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“For He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth’; Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength” (Job 37:6).

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Spiritual Bucket List

Creating the proverbial “bucket list” can be a lot of fun. Coming up with a list of things you would like to do one day in the not-too-distant future is also a good way to take the first step in accomplishing your goals.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are expected to be growing (1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18). We are also expected to be a positive influence on those around us, pointing people toward God (Matthew 5:13-16).

In light of these things, it may be helpful to create some sort of “spiritual bucket list.” A list of things you know you should be doing as you mature in the faith.

Here are a few suggestions to help you get started:

Teach Someone. Have a real Bible study where you sit down, open Bibles all around, and you present the life-saving message of the Gospel (Matt. 28:19; 2 Tim. 2:2).

Reconcile a broken relationship. For many of us, there is at least one person out there that needs to hear, “please forgive me” from you (Rom 12:18).

Really study on your own. Away from the church building, pick a book of the Bible or a topic and really dive in and learn (1 Tim. 2:15).

Memorize. Maybe favorite passages or chapters, maybe several verses that pertain to a certain subject (for example, numerous verses deal with forgiveness).

Determine to lead. Men, if you never lead a public prayer, determine to do so. Same goes with leading singing, teaching a Bible class, or **even presenting a lesson before the congregation.**

Go on a Mission Trip. We go to places near & far, be a part of that! Put into practice the things you have learned. Nearly everyone I know who has gone on such a trip such as this always says that it made a significant impact on their lives.

Go to more funerals. People are in desperate need when they are grieving. Few things help as much as knowing you are loved when your heart is broken (Rom. 12:5).

Bake more casseroles and cakes. Go to more fellowship meals and spend time with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Encourage those who are sick or hurting in any way.

You could add many more. But remember: You are not too old! Today is the day! Get started!

Bart Warren
South Green Street church of Christ
Glasgow, KY

Stop Worrying and Hurrying

In Lewis Carrol's classic Alice's Adventures In Wonderland we see Alice confronting the white rabbit. The rabbit scurries quickly by proclaiming, "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late!" In this statement we have two of the greatest problems of people today: worry and hurry.

We live in a world of uncertainty and most people's reaction is to excessively worry. We also live in a fast-paced world in which most think they must always be in a hurry just to keep up. But living in these ways makes our lives unsettled and miserable.

When Korah wrote the 46th Psalm, he addressed the solution to both of these problems. He opened by stating, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." (v.1-2, and may I add "nor worry"). The more we trust in God and that He is strong and in control, we will fear and worry less.

He ends the Psalm by saying, "Be still, and know that I am God... God...is our refuge" (v.10-11). It is important to stop from time to time and reflect upon God. Take some time to meditate upon the Scriptures,

contemplate God's awesomeness, and soak in His love. It is then that we will appreciate God more and more and not see the need to be in such a frantic pace.

With God we can properly balance our mind and life. It is then that we will see that we do not need to worry or hurry so much – maybe even at all!

*Edd Sterchi
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There is Space for You

Ever try to check in only to find out the hotel is full up? Ever stay at a friend's house only to find out there isn't a bed or even a couch to crash on? Ever get invited to come along but there isn't a seat in the car or a spot at the table?

Nobody likes to feel that way. Left out, forgotten about, and on the outside looking in.

So, consider Jesus words in John 14:1-4: "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going."

Jesus didn't want his disciples to feel like they had been abandoned. He wanted them to know he had plans for them. There was a place for them. There was space for them. And most importantly there was a way to get there.

Jesus not only has room in heaven for us, but he also has a plan to get there. He is a secure reservation, a made-up room, a place just for you. You are not an afterthought or unwelcome guest. He doesn't want to try and fit you in, he is expecting you.

Why would you want to go anywhere else?

*Barry Haynes
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Maid of the Mist

A cartoon from the past shows a boy standing in the very front of the boat called The Maid of the Mist. This boat carries sightseers so close to Niagara Falls that they must wear rain gear to keep from being drenched by the spray. Wearing his raincoat and hat, the boy stood at the front of the boat, squirting a water pistol at the falls.

People can be like that; they aim criticisms at the Bible. Nevertheless, in the light of the Bible's continuing witness to the righteousness and love of God, any attempt to discredit its message is like squirting a water pistol at Niagara Falls.

Legalized Suicide Coming Soon?

Among one of the great evils in our modern world is a Canadian invention called “MAID.” No, this isn’t a house-cleaning service. Disguised as a “charitable” way to help those who have permanent disabilities and illness, it is a method to murder yourself.

MAID is a physician-assisted suicide. Canadians have their choice. Doctors in Canada can either inject a patient with an overdose or they can give their patient a box of deadly pills the patient can take themselves.

Officially, the physicians are “encouraged” to offer patients this option (suicide) to deal with what life is throwing at them. This sets up Christian physicians for lawsuits for not offering MAID as a “treatment option” or for not referring patients to suicide-friendly doctors. In the USA, many Christian professionals are being sued by people because they do not participate in ungodly practices such as homosexual marriage. Canadian physicians will probably face losing

their credentials (and worse) for not participating in MAID.

God grants us the great gift of life (Job 1:21). To take your own life is to reject that gift and it is the same as murder. This is different from willingly sacrificing your life to save another (Romans 5:7-9).

Our God is the only one who has the right to decide when and how a person should die. Our attitude should be: “My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors” (Psalms 31:15).

There are many people who were on the verge of suicide at one point in their lives. For one reason or another they either did not succeed or something prevented them at the last moment. Later, they were grateful that they were prevented from murdering themselves. These people go on to live longer and deal with the issues that created their suicidal thoughts.

Instead of urging people to murder themselves, we should be

encouraging people to find reasons to live. Depression and suicide are serious issues, and my heart hurts with those facing their problems. I always encourage someone struggling with suicide to talk with the good people at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Other countries, such as the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, have legalized assisted suicide. So be aware that it is coming soon to the U.S. Now, countries are debating whether or not to allow parents to kill their own children in the name of “death with dignity.” This began with legalized abortion and the same reasons will soon be given for murdering children (serious illness, economic hardship, etc.). See the last source listed in this article about child “euthanasia.”

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Abilene, TX

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How Shall We Enter the New Year?

The year 2023 is upon us. How shall we approach it? No two people enter into the new year with exactly the same emotions. Some enter with fear and reluctance while others enter with optimism and enthusiasm. None of us can look into the future, for God in his great mercy and wisdom has kept the future veiled from our eyes. Thus, we must make our entrance into 2023 in faith. Paul stated, “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Looking to the future will be governed by the way we look at the

present. Looking around us today we must not permit the successes or the failures of the past to defeat victorious living in the here and now. Neither must we allow the fear of the future to rob us of contentment today. The prayer of serenity should express our attitude: “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Today is all we have. The past is gone. The future never comes because it is always made up of todays. Thus, to insure that all of

our todays are worthwhile we must be people of faith. The writer of Proverbs admonishes us: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). The psalmist wrote: “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalms 118:24).

Roger Massey
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Jonesboro, AR

Things We Can All Do

As followers of Christ, we are made perfect by the blood of Christ (Matthew 5:48 and 1 Peter 1:18-19). As Christians we must be willing to work good works (Ephesians 2:10). It may be the case that you are looking for things to do for the cause of Christ. If this is the case, here are some ways you can work with the Lord:

Pray daily for the church. Remember to especially pray for our elders and their families (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Think of the encouragement it would provide if our elders knew that everyone is praying for them. Remember they are under the command from God to

watch over our souls (Acts 20:28).

Look for opportunities to share the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). It can be as easy as talking to someone or just giving them a flyer to a gospel meeting, upcoming series, Friends and Family Day, or some other event where the Gospel is proclaimed.

Try to reclaim a wayward Christian (James 5:19-20). Let's face it: none of us are perfect and from time to time we all need someone to help us along the way.

Teach a Bible class. We always need good Bible teachers. Notice Psalm 145:4: "One generation shall praise Your works to another, And

shall declare Your mighty acts."

Invite a friend or neighbor to our worship services. Acts 20:20 teaches us that we can go house to house and reach those who need Jesus. We are blessed to have this opportunity.

Look for visitors at our worship services and give them a warm greeting. If they have children, help them find the appropriate class. Do everything possible to make them feel welcome (Proverbs 25:11).

*Jonathan Burns
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THE GREATEST TREASURE

The famous newspaper publisher, William Randolph Hearst, invested a literal fortune collecting art treasures from around the world. One day Mr. Hearst found a description of a painting that he was interested in. So he sent an agent to trace the history of the painting and contact its current owner so that he could purchase it. After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasured painting. It was in Mr. Hearst's warehouse. Hearst had been searching frantically for a treasure he already owned! Had he read the catalog of his treasures, he would have saved himself a great deal of money and trouble.

That graphically illustrates many Christians today. Many today seek some supposed "deeper life" or "higher blessing" through many earthly sources. They desire a better life and search bookstores, the Internet, and the advice of others.

Like William Randolph Hearst, they are clueless of what they already own – the Word of God, which has all the answers. If people will only search that, they will find all the treasures God has given. According to 2 Pet. 1:3, everything we need for life and godliness is in the Bible.

When Jesus was teaching some hard things for some to accept, some were leaving Him. To that, He turned to His apostles and asked, "Do you also want to go away?" Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

With a new year on our doorstep, resolve to get more into the treasures you already have – in God's word! The answer is in God's word – for a better life, for salvation, for comfort, for everything!

*Edd Sterchi
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Campbellsville, KY*

New Year Reminder

The New Year always brings to mind new goals, new expectations, new plans, and fresh starts. As we enter into this year, remember the greatest of these never change!

Our greatest goal is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:29-30).

Our greatest expectation is the Lord's return (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Our greatest plan is the unchanging gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17, Eph. 3:1-13).

Our greatest start begins with God who is able to bring to completion what He started in us (Philippians 1:6)!

*Andy Baker
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Abiding Dependence

During my formative years, my parents constantly talked to me about “reputation” and being “dependable!” They constantly talked to me about doing my best to have a positive reputation of “not” causing other people problems and simply being counted on at school, society, and in the workplace. Simply put, strive to be dependable. We totally understand the importance of “being there” for someone when needed. Additionally, we appreciate and seek someone who we can “count on” and be dependable for us! Typically, we start out with our parents, move to other family members, maybe teachers (counselors, coaches, administrators), school-age peers, eventually a spouse, and adult friends (inner circle, co-workers). Hopefully, in the aforementioned group, we can find some or several who can be dependable for us. Conversely, we are that for them.

But, we know, as we tarry on in the journey of life, we have “let downs.” Those who we have counted on have the potential to disappoint us for one reason or another. What’s the good news? Well, the Good News is Jesus Christ. Jesus is always there for us providing we are seeking Him!

Philip Sanders, faithful gospel preacher and speaker for the In Search of the Lord’s Way program, said this about Jesus recently: “I am captive to the story of an ancient One, born of a virgin, laid in a manger, who loved all, worked miracles, lifted the fallen, healed the sick, raised the dead, and suffered on the cross for my sins. I only wish to tell that story till I can no longer speak. No story is so high, so noble, so touching, so persuasive, or so glorious. No story draws the soul to search the heart and change the life. No story makes one feel the urgency to deny oneself, to take up a cross, and to follow the One

who loves. Yes, this story is above human ingenuity; it must be from God Himself. Only the word gospel could fully describe life in Christ. It is life indeed, newness of life, abundant life, and eternal life. It can come from no other than the Father through the Spirit. I am captive to a story greater than all.”

