in the temple, Jesus didn't choose a single one as a disciple. Of course, Jesus didn't call them phonies; He called them hypocrites, which means the same thing. According to *Webster's*, a hypocrite is "one who affects virtues or qualities he does not have."² In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, Jesus called the religious leaders hypocrites seven times, and then added a few additional phrases, such as, "sons of hell," "blind guides," "whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones," and "brood of vipers," just so there would be no mistaking His true feelings.

Jesus also exposed the phonies in His parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee boasted, "God, I thank you that I am not like all other men" (v. 11 NIV), and his prayer went no higher than the top of his head. But the tax collector, who prayed humbly, "God, have mercy" (v. 13 NIV), was surprised by unexpected

grace when his simple prayer touched the heart of God.

The humble and the hypocrite; the pure in heart and the phonies! My own experience simply confirms that the kingdom of God nourishes both, like wheat and tares growing side by side. It has been my privilege through the years to serve with hundreds of faithful men and women who love the Lord, and who daily acknowledge their dependence on His mercy. But I've also known—and sometimes even ministered with—others who mouth the right words but who are so smug and self-righteous that it is an embarrassment to be around them.

On the surface phoniness seems harmless enough. But the hypocrite can be so jealous of his place and reputation that he will kill to preserve them, claiming all the while he's doing God a favor (see John 16:2). The scribes and Pharisees were so furious when Jesus exposed their phoniness that they plotted and carried out His murder.

God hates phonies. I believe He grieves over them because He can neither bless them nor use them, and because He knows sooner or later they will inflict great harm on the body of Christ. But thank God for all the humble little people who—without phoniness—serve Him so faithfully. Jesus called them "the salt of the earth." At least, that's the way I see it. □

Footnotes

¹*Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G & C Merriam Company, 1971), p. 635.

²*Ibid.* p. 410.



Don Basham is chief editorial consultant for New Wine.

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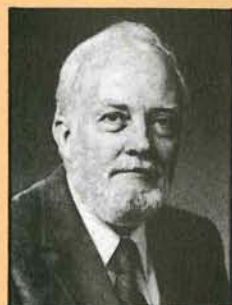
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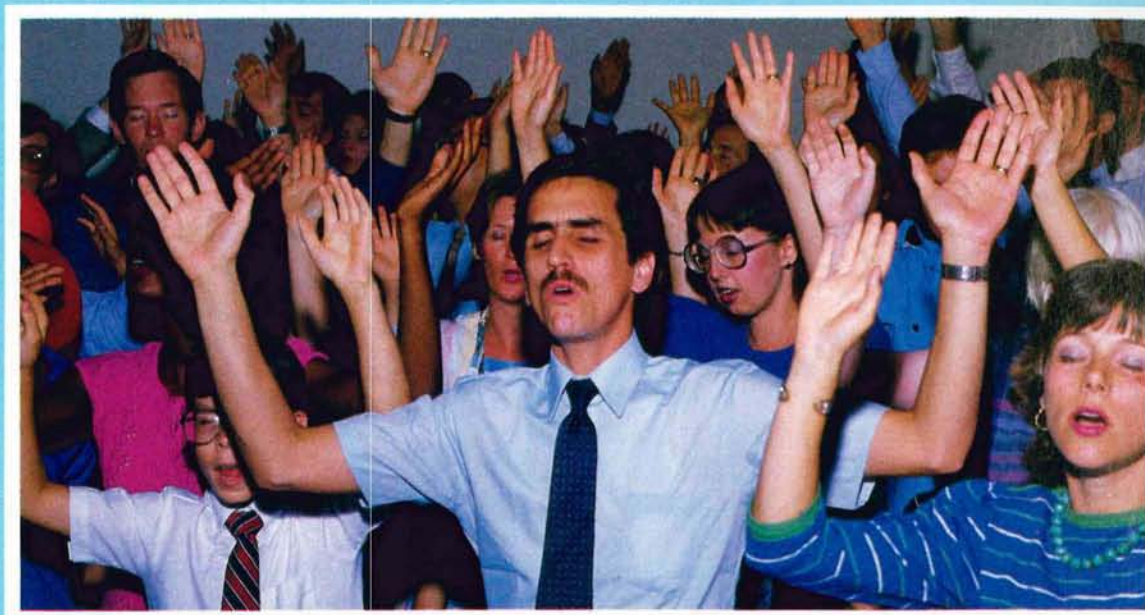
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