Jesus is not only “there” for us, He has been from the beginning. Jesus is dependable and we should be seeking Him and have confidence He will never let us down. Jesus is:

Savior of the world – Luke 19:10.

The Son of God – John 9:35-37.

A King – John 18:37.

Author and finisher of our faith – Hebrews 12:2.

Lord – 1 Thessalonians 1:1.

May we seek to be dependable, but may we never depend on anyone more than we do Jesus.

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Sincerity is Not Enough

In a New York hospital several years ago, carbon dioxide instead of oxygen was mistakenly administered to a patient.

According to the police report, the patient died almost instantly. The unfortunate patient died in spite of his own sincerity and that of the hospital authorities, the anesthesiologist, and the surgeon.

In the same way, in religious things certainty must be coupled with sincerity. A person can be religiously honest and yet be in an extremely unsafe spiritual condition. Saul of Tarsus was sincere during the time when the blood of Christians was

dripping from his hands. After his conversion to Christ he said, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1). “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

The plain teaching of the Book of God is “a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (Psa. 119:105). “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12).

Make absolutely sure you are right, and then sincerely practice it.

*George F. Gaines
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Top Traits of Successful Families

According to a study of more than 500 family counselors, the following are the top traits of successful families:

- Communicating/listening
- Affirming and supporting family members
- Respecting one another
- Developing a sense of trust
- Sharing time and responsibility
- Knowing right from wrong
- Having rituals and traditions
- Sharing a religious core
- Respecting privacy

Focus on the Family Bulletin

Think Souls

The inner part of the person—the soul—is such an important element to who we are. God made us as body, soul, and spirit (1 Thess. 5:23). Yet the concept of the soul is so broad in God’s word that we could spend a year just studying its various nuances! Even in the book of Acts, the word takes on a variety of meanings. It is a synonym for person (Acts 27:37), while other times it refers to life (Acts 20:10), or mind (Acts 14:2). We also get a glimpse of God’s connection with our souls:

Hope From God. “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption” (Acts 2:27).

Salvation In God. “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Fear of God. “And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles” (Acts 2:43).

Condemnation of God. “And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people” (Acts 3:23).

Unity From God. “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32).

Encouragement in God. “When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:21-22).

In Jesus our souls have no condemnation (Rom. 8:1)! Instead, we find encouragement (John 16:33), unity (Eph. 2:15), salvation (2 Tim. 2:10), and hope (1 Thess. 1:3). This year, may our souls dwell in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31).

*Logan Summers
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Rosenberg, TX*

Men of Valor

There is a description of several groups within the genealogies of Israel which deserve our focused consideration. Several are recognized for posterity as being “mighty men of valor.”

While many men will live such lives as to garner no real lasting impression on subsequent generations this shouldn’t be the case with the children of God. If our time spent here on the earth is lived in such a way to bear any kind of lasting influence at all just what kind of influence will it be and just how will we be remembered? Do you press forward or shrink back? Do you stand or step aside?

Every generation of the Lord’s church needs those men (and women), young and old alike, who will take a stand for the truth. Mighty men of valor! What kind of influence, what legacy, what inspiration, what remembrance will our lives have when we cross over into eternity? What we do today may well determine the answer that questions.

Be strong, be patient, be loving, be determined, be obedient, and be faithful!

*Tim Dooley
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Other Things to Do

When it is time to worship God
And to occupy my pew,
Will I assemble with the saints
Or find other things to do?
When God needs my service to Him
And wants me to help a few,
Will I do what needs to be done
Or find other things to do?
When I sit down to rest awhile
With quiet reading in view
Will I read the Word of God
Or find other things to do?
When I stand before the throne
And God renders what is due
Will He grant me mercy or will He
Find other things to do?

A SPIRITUALLY PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR

The following is a biblical formula for having a spiritually productive New Year in 2023:

“H”old fast to the faith (1 Corinthians 16:13; cf. 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9)

“A”sssemble for worship (Hebrews 10:25; cf. Acts 2:42)

“P”ray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17; cf. Acts 12:5 KJV; Romans 1:9)

“P”urify our heart (James 4:8; cf. 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:2-3)

“Y”ield not to temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13)

“N”eglect not doing good (James 4:17; cf. Acts 10:38)

“E”xemplify Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Gal. 2:20)

“W”ork in the vineyard (John 15:1-8; cf. John 4:34-35; Acts 8:4-13; Acts 20:17-27; 1 Corinthians 15:58)

“Y”ield ourselves first to God (Matthew 6:33; cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5; 1 Timothy 1:15-16)

“E”xercise unto godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8 KJV; Hebrews 5:14)

“A”nswer to others (1 Peter 3:15)

“R”edeem the time (Ephesians 5:15-16; Colossians 4:5)

Brethren, If we will put the above biblically tested formula into practice, we will experience a spiritually productive New Year, doing the Lord’s will! (Matthew 7:21).

Mike Riley

Our Present Hope

Many suffer from what might be called emotional paralysis. We are unable to function today because we either live in the past or are preoccupied with worry about the future. While we may regret mistakes of the past, we cannot make up for those mistakes by continually reliving them in our minds. Where forgiveness is necessary, we should by all means pursue it with vigor. But there comes a time when we must move on and make the most of the present.

The apostle Paul had formerly lived in hostility to the way of Christ. He was a man obsessed with the destruction of the church. He consented to the death of Stephen (Acts 7:58). He had been “a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor...” (1 Tim. 1:13).

Paul dealt with his dark past by looking forward to his bright future in Christ. He wrote the Christians at Philippi, saying, “forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Ph. 3:13-14). It matters not so much where we have been as where we are going. We cannot change the past, but we can set the course for our future by how we choose to live today.

While some need to move forward out of the past, others need to take a step back from the future. It is as paralyzing to occupy today with worries of tomorrow as it is to continually relive the past. In these troubling times, how can we avoid needless worry? The inspired recipe

is ours: “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Ph. 4:6-7). In the midst of his warning about coming persecutions, Peter tells us to cast “all our anxiety upon Him, because He cares for [us]” (1 Pet. 5:7).

Because God cares, there is no past so dark or future so bleak but that our present cannot be filled with the light of hope. “This is the day which the Lord has made; let us be glad in it” (Psa. 118:24).

*Glen Elliott
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Greenbrier, AR*

A Glimpse Into the Future

The rapidity with which changes have taken place over the past several years leaves us longing for some sort of glimpse into the future. What will the financial markets look like in six months? What will be the political landscape a year from today? And, what about the spiritual and moral climate in our society? What new challenges will we face in the year ahead. The best we can offer are educated guesses based on the past. We simply do not know about tomorrow (Mt. 6:34). But, while we cannot know the future, at least to the extent that our anxiety-driven curiosity requires, we can know the God who holds the future in His hands.

In previous ages, God spoke “to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways...”

(Heb. 1:1). Fulfilled prophecy is a major component of the body of evidence that supports the inspiration of the Bible. Detailed descriptions of people and events written hundreds of years before their fulfillment leaves us with the indelible impression that the Lord has, indeed, spoken through His servants, the prophets.

Yet, there have always been those who falsely claim to speak in the name of the Lord. Perhaps, for this reason, Moses hypothetically posed the question: “How will we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?” (Dt. 18:21). Answering his own question, Moses says, “When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not

spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (vs. 22).

How often are modern-day prognosticators given a free pass by their adherents even when it becomes clearly evident that their predictions have altogether missed the mark? Because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, God’s prophets were always 100% accurate in their predictions. By contrast, today’s false prophet, in spite of using the same taken-out-of-context passages year after year, cannot get their teaching to line up with actual events with any degree of reliability or specificity. Should they not be held accountable for their false predictions? (1 Jn. 4:1).

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And Where Are Your Parents?

Prosecutors in Knox county Tennessee decide to do something about a numbers of students that had been chronically absent from school. Under Tennessee law, parents can be held responsible for their children’s missed days. So they sent a letter to 582 parents of habitually truant students telling of a meeting they could attend to learn about the law and avoid being arrested. But 241 parents, 40 percent of those contacted, failed to show up! It is not hard to figure out why their children don’t show up to school either. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Part of that training is setting an example to follow. A child that is told proper behavior but never sees it modeled will never put that behavior into practice. Children will listen to what we say but will do what they see us do.

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Hope, AR*

The Woman of His Dreams

A young man called his mother and announced excitedly that he had just met the woman of his dreams. Now what should he do?

His mother had an idea: “Why don’t you send her flowers, and on the card invite her to your place for a home-cooked meal?”

He thought this was a great strategy and arranged a date for a week later. His mother called the day after the big date to see how things had gone.

“The evening was a disaster,” he moaned.

“Why, didn’t she come over?” asked his mother.

“Oh, she came over, but she refused to cook.”

If You Were Granted Just One Wish

The fervor which swept across this nation seeking to win the \$500,000,000 lottery is remarkable. It is amazing to see how so many Americans think that money would bring them true happiness. The reality is that past winners of lotteries just could not handle that kind of money and their lives were ruined by such a “blessing.”

As a child, we thought about finding that bottle with the genie inside who would grant us three wishes. It was rather fun to see how our friends used their wishes to bring them imaginary happiness. It was fun, but the truth is there is no magic genie.

Suppose that you could ask God to give you just one thing. What would it be? Take just a moment to think about this before you continue reading. If He promised to grant your one request, what would you ask for? What above all else would bring you the greatest joy?

David, the man after God’s own

heart, prayed that God would just do one for him. His words were, “One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek . . .” Now if these were your words how would you finish his sentence? What one thing above all else would you ask God to give you? David desired one thing. He knew the nature of God was to answer his prayer so he asked God to give him just one thing.

“One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple” (Psa. 27:4). Nothing in this world would bring greater happiness to David than this one request.

Look at the first part of David’s wish. He longed to dwell in the house of the Lord as long as he lived. There is more to this than for David to physically be in the tabernacle (the temple had not yet been built). Above all else he wanted to be with God. What about us? Paul defines

the house of the Lord as the church (1 Tim. 3:15). David’s one request is so readily available for us!

He longed to behold the beauty of the Lord. Take time to think about the beauty of our God. David lived before Emmanuel came. He never saw God in the flesh, but we see Him every time we read the New Testament. God is beautiful. We are able to see the beauty of the Lord far better than David ever did!

Finally, David longed to inquire of the Lord. David only had, at best, nine books of the Bible. We have sixty six! We can inquire and know far more than David ever did. He longed to let God instruct him. We are more blessed than David!

The true blessings in this life are spiritual. Don’t waste your life chasing foolish wishes that are so material. David’s one wish should be the one we first think of!

*Dan Jenkins
Palm Beach Lakes Church of Christ
Palm Beach Lakes, GA*

What is Your Focus?

A New Year is before us. What your heart is focused on is eternally important. Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:21). Are you passionate to have a heart like Jesus, and to focus on what He was focused on? A heart like Jesus is a pure heart. “Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall

see God” (Matthew 5:8). Purity of heart requires patience, decency, and discretion. A heart like Jesus is meek and humble. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). Christians must take heart or take courage (John 16:33). Life has difficulties and

where your heart is will determine your reaction. A strong spiritual heart will get you through life and prepare you to be with God eternally. Is your heart right with God and loving toward man?

*Charles Box
Walnut Street church of Christ
Greenville, AL*

In the Storm, We Pray

When disasters strike, the human spirit responds by reaching out to help those affected. People stand in line to give blood; millions of dollars are donated to aid victims and their families; rescue teams work for endless hours. But most essential effort is accomplished by another valiant team. Their task? To guard and restrain the world with prayer. Those who pray keep alive the watch fires of faith. For the most part, we do not know all of their names. Such is the case of one who prayed on a day long ago.

His name is not important. His looks are beside the point, his gender of no concern, his title is unrelated, but he is important not because of who he was, but because of what he did.

He went to Jesus on behalf of a friend. His friend was sick, and Jesus could help, and someone needed to go to Jesus, so someone went. Others cared for the sick man in other ways. Some brought food; others provided treatment; still others comforted the family. Each role was crucial. Each person was helpful, but no one was more vital than the one who went to Jesus.

John writes, "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick (John 11:3)." Someone carried the request; someone walked the trail; someone went to Jesus on behalf of Lazarus. And because someone went, Jesus responded.

In heaven, the prayer of saints is precious. John the apostle knew that the healing began when the request was made. The man told Jesus, "The one you love is sick, not the one who loves you." The power of the prayer from that man depended on the one who heard it.

We, too, can go to God in prayer and say, "The one you love is tired, sick, sad, hungry, lonely, fearful, depressed, etc..." The words of the Christians prayer will receive a response. God hears the prayers. He does not miss a word. When Jesus heard the request, he said, "...This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby (John 11:4)." Jesus took note of the man's words, and he was heard of God.

We live in a loud world. To get someone's attention is not easy. One must be willing to set everything aside in order to listen. We must consider it a privilege when someone is willing to silence everything else so he can hear us clearly.

John's message is critical. We can talk to God because He listens. Our voice matters in heaven and God takes us seriously. There is no need to fear that the Christian will be ignored. Even if you stammer or stumble, even if what you have to say impresses no body, it impresses God, and he hears you. God listens to the painful plea of the elderly Christians in the rest home. He listens to the confession of the one who has fallen. He hears the alcoholic that obeys the Gospel and begs for mercy, the spouse who seeks guidance, the businessman who steps off the street into the congregation of the Lord's church to worship, and He listens.

A Christian's prayer does not stop until it reaches the very throne of God. You are the someone of God's kingdom. One may not understand the mystery of prayer, but a Christian knows that by being in Christ, he has access to all spiritual blessings, and that is the mystery of prayer revealed. When one obeys the Gospel then actions begin in heaven when someone prays. What an amazing thought! When you speak, God hears; when God hears, the world is changed, and the world changes all because in the storm, Christians pray.

*Bradley Tate
Nettleton church of Christ
Jonesboro, AR*

Living It Day by Day

She sat alone in an old people's home,
Lonely and old and gray;
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would call on her that day.
Did you?

He lay for days on his hospital bed;
The hours were long and hard.
He wished someone, just anyone,
Would send him a cheery card.
Did you?

He was far from home on foreign soil,
Feeling homesick, lonely, and blue.
He wished that someone, just anyone,
Would write him a letter.
Did you?

She felt a stranger, that little bride;
No husband with her to church came.
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would stop and call her name.
Did you?

Her loved one died a few weeks ago;
All sad and brokenhearted she sat.
She wished that someone, just anyone,
Would come to her house and chat.
Did you?

That matter of Christian service—
We are living it day by day,
When we help someone, just anyone,
As we walk along life's way.

Author Unknown

What is the Point of My Life?

Most people, at some point, have wondered about their purpose in life. Whether due to their environment, or due to things that happen (or don't happen) to them, they begin to doubt their own worth. Job expressed these sorts of doubt when he wished that he had never been born (Job 10:18-19). In his grief, his vision was clouded to the goal that God had for him.

Many in the Bible rightly came to the conclusion that the real goal of life is to “fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all” (Ecc. 12:13).

Some may ask, however, “Why should I serve God?” Using Psalm 139:13-16 as a basis, notice three facts about our relationship with God that should cause us to desire

to serve Him.

We should serve Him because He created us (Psalm 139:13-14). This passage says we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” by the Creator. As a master craftsmen, God has designed us and brought us into being. We should serve Him out of joyful thankfulness for the gift of life!

We should serve Him because He knows us (Psalm 139:15). God knows everything about us. This entire Psalm, in fact, is about the perfect knowledge of God. He knows us completely, inside and out. And because of that, we can trust Him fully! It is easy to serve, when we trust the Creator!

We should serve Him because He loves us (Psalm 139:16). This

passage says God wrote our days in His book before they even arrived. As a loving father might look forward to the things his child would do, so God laid the days out before us in love. What a gift of love!

Because He created us, He knows that we would need a Savior, so in love He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, as a gift that we might have eternal life. Ultimately, the point of your life is to be saved and live eternally with our loving Father! What a great motivation to serve Him!

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

J. Edgar Hoover and the Church of Christ

In a recent gospel meeting, this writer was privileged to meet a dentist and his wife who informed him of an inquiry they had made of the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation several decades ago. This couple was very active in a mainline denominational church when they began to notice the increasingly pronounced move toward socialism, especially in the directives and guidelines sent down from the church's headquarters.

Having become disenchanted by the modernistic, anti-American, pro-socialistic thrusts of their denomination and by the National Council of Churches, of which their

church was a member and major supporter, they wrote Director J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I., Washington, D.C., asking, “Which church in America, if any, is likely to be the least infiltrated and permeated by such unpatriotic influences?”

Mr. Hoover promptly responded by letter, saying that since the churches of Christ are completely autonomous—possessing no organization larger than the local church, thus no hierarchy to send directives down to the local congregation—there would be little likelihood of more than one or a few congregations ever coming under such influence.

The dentist and his wife investigated the undenominational church of Christ, against which they had earlier been quite prejudiced. They came to appreciate the restoration principle (i.e., the return to the pure teaching of the New Testament and thereby restoring the primitive church, which Christ built nearly two thousand years ago) and obeyed the gospel plan of salvation, as set forth in the Acts of Apostles.

Director Hoover's insight into the organization of the church of Christ will always be appreciated by these fine Christians and by their children.

*Curtis Cates
1941-2013*

The Best Ruined Trips

Harry Vardon was golf's first superstar. The British golfer had become a cornerstone of golf popularity in the United States after an American tour in 1900 that ended with him winning the U.S. Open. In 1912 he was planning a return tour to America after overcoming tuberculosis. He was to arrive to huge fanfare on the greatest vessel of his day. The voyage had to be canceled when his disease came back. Harry was devastated thinking his comeback was over.

Jack Johnson was the world heavyweight boxing champion. At the peak of his fame, he too was planning to board the greatest vessel of his day on a trip. But it

wasn't an illness that kept him ashore, it was racism. The black fighter was refused passage on the vessel because of his color.

As tragic as these may seem, both men would later speak about how glad they were that they missed the boat, even with the terrible circumstances that caused it to happen. That's because that boat was the HMS Titanic. As you probably know, the maiden voyage would be its last.

Life can be strange that way. Things we think are tragic may actually be a benefit. Moments we praise can in turn be the start of our downfall. We live in moments not always able to see how those

moments build up toward the future.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

That's why in all the things we go through we need to trust in God. He can see what lies ahead, we cannot. He can understand the curves when it just feels like we are being tossed around. He knows when the voyage is safe and when it leads to the depths.

*Barry Haynes
Hope church of Christ
Hope, AR*

Let's Go Fishing

Have you ever wondered why fishing is mentioned so often in the four gospel accounts of the New Testament? Could it be that the activity of fishing is one that most people can relate to in one way or another? Even if you've never fished in your life, you have a general idea of what fishing is all about. A person uses certain tools like hooks, lines, bait, or nets to go into the water and catch fish.

There's a great fishing story in Luke 5:1-11 that tells of how Jesus got into a boat with Simon Peter and said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (v.4). Peter, being a professional fisherman, told Jesus that they had fished all night and

caught nothing. However, because Jesus had commanded it, Peter went fishing anyway. The results were amazing! They caught so many fish that the nets broke, other boats and fisherman had to come and help with the great catch of fish. As Peter witnessed the miracle he fell to his knees and said to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (v.8). Jesus' response to Peter was both comforting and profound, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men" (v.10). I'm not sure Peter completely understood what Jesus meant, but it moved him so that he abandoned all he had and followed the Christ (v.11).

Even though Peter's road to becoming a "fisher of men" (Matt.

4:19) was paved with mistakes and imperfections, he did just as Jesus had commanded. Peter's adventures in evangelism are recorded for us in the book of Acts and the letters of 1st and 2nd Peter still inspire us to this day. Jesus' instruction to cast out the net of the Gospel was not only meant for Peter and the apostles, but for us as well. We must be fully equipped with the fishing gear of truth and always be ready to troll the waters of the world for lost souls. So with that, "Let's go fishing!"

*Jay Launius
Maud church of Christ
Maud, TX*

Keep Praising God!

The town of Antioch on the Mediterranean Sea was an early center of Christian ministry. This was the church that sponsored Paul and His pioneering outreach to the Gentiles.

During the third century, the beloved Christian Babylas, was martyred. His body was buried in a grove by the Orontes River. His burial place was the former site of a shrine to the pagan god Apollo. In the fourth century, the emperor Julian came to power. Julian was a pagan and wanted to steer the empire back to the pagan gods. Part of his strategy involved sprucing up pagan worship centers – like the one on the banks of the Orontes River. For that to happen, Babylas' body had to be removed (it would not do for such a notable Christian to be buried on a pagan god's temple site). Julian ordered the exhumation.

It is said that when the Christians dug up his body and moved it to another site, they chanted Psalm 97. Here is just a portion of what they proclaimed: "Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods. Zion hears and is glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoice because of Your judgments, O LORD. For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name" (Psa. 97:7-12).

In essence, they were saying, "You can have your Apollo. We have a God who rules over all the earth. You can make us move our dear beloved's body, but we know where his soul is. You can make life difficult for us, but we have a source of light and joy you know nothing about. The Lord protects us, and so we are happy in Him."

What a great message for us. Sometimes the forces of unbelief and paganistic practices cause us difficulty upon the earth. But, always remember, if we are faithful to God we have something greater. "The Lord reigns" (Psa. 97:1). Does He reign in your life?

*Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY*

One Last Chance

A man never opened the car door for his wife or any other woman. He felt it was a sissy, Emily Post kind of thing to do. "Besides," he was fond of saying, "she doesn't have two broken arms."

After many years of marriage, his wife died and he was heartbroken because he truly loved her. Somehow, as the pall-bearers brought her casket out of the funeral service, he and his family reached the hearse in front of them.

The funeral director was back a few feet, so he called him by name and said, "Open the door for her, will you?" The man reached for the door handle and then, for one second, froze.

He realized he had never opened a car door for her in life. In death would be the first and only time. Years of regret came crashing down.

Lesson: If you love someone, tell them now. If there is a kind deed you can do, do it now. There will be a time when all our tomorrows are yesterdays, and there will be no more chances to do the little things to show our love.

*Randall J. Medlin
University church of Christ
Montgomery, AL*

Biblical Baptism Includes:

The right candidate: a penitent believer (Acts 2:38; 8:36).

The right purpose: salvation, forgiveness (Mark 16:16).

The right method: immersion (Acts 8:38; Romans 6:1-4).

The right Authority: into the name of Father, the son, the Holy spirit (Matthew 28:19).

Some have the right authority and purpose, but miss the candidate and method.

Others have the right method, authority, and candidate, but miss the purpose.

Still others may have the right candidate, method, and purpose, but miss the authority—preaching a different Jesus.

The “One Another’s”

Take your Bible app and search the New Testament for “one another,” mine returned 89 results. The first passage to note is John 13:34 where Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” As you begin to read through the selected verses you can begin to see a pattern of behavioral practices to apply in our relationships. You will read key words like “affectionate,” “preference,” “service,” “gentleness,” and “compassion.” These passages will overwhelm you with encouragement and motivation and you will begin to wonder if the scriptures teach us to have these characteristics why is it that Christians can’t get along with each other?

I believe the answer can be found in Jesus’ own words, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? Yep, that’s it. We can’t get along because we disregard the instructions of the “one another’s.” Oh how quickly we will condemn the individual who lies, curses or practices immorality. We stand with rocks in our hands ready to stone the adulterous offender while holding contempt in our hearts for each other. (John 8:3ff) Shame on us.

Can you imagine how strong and effective the church would be if we all applied the “one another’s?” Let us begin today to encourage, appreciate, forgive, and love one another.

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

*Jay Launius
Maud church of Christ
Maud, TX*

A Christian Needs a Super Bowl Discipline

Today is Superbowl Sunday. As I thought about “The Big Game,” I remembered something that Coach Tom Landry once said. According to the former Dallas Cowboy, “The job of a football coach is to make men do what they don’t want to do, in order to achieve what they’ve always wanted to be.”

The truth is most of us want to win. We just don’t want it bad enough to suffer. We just don’t want it bad enough to do what it takes to win. The winner is one who is disciplined. Without discipline, one cannot excel in any sport.

Likewise, if we want to win in our spiritual lives, we must be willing to incorporate discipline in everything we do. The Apostle Paul talked about this when he wrote: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training” (1 Corinthians 9:25a). Christians need discipline to remain faithful and receive the crown of life.

*Larry Fitzgerald
Woodlawn church of Christ
Abilene, TX*

How Did You Get That?

A little girl once asked her mother, who had a withered hand, how it came to be deformed.

She replied that it had occurred when she had rescued that little girl from a fire in her crib. “It was for you, my child,” she said, “that this poor hand suffered.”

To some it might have appeared unsightly, but from that time on to that loving daughter it was a beloved token of her mother’s love.

Christ “endured the cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2), but Christ made it a thing of glory (1 Corinthians 1:18). Even in heaven the words of praise are, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Revelation 5:12).

*Mark Posey
Decatur, AL*

What Nebuchadnezzar Teaches Us About God

Nebuchadnezzar was one of the most influential foreign kings in the biblical record. In world history, he was known as one of the greatest kings to ever live. Holy Scripture speaks of him in human terms as the “king of kings” (Dan. 2:37; 4:1; Ezek. 26:7).

He is known to us as a man who had dreams and was desperate to have them interpreted. Time and again, his wise men were powerless to solve the riddle and to put his mind at ease. It was only Daniel (through the power and insight of

Almighty God) who could tell him what the dreams were about.

Daniel 4 records one of these events. At the height of his power, the king had another troubling dream. From this encounter, we learn a number of important lessons:

God can reach the very hardest of hearts. Never give up on the one you fear may never change!

God is merciful. God warned... then humbled...then restored the king.

God is powerful (Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 32, 34-35).

God is holy. He hates and will not tolerate sin.

God deserves all praise, honor, and glory (Ps. 106:1).

We are called to live in light of what we know about the Almighty God. Will we “look down” on all that we think we have “made” (Daniel 4:30)? Will we “look up” at the One who made all things (Daniel 4:34)?

*Bart Warren
South Green Street church of Christ
Glasgow, KY*

A 3x4 Fence

A person might as well put his shoulder to the burning sun and seek to stop it on its flaming course as to seek to destroy and stop the circulation of the Word of God.

The Bible is like the Irishman who had trouble with his neighbor knocking his fence over. He built a wall four feet wide and three feet tall. When asked why he had built such a wall, he replied, “When they knock this wall over, it will be just that much higher.”

G. C. Brewer said, “When all kingdoms set up by men have utterly failed and their foundations have crumbled to dust and their glories have become subjects to ridicule, when day and night shall be no more, the moon ceases to wax and wane, the sea shall flow and ebb no more, when earth and the heavens shall have been shaken and have passed away with a great noise, the word of God shall stand imperishable, immovable, and unshaken!”

Wendell Winkler

WHAT YOU MISSED

It is sad but true that a large percentage of the people who come to worship on Sunday morning do not come back on Sunday night or Wednesday night. Also, many wait until after Bible class is over Sunday morning before gathering together. We could talk about the sin of forsaking the assembling of the saints, but I want to focus on what individuals miss when they do not attend these meetings of the church. If you missed these services...

...you missed the opportunity to sing praises to your Creator. Do you believe He is worthy of such praise? If so, you missed opportunities to show Him.

...you missed the opportunity to offer up prayers to the One who hears and answers prayers.

...you missed the opportunity to encourage brothers and sisters in Christ, and to be encouraged by the same.

...you missed the opportunity to be nourished spiritually. God’s Word was taught, which means spiritual nourishment was provided. It is only God’s Word that is able to provide spiritual nourishment (1 Peter 2:2). If you have not been growing spiritually, you are lacking spiritual nutrition. Stop skipping meals.

Let’s be sure we don’t miss out on any more of these opportunities.

*Tim Wilkes II
Hernando, MS*

AMERICA STILL NEEDS GOD

You are no doubt all too aware of America's continuing moral decline. The evidence is both overwhelming and indisputable. You may be unaware, though, just how far and how swiftly we have slipped. William Bennett has recently released, through the auspices of the Heritage Foundation, "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators," a statistical portrait of the nation's behavioral trends since 1960. His findings are alarming.

According to Bennett's study, the population has increased 41 percent while violent crime has jumped 560 percent. Divorces have quadrupled. The teenage suicide rate has risen 200 percent. Illegitimate births have increased 400 percent.

What has gone wrong? Consider these questions carefully. During the past thirty-four years, have we as a nation drawn closer to God or have we slipped farther away from God? Have we placed a greater emphasis upon the Bible or have we neglected the Bible? Have religion and spiritual matters generally been advanced or have they been pushed aside in favor of secular concerns? Are our families attending worship services, praying, and reading the Bible more often or less often now than families did a generation ago?

The answers are painfully obvious.

We are reaping what we have sown. The Bible has been right

all along: "Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

The solution to America's most pressing problems may be found within each of us, in a renewed and determined commitment to put God and His will first in our lives. As His people, we don't need more government. We surely don't need more selfish greed or self-promotional grandstanding. What we need is what we've always needed.

We need God.

*Dalton Key
10th and Rockford church of Christ
Tulsa, OK*

A Great Challenge to Christians

Our challenge in this life is to make a positive difference for the Lord while we are on earth. The Bible clearly teaches us that serving God is vitally important (Matthew 22:37-40). Our main purpose is not working, hunting, texting, or hanging out with friends. Instead our purpose is that of serving God faithfully. Faithfulness to God requires a strong resolve to put Him first in our lives. Becoming a Christian is not enough. This is only the beginning of a life which is to be lived for God daily. The Lord must be first in the hearts and lives of His followers. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). The Macedonians had it right when "They first gave themselves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:5). The Lord is satisfied only when He has "preeminence" in our heart and life. The Bible commands us to live a life worthy of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus (Revelation 1:5). Your love for the Lord will lead you to faithful Christian living.

*Charles Box
Walnut Street church of Christ
Greenville, AL*

My Daddy Prays for Me

When Daddy prays, the house gets still;
His voice is slow and deep.
We shut our eyes; the clock ticks loud.
So quiet we must keep.

When Daddy prays, he doesn't use
Those words the preacher does.
He prays for lots of different things,
But mostly he prays for us.

His prayer gets awful long sometimes,
And hard to understand.
So I just wiggle up close
And let him hold my hand.

I can't remember all of it;
I'm little yet, you see.
But there's one thing I can't forget:
My Daddy Prays For Me.

Unknown

The Church is Important

I wonder if the church is as important to us today as it was to the Christians in the first century? There's an old saying that states something like: "Don't let the urgent overtake the important." There are a lot of urgent matters in the world today, but we must not let them crowd out the importance of the church. Let's use the book of Ephesians to prove this point.

The Church is Important Because of the Father's Purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). In this section we can clearly see that God had the church in mind all along! The church is not an afterthought, a plan B, or a substitute as some claim. It is not by the will of man or by some accident that the church exists. God had the church planned from eternity. He is the mastermind behind the true

and wonderful church (Eph. 3:14-15). That makes it very important indeed.

The Church is Important Because of the Son's Purchase (Eph. 5:25-27). Christ's sacrifice shows the value God places on the church. Would you be willing to give your life for something of unimportance? Of course not, and neither was Jesus! It is sad to hear some people say, "Give me Christ, but not the church." That's like saying, "Give me the head, but not the body." The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23). You can't separate Christ and the church. The church cost Jesus His blood. Because of that, it should be extremely important to us.

The Church is Important Because of the Spirit's Presence (Eph. 2:19-

22). The church is the temple of God. In Old Testament times, God's Spirit dwelt in the tabernacle and later the temple. But now the church is the temple of God and the Spirit still dwells in it. Like the temple of old, in the church, where the Spirit lives, God is worshiped and given glory (Eph. 3:21). This makes the church a matter of great importance.

Without a doubt, the church is important to God. If the church really is that important to Him, then that would make proper association and involvement within it important, as well. And, without a doubt, it is. Is the church important to you? Are you an active member of it?

*Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY*

A Tale of Two Women

On July 24, 2019, Police in Chattanooga, Tennessee, charged a woman with murder. This 29-year-old was abusing illegal drugs which resulted in the premature delivery and death of her twin daughters. According to the police, this mother was being charged with murder, aggravated child abuse or neglect and viable fetus as a victim.

But can someone explain to me how this woman can be charged with murder while a mother who allows a doctor to insert a saline solution into her womb, thus killing her baby, is not charged with murder?

- Two women.
- Both Pregnant.
- Both subjected their babies in their wombs to a deadly substance.

- Both resulted in the death of their babies.
- One is hauled to jail.
- One is hailed a hero of reproductive rights.

Friends, the battle over abortion is not a battle that will be won by educating people and making them aware of something they did not already know. Everyone knows. Everyone can see the inconsistency. Therefore, this battle won't be won by educating people about pre-born life in the womb. While some may pretend not to know, we all know. No, this is a battle about the will, and whether one is allowed to fulfill their selfish desires at the expense of a defenseless person.

*Steve Higginbotham
Karns church of Christ
Knoxville, TN*

The Autobiography of Jesus

The closest Jesus came to writing a book while on earth was when He stooped in the presence of the sinful woman's accusers and scratched something in the dirt (John 8:6, 8). He was many things while on earth, but a writer was not one of them.

That changed when Jesus returned to heaven. According to Revelation 1:1, Jesus sent a revelation back to earth from heaven. Revelation (*apokalupsis*) means "an uncovering," so you could say He is a mystery writer.

The book of Revelation is not only a revelation from Christ, but also a revelation about Christ. He is both the author and the subject. In that sense, the last book of the Bible is Christ's autobiography. In it He is the Priest-King (chapter 1), the Judge of churches (2-3), the Creator (4), the Redeemer (5),

the Conqueror (6-20), and the Bridegroom (21-22). It begins with a vision of His glory, wisdom, and power (1) and ends with a prayer for Him to come quickly (22:7, 12, 20).

One of the more thought-provoking questions of the New Testament is, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" (Matthew 22:42). Perhaps no greater block of material is found in answering the question than His autobiography. Revelation has much to say about all three persons of the Godhead, but it is especially clear in its presentation of the exalted resurrected Christ who has received all authority to judge the earth.

The Book tells us much about the offices Christ holds and the attributes He possesses. He is called Jesus Christ (1:1), the firstborn from

the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth (1:5), the First and the Last (1:17), He who lives (1:18), the Son of God (2:18), holy and true (3:7), the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God (3:14), the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (5:5), a Lamb (5:6), Faithful and True (19:11), The Word of God (19:13), KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (19:16), Alpha and Omega (22:13), the Bright and Morning Star (22:16), and the Lord Jesus Christ (22:21).

A blessing awaits those who study the Book (1:3), so why not delve into it this week? It points a finger at Jesus and focuses attention on Him (John 1:37).

Allen Webster
Jacksonville, AL

The Christian and 'Presents'

Concerning others, Christians should be present and be a present. Let me explain. Webster's defines "present" as: "being in view or at hand." The same resource also gives another definition of "present" as "something presented: gift."

So concerning others, Christians should be present (in their company) and be a present (a blessing to their lives). According to Jesus, the second greatest commandment is to love others as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:39). The Greek word for love in that passage is *agapao* (the verb form of *agape*). This is a giving type of love

that looks out for the best interest in the one loved. Love is best expressed in the presence of the one loved and in kind actions toward them.

We should seek to be in the presence of others and, when we are, we should focus on benefiting their lives in the name of Christ. We should be present and be a present!

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32).

Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY

A Living, Bright Reality

Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living, bright reality;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen;
More dear, more intimately nigh
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.

Careful Words

I'm careful of the words I say
To keep them soft and sweet;
I'll never know from day to day
Which ones I'll have to eat.

The Fortune of Family

One of the most valuable things that God has given us is the concept of the family. Think about it – before God brought forth the societal governmental system, He gave the family. Before God established His church on the earth, He consecrated the family.

After creating the heavens and the earth, God placed a family there (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:21-25). After God cleansed the earth through the global flood, He began anew with a family (Gen. 6:17-18.). It is through a family that God gave His promise of a Savior and through whom all families on earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-5).

The family as God would have it is the moral structure of any successful society. The family is the golden thread that binds a particular group of people to their past, present, and future. The family is where hurts are best healed, victories are best shared, and forgiveness is easiest displayed. The family is the place where love is most at home. Without a doubt, God knew what He was doing when He created the family.

When Paul through inspiration wanted to show Christ's love for the church and her relationship to Him, he did in family type language (Eph. 5:22-33). And after that, Paul naturally transitioned into a discussion of parents and children and their responsibilities to one another as a family (Eph. 6:1-4).

After looking at all of this Biblical information, we can only come to one conclusion: family is important. Why else would God have connected such vital aspects of His will to the family? Because the family (following the will of God) is the core unit of success and happiness.

Knowing this, it behooves each of us to make our family relationships the best that they can be. We each need to do our part to make our families better and stronger. Only good things will come from this effort.

One last thing – regardless of our earthly family situation, we can be a part of the best family on earth, which is the church. Members of the church are “members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19), and are a part of “the whole family in heaven and earth” (Eph. 3:14-15). Are you a part of God's family?

*Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY*

Thanks to God for My Redeemer

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!
Thanks for times now but a mem'ry,
Thanks for Jesus by my side!

Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,
Thanks for dark and stormy fall!
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,
Thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered,
Thanks for what Thou dost deny!
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!

Thanks for pain, and thanks for pleasure,
Thanks for comfort in despair!
Thanks for grace that none can measure,
Thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside,
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!
Thanks for home and thanks for fireside,
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!

Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow,
Thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,
Thanks through all eternity!

August Ludvig Storm

The Precious Book Divine

How precious is the Book divine,
by inspiration giv'n!

Bright as a lamp its precepts shine,
to guide my soul to heav'n.

Holy Book divine!

Precious treasure mine!

Lamp to my feet and a light to my way
to guide me safely home.

*John Fawcett
1739-1817*

Lessons from the Eunuch, Part 1 of 5

You can be sincere, and still be lost! The eunuch was a worshiper of God (Acts 8:27). He was a studier of God's word (Acts 8:28). And yet, God still found it necessary to send the evangelist Philip to him to teach him how to be saved (Acts 8:26,29). Philip "preached Jesus" to the eunuch, and the eunuch's response was to immediately be baptized in water for the remission of his sins (Acts 8:36,38-39). Have you obeyed the Lord in baptism?

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Lessons from the Eunuch, Part 2 of 5

Open hearts are needed to hear God's truth! While traveling, the eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. Some people may have taken offense at the question, but the eunuch instead said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" The eunuch had an open heart, because he was studying God's word, and he was willing to receive help in understanding it. He even asked an honest question regarding the Messiah spoken of in Isaiah 53. So many today are unwilling to study, admit need, or ask honest questions. How about you? Is your heart open to God's truth?

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Lessons from the Eunuch, Part 3 of 5

Teachers are needed! When Philip asked the eunuch if he understood what he was reading, the eunuch said, "How can I unless someone guides me?" He was in need of someone to help clarify the scriptures! Granted, he was reading an Old Testament text without the New Testament revelation, but nevertheless, as Romans 10:14 teaches, "...how shall they hear without a preacher?" The church is the light of the world (Matt. 5:14) and the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). Are you doing your part to teach others?

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Lessons from the Eunuch, Part 4 of 5

You can't understand the Old Testament without the New! In Acts 8:30, the eunuch was reading from Old Testament prophet Isaiah, but he couldn't understand fully without the revelation that Jesus the Messiah had come. Philip preached Jesus to him and in effect removed the veil from his eyes (2 Cor. 3:14). The entire Bible makes sense in light of the New Covenant. Do you understand what you are reading?

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Lessons from the Eunuch, Part 5 of 5

Baptism is essential to salvation, and the preaching of the gospel! When Philip "preached Jesus" to the eunuch, his response was to say, "See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Baptism in water is man's response to the preaching of the gospel. Jesus Himself declares this (Mark 16:16; Matt. 28:18-20). Follow the eunuch's example and obey the gospel of Christ today!

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Ears, Hands, and Feet for God

We tend to think that books like the Old Testament book of Leviticus are not relevant for us today. But we need to remember Paul's words in Romans 15:4, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." We can learn much from looking at the Old Testament.

The book of Leviticus (among others things) concerns the Levites, the priestly tribe. This book gives information regarding sacrifices, the priesthood, purification, and festivals of the Mosaic system. And Christians, being the priests of the New Testament (1 Peter 2:9), can

certainly glean some important general principles of how we are to conduct ourselves in the kingdom of God (the church). One such example would be in Leviticus 8:24 when the priests were consecrated into service for the Lord. The text reads, "Then he brought Aaron's sons. And Moses put some of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar." This practice, even though not to be literally followed today, should still hold great symbolic meaning for us.

It is obvious that the ear represented hearing, the hands represented

service, and the feet represented a walk of life. They were to listen to God's instructions, do God's will, and live the lifestyle that God desired. It is no different for us today as priests of God. We need to read our Bibles, perform acts of service in God's name, and live pure and influential lives in the world.

It all boils down to our relationship with God. We need to remember that we are priests of God and priests are meant for service. So let us dedicate our ears, hands, and feet to Him. Let us always learn from God, labor for God, and live with God.

*Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY*

Proving the Will of God

When you were in school, didn't you just love it when your math teacher would give you a problem to solve and say, "Show your work?" That meant she wanted you to not just give the correct answer, but to demonstrate the process by which you came to that answer.

Christians are commanded to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" by our righteous lives (Romans 12:2b). It's good to know the Bible answers, but are we showing it in our lives? And how exactly are we to do that? Romans 12:1-2 give us a clear answer!

By Living Sacrificially (Rom. 12:1). Sacrifice is key to the Christian life because our God is sacrificial. The highest form of love is shown by sacrifice (John 3:16; 15:13). That's why Paul tells us to present ourselves to God as a "living sacrifice." In other

words, live sacrificially so others can be drawn to Christ!

By Not Conforming to the World (Rom. 12:2). Before we became Christians, we were part of the world (Eph. 2:1-2; 4:17-20). The church, however, is admonished to be separate from the world (2 Cor. 14-17). Don't allow the world to pour you into its mold!

By Being Transformed (Rom. 12:2). The mold God wants us to be poured into is Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18) and to be clothed with Him (Rom. 13:14). We are to be shaped day by day into the image of His Son!

Do you know the good and acceptable and perfect will of God? Then show your work!

*Matt Clifton
Judsonia church of Christ
Judsonia, AR*

Definition of a Christian

He has a mind and knows it.
He has a will and shows it.
He sees the way and goes it.
He draws the line and toes it.

He has a chance and takes it.
A friendly hand, he shakes it.
A rule, he never breaks it.
If there's not time, he makes it.

He loves the truth, stands by it.
And always tries to show it
To whomever may deny it
Or openly defy it.

He hears a lie and slays it.
He owes a debt and pays it.
And as I have heard him praise it.
He knows the game and plays it.

He sees the path Christ trod,
And holds the hand of God.

Benevolence in the Old Law

We all know that Jesus taught us to care for the poor and needy. Benevolence is to be an active part of every Christian's life. However, giving to those in need is not only a New Testament practice. God has always required His people to care for the less fortunate.

God required His people to care for those who fell on hard times. Deuteronomy 17:7-11 says that Hebrews were not to harden their hearts nor close their hands to the poor, rather give as the poor brother had need. In Leviticus 25:36, the Lord commanded, "If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you." Those who had fields of crops or vineyards were mandated to leave the corners of the fields unharvested to allow the poverty stricken to gather the leftover "gleanings" for food (Leviticus 19:9) This is the what Ruth did in order to provide food for herself and her mother-in-law Naomi.

One aspect of the Old Testament law of benevolence that carried on into the Law of Liberty is one of cause and effect. In the Old Testament we read, "The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself." (Proverbs 11:25) This same principle is repeated by Jesus when He said, "Give, and it will be given to you; For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38). The circle of benevolence is one that we all should be involved with at every opportunity (Galatians 6:10) and when we do, we'll hear the King say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

Jay Launius
Maud church of Christ
Maud, TX

Being Habitually Late

Sometimes things happen that are outside of our control, causing us to arrive late for certain events, but what about someone who is habitually late for spiritual events when they did not have to be? Being habitually late generally indicates several things:

- *Selfishness*
- *Laziness*
- *Disrespect for other people*
- *Disrespect for God*
- *Misplaced priorities*
- *Lack of interest in spiritual things (being carnally-minded)*

Being late can also have a negative impact on others around us:

- *It can be a distraction to those who are trying to learn*
- *It can be a distraction to those who are serious about worshiping God properly (Jn. 4:24), pulling their focus away from God to you*
- *It can make others think spiritual things should not be a priority*
- *It can tempt others to do the same thing*

God wants us to do our best in everything we do (Eccl. 9:10; Col. 2:23). Let's do our best to be on time, thereby demonstrating our love for God and our love for others.

Jason Patrick Hilburn
Baker church of Christ
Baker, FL

Hidden Treasures

A South Dakota rancher and his bride received a nice Bible as a wedding gift from his grandfather. They wrote a thank you note and stowed the Bible in a closet. The grandfather asked every so often how they liked it. Eventually, they became curious, dug it out, and leafed through it. They found 66 twenty-dollar bills—one in each book. The grandfather left \$1320 in monetary treasure to be discovered, but God has left inestimable eternal spiritual riches (story adapted from Kathleen Norris. *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*). Understanding the Bible takes effort (2 Timothy 2:15), but its treasures are worth the investment.

A Chalkboard Lesson

On the blackboard in the classroom adjacent to the foyer hallway was this writing: “God isn’t good, He’s GREAT!!” Clearly the expression is to elevate the Lord to the highest of the highs. If “good” is high, then “great” is even higher. At least, that is the way most will understand it in this context (“good” is actually a term that appropriately applies to God; it is the highest standard of measurement, since He is the essences of that which is good).

In what ways is God great? Consider:

“G” stands for that which is GOOD. When Jesus was approached by the young ruler, this dialogue ensued: “And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, even God” (Luke 18:18-19). When the Lord said this to the young ruler, He was not dismissing the term that was applied to Him, but His challenge to the wealthy young man to understand just what he ascribed

to Jesus: he was calling Jesus God with this adjective “good.”

“R” stands for His plan of REDEMPTION. It was the Lord Jesus who made the point, “For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). In Luke 21:28, we read “But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.”

“E” stands for God’s ETERNAL nature. Reflect on this a moment. There has never been a time when God did not exist. More than that, even before time began to exist in this material Universe, God existed. When Moses was told by the Lord to let the children of Israel know His name, He said, “...unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.” This means that God is always in the present tense; there is no future with Him, and no past. The terms / concepts “future” and “past” pertain to God’s dealings with His creation, not with Him. Incomprehensible when you think about it.

“A” stands for ASSURANCE. We all need peace of mind. If we feel as if we are walking on a razor’s edge, falling to one side or the other if one is not careful, we end up cutting ourselves instead. Where is the peace of mind in that? In Hebrews 11:1, the Scripture reads, “Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.”

“T” stands for a TRIAL we all face. “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him” (James 1:12). Since the Lord does not tempt anyone (1:13), how can each resist the temptations that come to us? Solomon knew well the answer to this: “Trust in Jehovah with all thy heart and lean not upon thine own understanding: In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he will direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5-6). Let us put our TRUST in Him and not on our own approach.

*Ron Thomas
Rio Grande church of Christ
Bidwell, OH*

She Directed Her Child’s Steps

There once was a church pouring new cement for the walkway to the meeting house. One of the young mothers of the congregation took her 2-year-old baby and imprinted his hand in the wet cement pointing to the door of the building. She wanted a constant reminder to herself and everyone else that she was going to do everything she

could to direct her child’s steps to the Lord.

In the Bible (2 Tim. 1:5) we are told of another child whose faith was directed by his grandmother and mother; Timothy. The young evangelist may have never had faith without a godly grandmother and mother wanting to direct him in the ways of the Lord.

This is how faith is often started. A godly parent or grandparent teaching, and showing their child the way to the Lord.

Will you start a heritage of faith with your family this Sunday?

*Mark T. Tonkery
Norval Park church of Christ
Zanesville, OH*

What is in Your Heart?

Listen to these words: “Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: “Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you” (1 Kings 3:9-12).

Solomon was asked a very simple question but it was very complex in its nature. God said: “Ask! What shall I give you?” (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon could have asked for great riches. Solomon could have asked for great power. Solomon could have asked for his enemies to be delivered into his hand. Solomon could have looked at himself and found the one thing that he thought would make him happy. Yet, he asked God for an understanding heart! God gave Solomon the gift that could change the world.

Like Solomon, let us tear down the walls of anger, division, self care, importance, and evil. God was pleased at Solomon’s response (1 Kings 3:11) and granted him a wise and understanding heart (1 Kings 3:12). We need more wise and understanding hearts in Sparta, in Tennessee, in the United States of America, and in the world. There are so many things worth fighting for and so many things that waste our time and influence. Heaven is worth it all!

May we ask ourselves one question: “What is in our hearts?”

*Jonathan Burns
Findlay church of Christ
Sparta, TN*

Try + Umph = Triumph

Dad always used to say “Can’t never could do nothing.” I know that isn’t grammatically correct but it is correct when it comes to life.

If we think it can’t be done, we prove it to be so, even if it wasn’t true to begin with. However, it isn’t just can’t that will kill our efforts, it is our effort.

I can’t tell you how many times I have seen a good idea or project die a painful death not because it was a bad idea or a misguided plan but because the people wouldn’t go along with it enough to make it work. Often the lack of energy comes from those that know the thing is good but don’t want the thing. So rather than oppose with reason they undermine with laziness.

But good things often only come with effort and enthusiasm. Success isn’t about just doing something; it is about doing it with enough zeal to make sure it gets done. “...who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14).

I bet you have made plans for this year to make some improvements in your life. If you really want those plans to succeed make sure you put some ”umph” in your try!

*Barry Haynes
Hope church of Christ
Hope, AR*

Trust

He holds the key to all unknown,
And I am glad;
If other hands should hold the key,
I might be sad.

What if tomorrow's cares were
here without its rest?
I'd rather He unlocked the day
And as it's hours swung open,
say "My will is best."

I cannot read His future plans,
But this I know,
I have the smiling of His face
And all the refuge of His grace
While here below.

Enough, this covers all my needs,
And so I rest
For what I cannot, He can see,
And in His love I'er shall be
Forever blest.

John Parker

Afterwards

Light after darkness, gain after loss,
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,
Home after wandering, praise after tears.

Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain,
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast,
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last.

Near after distant, gleam after gloom,
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony, rapture of bliss—
Right was the pathway leading to this.

*Frances Havergal
1836-1879*

Are You 'In Love' With Your Brethren?

It has been said that you should never fall in love with a tennis player—to them, love means nothing. Love should mean something to us. Love is an important concept to God and it should be to us, as well.

A common phrase we use is “in love” meaning that we are in a state of strong emotional attachment with someone. Well, I believe that Christians should be “in love” with one another. Doing a search of the phrase “in love” in our English Bibles reveals some interesting things concerning Christians’ relationship with each another (note: the following verses are based upon the NKJV).

- **“bearing with one another in love”** (Eph. 4:2). This means that we are patient with one another – that we are always there for them.

- **“edifying...in love”** (Eph. 4:15). To edify means to “build up.” We should always be endeavoring to uplift and encourage our brethren.

- **“walk in love”** (Eph. 5:2). What is meant by walking is a way of life. Our way of life ought to be that of caring for and expressing love for one another.

- **“esteem...very highly in love”** (1 Thess. 5:13). We should prefer one another and honor one another because we love one another.

If we properly operate “in love” with one another, we can see some

benefits, as well.

- **“Being knit together in love”** (Col. 2:2). We will grow closer together with the special love bond we have in Christ.

- **“abound in love to one another”** (1 Thess. 3:12). Our love will grow in intensity and be so abundant that it will literally know no bounds.

“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16).

*Edd Sterchi
Broadway church of Christ
Campbellsville, KY*

Holy Rest

We know that under the old covenant, God commanded the Jews to keep a Sabbath rest (Exodus 20:8-11). But did you know that God also commanded that the Jews take various weeks off, too? (Leviticus 23:4-8, 34). These “Sabbath weeks” are similar to our vacations.

Today, God no longer requires Sabbath-keeping under the New Testament (Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 8-10). However, it is still a good idea to rest 1 day out of 7 ... and to have an occasional week of rest.

In rest, we are taking time to re-create ourselves. This was not man’s invention. It was God’s idea. One important thing to remember is to keep our focus on God and to not use such excursions as an excuse to stop worshiping God and studying His word. Instead, true rest includes strengthening our relationship with the Lord.

“Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken” (Psalm 62:1-2).

“Dear Lord, thank you for allowing us times for ‘holy rest.’ Amen!”

*Larry Fitzgerald
Woodlawn church of Christ
Abilene, TX*

Still Together

Let me hold your hand, as we go downhill,
We’ve shared our strength, and we share it still,
It hasn’t been easy to make the climb,
But the way was eased by your hand in mine.

Like the lake, our life, has had ripples too,
Ill health and worries, and payments due,
With happy pauses along the way,
A graduation, a raise in pay.

At the foot of the slope, we will stop and rest,
Look back if you wish, we’ve been truly blessed,
We’ve been spared the grief of being torn apart,
By death or divorce, or a broken heart.

The view ahead, is one of the best,
Just a little further, and then we can rest,
We move more slowly, but together still,
Let me hold your hand, as we go downhill.

Peggy Cameron King

A Sound Mind

There is a real need for us to take care of our bodies. The Bible teaches that we are to “glorify God” in our bodies, and that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God (1 Corinthians 6:20; Romans 12:1). Both of these passages enjoin upon us the responsibility to do what we can to maintain healthy bodies.

The Bible also teaches us to maintain healthy, sound minds. Paul wrote, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). One who has a sound mind has good judgment, a sensible mind, and is able to think soberly and clearly.

A sound mind leads to a life of balance and self-control. All these things are essential to the Christian life, so maintaining a healthy mind should be important to us all.

We need to be aware that our greatest enemy, Satan, wants to prevent us from having a healthy mind. Scripture warns: “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3). Satan tricked and deceived Eve in the Garden, and he still wants to corrupt and confuse our minds today. Notice in the verse just cited that Satan wants to corrupt our “minds.” He knows that if he can get control of our minds, our actions will soon

follow where our minds lead (cf. Proverbs 4:23).

One way Satan may prevent us from having a healthy mind is through fear. Since “God hath not given us the spirit of fear” (2 Timothy 1:7), fear must be from Satan. Fear may disturb our minds in many ways and rob us of peace. Satan wants us to fear that we are capable of living a faithful and dedicated Christian life. This fear may be re-enforced by memories of past failures and sins. Satan knows that if we dwell on past mistakes we will not have the courage and confidence to live for Christ in the present. The fear of being rejected or betrayed may dominate one’s thinking and prevent a sound mind. The fear of health problems, growing old, or the fear of dying may prevent a sound mind. Satan can fill our minds with so many lies about ourselves, our sins, and our security that we find ourselves confused, unsettled, and distracted.

However, God has given us “truth” in His Word to dispel the distortions and lies of the devil. Jesus said, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). Regardless of our present circumstances, problems, temptations, or challenges the God who gave us His truth can give us clarity and a sound mind.

*Mark Lindley
Chapman church of Christ
Ripley, MS*

You Can’t **PUSH** a Chain

A chain is a handy device. You use it to pull a car out of the ditch. You can hoist a heavy item. You can use one to anchor a boat or secure a gate.

But can’t push with a chain. It will pull or hold but try to push and it’s pretty much useless.

People are a lot like a chain. When linked together they can be powerful, if you pull them and don’t try to push. You start pushing them and the links go every which way.

Too many times we try to lead folks by just pushing them. We’re in the back trying to get things moving and it rarely works well. All that shouting and cajoling and needling might move things an inch or two, but the bang for the buck is underwhelming.

If we stand at the front and start pulling, however, things change. Things snap into place. The effort is multiplied. The strength of the whole is unified.

In any role—parent, teacher, mentor, boss—that we want to help lead others, we would be a lot better off if we try pulling instead of pushing.

*Barry Haynes
Hope church of Christ
Hope, AR*

CHURCH HURT

Nearly twenty years ago, I was on the phone with someone in the congregation where we were attending at the time. I made the phone call while on my break at my workplace. Unbeknownst to me, one of my coworkers was listening to the conversation. Well, he could only hear me talking with the person I was on the phone with, but could not hear them.

The conversation was one that should have taken place in person or without anyone present who had no context or information about the topic being discussed. Hence, my coworker had no idea what the other person was saying. The conversation was about some strife and conflict that our little congregation was dealing with.

As soon as I hung the phone up, my coworker, looking across the room at me said this, “Hey Al, right there is why I don’t want anything to do with church.” At that moment in time, I realized my words had the power to influence for the good or influence for the bad. Was

I being rude in the conversation? Could my tone have been better? Did I say way more than I should? All of these questions and more are still on my mind, nearly 20 years later!

Since that time, I have seen over and over, brethren have conflict with one another, struggle to maintain relationships within congregations, and are just simply challenged when finding the best way to respond to someone over the simplest of things. We all know we don’t always handle everything correctly all the time. I know I wish life had a rewind button to repair some of my responses to others. When conflict arises, we should seek reconciliation. Also, we know that conflict changes relationships and a negative pattern of conflict with others changes relationships. What’s the answer to prevent these situations from arising?

We need to realize “words matter.” James 1:19-20 is clear when it comes to how we need to respond

to anyone in any given situation. “So then beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” Communication had been difficult at times. Our transmissions during discussions can be uplifting or undermining.

Brothers and sisters, if you are reading this article, you have an interest in maintaining a right relationship with God or you are seeking to know more about the saving message of Scripture. Either way, we all would agree, our goal is to live in Heaven, together! May we seek to find ways to live together on Earth, first!

“Angry words, oh, let them never from the tongue unbridled slip; may the heart’s best impulse ever check them ere they soil the lip.”

*Allen Jones
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Getting the Most Out of Sermons and Bible Lessons

Have you ever left a Bible class or worship service and thought, “I just didn’t get much out of that.” I daresay we all have at one time or another. Let me offer some suggestions that may help us.

- I know it’s not always possible, but come to worship or Bible class well-rested. If you’re tired, it’s going to be difficult to pay attention and stay awake.

- Before you arrive at the service, prepare yourself to be a good listener and have your mind on God. Some read their Bibles or pray. Others may watch, “A Bible Answer” or “In Search of the Lord’s Way” on TV. Whatever helps you get your mind focused, do it.

- Remind yourself of how important it is to hear God’s Word proclaimed. There is always something new for us to learn or be reminded of.

- When it comes to Bible class, come prepared to participate. If you have some insight on the topic being discussed, share it so that all can benefit from it.

- Don’t be afraid to ask questions in Bible class.

- When it comes to listening to the sermon, have a positive attitude – decide that you’re going to hear something that will help you or someone else. Don’t focus on the mispronounced words or the unintentional errors. Instead, focus

on the overall message and what you can learn from it.

- Follow along with the Scriptures, or, if so many are used that you can’t turn to them quickly enough, write the references down and look at them later.

- If taking notes helps you stay focused, then take notes.

- If the lesson being taught reminds of something you need to be doing, do it, because we’re not supposed to be just hearers only, but doers of God’s Word (James 1:22).

Are you getting as much as you can from the Bible class and the sermons? Let us all be “swift to hear” and “doers of the Word” (James 1:19,22).

R.W. McAlister

A Son Not Like His Father

“She is just like her mother.” “He is exactly like his dad.” It is amazing how much children favor their parents, especially when they become adults. They look like their parents. They talk and walk and sit like them. They respond with the same words, gestures and facial expressions. For good or bad, the Jewish proverb “Like mother, like daughter” (Ezekiel 16:44) is probably more true than we like to admit.

We clearly see how others imitate their parents but fail to realize that we do the same. The influence of both mother and father is strong—so strong, in fact, that we can be tempted to think that it predetermines a child’s destiny in this life and in the next. An old Bible story puts this in perspective.

The first king of Israel was a little man in a big man’s body. Saul was rash and unreasonable. He was quick-tempered and vindictive. He was prideful, jealous and harsh. He did only the things God told him to do that he found useful and disregarded the rest. He had one standard for himself and a different set of rules for others. His own words describe him best: “I have played the fool and erred exceedingly” (1 Samuel 26:21). But even that confession was not clean. The prophet Samuel had warned him earlier when he disobeyed God and tried to justify himself, “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Samuel 15:23). He would not listen to God and so God refused to hear him. In

the end he consulted a witch and the next day committed suicide.

Jonathan was the son of this self-centered, self-willed man, but he was different from his father. That difference stood out in how they related to one who was a man after God’s own heart—David. Saul envied David and was afraid of him; he “became David’s enemy continually”

“Jonathan was the son of this self-centered, self-willed man, but he was different from his father. That difference stood out in how they related to one who was a man after God’s own heart—David.”

(1 Samuel 18:29). But Jonathan was the best friend David ever had. “The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his old soul” (1 Samuel) Jonathan was the son of this self-centered, self-willed man, but he was different from his father. That difference stood out in how they related to one who was a man after God’s own heart—David (18:1). That friendship almost cost him his life.

Jonathan protected David and his father was so furious that he had

the audacity to accuse Jonathan of being just like his mother (“a perverse rebellious woman”) and threw a spear at him to try to kill him (1 Samuel 20:30-34). When this happened, Jonathan “rose from the table in fierce anger.” But he refused to become the bitter, unjust man his father was. He was loyal to Israel to the end in spite of his father the king and died in a fierce battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31).

Jonathan was like Hezekiah, Josiah and others in the Bible. He rose above his upbringing. How? There were other influences in his life, but the simple answer is that he chose to be better. His example is rare, but a true Christian is rare in the overall picture. Even in the worst homes everyone makes the choice to do good or evil. The Bible speaks of a wicked father who “begets a son who sees all the sins which his father has done, and considers but does not do likewise” (Ezekiel 18:14). If it happened then, it can happen today.

It is easy to lose hope in a world like ours. But we must be just and have faith. Don’t be like Elijah when he thought he was the only one who cared about doing right (1 Kings 19). Don’t be like Jonah who thought and even wanted the worst outcome (Jonah 4). We must not be naïve to family traits that cause trouble, but we must also not use the bad we have seen in families as a reason to stop trying. There are still exceptions to the rule like Jonathan.

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Today's Sins

Though I cannot recall the source, I remember the following illustration and its applicability to the topic at hand. Jewelers display diamonds and pearls on black cloth to create great contrast and thereby enhance the brightness of the jewels. In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul lays out the black cloth. In chapters four and five, he places the jewels on it. The black cloth is sin. The jewels are the salvation offered in Christ. Consider what Paul wrote about the sins of the Gentile world in Romans 1:18-32, and note how modern these ancient sins are.

The wrath of God is being revealed (present tense participle) on all who suppress the truth and consequently live ungodly and unrighteous lives (1:18). The truth that is being suppressed relates to the nature of God, which led to a failure to properly honor him (1:20-21). Though God had revealed himself to Gentiles (1:19), they had largely rejected him.

Even though God's eternal power and divine nature can be perceived through the created world (1:20; Psa. 19:1-4; Acts 14:17), the Gentiles refused that evidence and chose the path of worshiping the creature instead of the creator (1:21-23). When you suppress the truth of who God is, you set yourself up to believe any lie, no matter how foolish (1:22).

Therefore, God gave them what they wanted (1:24-25). They wanted to live without restraint, to be led around by their own base lusts, and to ignore God and his moral law. So God let them, and his

wrath (1:18) came in the form of the consequences of those choices. One example of their degeneration was homosexuality (1:26-27). Paul uses strong words of condemnation for this immoral way of life: degrading passions, unnatural, and indecent acts. In quick fashion, Paul lists several additional sins that characterized those Gentiles who chose idolatry over God (1:28-32).

Take special note of the connection between what a person thinks about God and how that person acts (cf. Prov. 4:23; 23:7). It was because the Gentiles "exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25) that God gave them over to the grossest immorality.

It is easy to see the same thing in our day. The more people reject the truth about God, the more they embrace depravity (Rom. 1:28). Look at the list of sins in this section and note how many of them are not just excused, but praised and promoted in our culture. It is neither Paul's point nor mine to imply that every person who rejects God will commit all of these immoral offenses. But the farther one separates from God, the more likely he will be to embrace godless, unholy behavior (1:32).

"That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9).

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The Gospel Is for All

The gospel of Christ is:

Free. Even the poor can obtain it: "The poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:5).

Plain. Even the uneducated can understand it: "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge" (Ephesians 3:1-6; cf. 2 Timothy 2:7).

Equalizing. The humble are raised by it and the proud are humbled by it (1 Peter 5:6; James 4:10).

Powerful. The weak are strengthened by it: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

Encouraging. The depressed are encouraged by it: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Comforting. The sorrowful are consoled by it: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Compensating. Obedient believers are rewarded by it for their works of faith and labors of love (Mark 10:28-30).

Are you following the true gospel of Christ?

Author Unknown

A Warning from the Past

As one studies the book of Hebrews one of the things he will be impressed with is the superiority of Jesus. Specifically, we see the superiority of Jesus over one of the most influential individuals in the Old Testament, Moses.

Moses was the author of the first five books of the Bible—the Torah. He was the deliverer of God’s people from Egyptian bondage and the giver of God’s law to the people. Yet, in spite of all these great accomplishments, the Hebrew writer’s intention was to demonstrate that Jesus was greater and thus worthy of more loyalty and obedience.

Why is Jesus greater or better than Moses? He is greater, not just because he was more faithful in His service to God, but because of who He was and what He did. Jesus is greater, because He is the builder of a greater house (the Church) and as such He is head over the house.

Moses, however, was a servant in the house and the things he did were in preparation for the coming of Jesus. Jesus is greater because He is the giver of a greater rest. Moses was to lead the people of God to the Promised Land where they would receive rest, but it was an earthly rest. It was Jesus that made possible through His death on the cross, a heavenly and eternal rest.

That brings us to the second warning in the Book of Hebrews—a warning against departing from the living God through unbelief. In Hebrews 3:6, we find that we are the house of Christ, which is the Church, of which Christ is the Head. Those in Christ are now members of the Household of God and together with the faithful saints of old (including Moses) we are now fellow-citizens in the spiritual house or commonwealth of Israel. However, our status as members of the house is conditional, to remain in the house we must “hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of hope to the end.”

Thus, the need for the constant warnings or admonitions found throughout the book. The first showed the danger or drifting and now we shall consider the danger of departing. To warn against the danger of departing from God and the consequences that would come with such a departure the Hebrew writer appeals to an example from the past in Hebrews 3:7-19. These stories of the past recorded in the OT are not just there for our reading entertainment, they are there because they teach us lessons that we need to learn.

In this case they teach us the very real danger of falling away from God through unbelief, so that we might avoid a similar fate that was realized by the Israelites in the wilderness. In our efforts to remain steadfast we must then encourage one another to remain strong in our faith and obedience, trusting in God until the end of our lives and then receiving the reward of faithfulness.

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KNOW THE ENEMY

In order to be successful in battle, it is imperative that one knows his enemy. He must know the way the enemy thinks and acts. The more one understands the maneuvers of his foe the better equipped he will be to counter them. The adversary of every child of God is Satan. The Bible speaks of his wiles or schemes (Eph. 6:11). He sets snares or traps for men (1 Tim. 3:6). He hurls fiery darts with great fury and consistency (Eph. 6:16). He hasn't written a book but the Lord, in His Book, has detailed his strategies. Therefore, we have no reason to be ignorant of His devices. As one reads through the Scriptures we learn the following about the Devil.

He tempts. After our Lord was baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15), the Bible says, "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1). Two verses later he is referred to as "the Tempter" (4:3). The Devil, through the lust of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life, seeks to convince us that sinning is the better choice (1 John 2:15). We must know how he works and refuse to give in (cf. James 1:12-15). He destroys. Jesus, in describing the devil, said, "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). In tempting the first pair he was able to bring sin and death into the world (John 8:44). Therefore, we must understand that he only wants to divide men from God, destroy their hope of heaven, and devour their souls (1 Pet. 5:8).

He lies. In the same context just mentioned, Jesus went on to say that Satan "is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). Satan seeks to make truth seem as if it were error, right as if it were wrong and good as if it were bad (cf. Isaiah 5:20). He parades himself as an "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). We must be careful putting everything to the test (1 Thess. 5:21).

He loses. Satan is spoken of as a "strong man" (11:21). He is a formidable foe. Yet, the Bible teaches that Jesus has defeated Him. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Everlasting fire is his final destination (Matt. 25:41). However, through Jesus, those who fight the good fight will receive the crown of life, triumph and victory (1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 2 Tim. 4:8).

Do you know the enemy? Let's diligently study the Book lest we be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11).

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The Not-So-Encouraging Words

Richard Nixon had already had one nominee for the Supreme Court shot down by the Senate and it was looking like his second choice Harold Carswell was about to go down as well. Since he was attacked as a mediocre choice, Republicans were asked to help bolster the candidate. Nebraska Senator Roman Hruska tired with the following statement, "Even if [Carswell] were mediocre, there are a lot of mediocre judges and people and lawyers. They are entitled to a little representation, aren't they?" Needless to say, this didn't help the case and Carswell didn't get the job.

Everybody needs a little encouragement every now and then. Yet we need to make sure that our attempts don't do the opposite. Consider three ways to make sure your words build up and not tear down

Are they Considered? Don't just say something. Make sure your words have meaning and that meaning is good.

Are they Timely? You can say the right thing and still be ineffective because of the timing. Encourage when it is needed.

Are they Helpful? Some things are nice to say but they ring hollow because they don't fill the person's need. The same words over and over lose their effectiveness.

It is good to be an encourager. But it is far better to be an effective one.

"Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

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Bible Quizzes

for God has avenged you on her!”
Solution: rich; linen, scarlet, pearls; hour, nothing; dust; Rejoice, apostles, prophets

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 18:1-8

1. “After these things I saw another angel coming down from __, having great __, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.”
2. This angel cried mightily, saying, “ __ the great is fallen...”
3. “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her __, and lest you receive of her __. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her __.”
4. “ __ to her just as she __ to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.”
5. In how many days would her plagues come?

Solution: heaven, authority; Babylon; sins, plagues, iniquities; Render, rendered; one

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 18:9-14

1. The __ of the __ who participated with Babylon would weep and lament for her.
2. “Alas, alas, that __ city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your __ has come.”
3. The merchants of the earth would weep and mourn over her because no one __ their __ anymore.
4. True or False: Even human beings were being sold in “Babylon.”
5. “The __ that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are __ and __ have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.”

Solution: kings, earth; great, judgment; buys, merchandise; true (v.13b); fruit, rich, splendid

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 18:15-20

1. Merchants of the world became __ by Babylon.
2. “Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine __, purple, and __, and adorned with gold and precious stones and __!”
3. “For in one __ such great riches came to __.”
4. Those who traveled and traded by ship threw __ on their heads and wept and wailed.
5. “ __ over her, O heaven, and you holy __ and __,

Bible Quiz: Revelation 18:21-24

1. “Then a mighty __ took up a stone like a great __ and threw it into the sea...”
2. “The sound of __, musicians, flutists, and __ shall not be heard in you anymore.”
3. No __ would be found in the city anymore.
4. “The __ of a __ shall not shine in you anymore...”
5. The nations were deceived by Babylon’s __.

Solution: angel, millstone; harpists, trumpeters; craftsmen; light, lamp; sorcery

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 19:1-10

1. The voice John heard in heaven was of a great __.
2. “For __ and __ are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication...”
3. The voice of the great multitude had the sound of many __ and of mighty __.
4. “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the __ of the __ has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”
5. “And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow __, and of your __ who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship __!’”

Solution: multitude; true, righteous; waters, thunderings; marriage, Lamb; servant, brethren, God

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 19:11-16

1. What color was the horse mentioned in verse 11?
2. “And He who sat on him was called __ and __, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”
3. True or False: His eyes were like a chunk of ice.
4. “He was clothed with a robe dipped in __, and His name is called The __ of God.”
5. “Now out of His __ goes a sharp __, that with it He should strike the nations.”

Solution: white; Faithful, True; false (flame of fire); blood, Word; mouth, sword

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Bible Quizzes

Bible Quiz: Revelation 19:17-21

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1. “Then I saw an angel standing in the ___; and he cried with a ___ voice...”
2. Who was the angel speaking to?
3. “And I saw the ___, the ___ of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.”
4. The beast and the ___ prophet were captured.
5. “These two were cast ___ into the lake of fire burning with ___.”

Solution: sun, loud; birds; beast, kings; false; alive, brimstone

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 20:1-6

1. The angel had the ___ to the bottomless pit and a great ___.
2. “He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the ___ and ___, and bound him for a thousand years...”
3. “And I saw ___, and they sat on them, and ___ was committed to them.”
4. “Then I saw the souls of those who had been ___ for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his ___, and had not received his mark on their ___ or on their hands.”
5. “...but they shall be ___ of God and of Christ, and shall ___ with Him a thousand years.”

Solution: key, chain; Devil, Satan; thrones, judgment; beheaded, image, foreheads; priests, reign

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 20:7-15

1. After one thousand years, ___ would be released from prison to go out and deceive the nations.
2. The number of the nations in the battle would like the ___ of the ___.
3. “They went up on the breadth of the earth and ___ the camp of the ___ and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”
4. John saw the ___ standing before the great white throne in judgment, and ___ were opened, including the Book of ___.

5. “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the ___ of ___.”

Solution: Satan; sand, sea; surrounded, saints; dead, books, Life; lake, fire

Bible Quiz: Revelation 21:1-8

1. The first heaven and the first earth had ___.
2. “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New ___, coming down out of ___ from God, prepared as a bride ___ for her husband.”
3. God will wipe away every ___ from their ___.
4. “Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things ___.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are ___ and ___.’”
5. The sinful will have their part in the ___ of fire which burns with fire and ___, which is the second death.

Solution: passed away; Jerusalem, heaven, adorned; tear, eyes; new, true, faithful; lake, brimstone

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 21:9-16

1. How many angels, bowls, and plagues are mentioned?
2. “Come, I will show you the ___, the Lamb’s ___.”
3. “Her light was like a most precious ___, like a ___ stone, clear as ___.”
4. How many gates were there?
5. “The city is laid out as a ___; its ___ is as great as its ___.”

Solution: seven; bride, wife; stone, jasper, crystal; twelve; square, length, breadth

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Bible Quiz: Revelation 21:17-27

1. The wall measured ___ cubits.
2. “The construction of its wall was of ___; and the city was pure ___, like clear ___.
3. The twelve gates were of what previous gem?
4. “The city had no need of the ___ or of the ___ to shine in it, for the glory of God ___ it. The Lamb is its light.”
5. “But there shall by no means enter it anything that ___, or causes an ___ or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of ___.”

Solution: 144; jasper, gold, glass; pearl; sun, moon, illuminated; defiles, abomination, Life

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Quotes and Sayings

“You know how I always dread the whole year? Well this time I’m only going to dread one day at a time.” **Charlie Brown (George Shultz)**

“Ring out the false, ring in the true.” **Alfred Lord Tennyson**

“The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide you’re not going to stay where you are.” **J.P. Morgan**

“Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one.” **Brad Paisley**

“The object of a New Year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul...” **G.K. Chesterton**

“It is never too late to be what you might have been.” **George Eliot**

“Year’s end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.” **Hal Borland**

“Never underestimate the power you have to take your life in a new direction.” **Germany Kent**

“An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.” **William E. Vaughan**

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.” **C.S. Lewis**

“Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead.” **Oscar Wilde**

“When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be.” **Leo Tolstoy**

“One word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: That word is love.” **Sophocles**

“You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving.” **Robert Louis Stevenson**

“Keep your face always toward the sunshine – and shadows will fall behind you.” **Walt Whitman**

“I never took a position we were going to be a good ball club. I took the position

we were going to be a winning ball club.” **Red Auerbach**

“Think of only three things: your God, your family, and the Green Bay Packers—in that order.” **Vince Lombardi, to his team**

“Great things are not something accidental, but must certainly be willed.” **Vincent van Gogh**

“Life wastes itself while we are preparing to live.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“The prayer that is faithless is fruitless.” **Thomas Watson**

“No one knows what he can do until he tries.” **Publilius Syrus**

“If you spend your whole life waiting on the storm, you’ll never enjoy the sunshine.” **Morris West**

“My prayers, my God, flow from what I am not; I think Thy answers make me what I am.” **George MacDonald**

“Before me, even as behind, God is, and all is well.” **John Greenleaf Whittier**

“The way to love anything is to realize that it may be lost.” **G.K. Chesterton**

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” **Helen Keller**

“In the long run, the pessimist may be proved to be right, but the optimist has a better time on the trip.” **Daniel L. Reardon**

“No great man ever complains of want of opportunity.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“Fortune is like the market, where many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall.” **Francis Bacon**

“Don’t tell people how to do things, tell them what to do and let them surprise you with their results.” **George S. Patton**

“There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men. True nobility lies in being superior to your former self.” **Ernest Hemingway**

“I firmly believe that any man’s finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he

has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle – victorious.” **Vince Lombardi**

“There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.” **Henry David Thoreau**

“If your ship doesn’t come in, swim out to it!” **Jonathan Winters**

“A pessimist is one who makes difficulties out of his opportunities; an optimist is one who makes opportunities out of his difficulties.” **Robert Mansell**

“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it.” **Henry Ford**

“Don’t say you can’t until you prove you can’t.” **Les Paul**

“You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.” **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.” **Swedish proverb**

“He that will not sail till all dangers are over must never put to sea.” **Thomas Fuller**

“In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result.” **James Lane Allen**

“Never grow a wishbone, daughter, where your backbone ought to be.” **Clementine Paddleford**

“I never saw a useful Christian who was not a student of the Bible.” **D. L. Moody**

“We are dealing with God’s thoughts: we are obligated to take the greatest pains to understand them truly and to explain them clearly.” **D.A. Carson**

“The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian.” **A.W. Tozer**

“The most vital, creative, and positive thoughts are those stated in the Bible. Its words are alive and form powerful thought processes.” **Norman Vincent Peale, Have a Great Day**

On the Lighter Side



Just the Nine of Us

In Budapest, a man goes to the preacher and complains, “Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?”

The preacher answers, “Take your goat into the room with you.”

The man in incredulous, but the preacher insists. “Do as I say and come back in a week.”

A week later the man comes back looking more distraught than before. “We cannot stand it,” he tells the preacher. “The goat is filthy.”

The preacher then tells him, “Go home and let the goat out. And come back in a week.”

A radiant man returns to the preacher a week later, exclaiming, “Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there’s no goat—only the nine of us!”

A Sure Bet

A strong young man at the construction site was bragging that he could outdo anyone in a feat of strength. He made a special case of making fun of Morris, one of the older workmen. After several minutes, Morris had enough.

“Why don’t you put your money where your mouth is?” he said. “I will bet a week’s wages that I can haul something in a wheelbarrow over to that outbuilding that you won’t be able to wheel back.”

“You’re on, old man,” the braggart replied. “It’s a bet! Let’s see what you got.”

Morris reached out and grabbed the wheelbarrow by the handles. Then, nodding to the young man, he said, “All right. Get in.”

Whose Book?

Unfortunately many homes, yes even so-called Christian homes, are like the one in which the little girl pointed to the Bible on the mantle that was never opened, and said to her mother, “Whose book is that?”

Her mother quite startled by her daughters question replied, “Why honey, don’t you know? That is God’s book!”

The child demonstrating that she had a very practical turn to her mind said, “Don’t you think that we had better give it back to him? No one around here ever reads it.”

Psychologically Speaking

The psychology instructor had just finished a lecture on mental health and was giving an oral test. Speaking specifically about manic depression, she asked, “How would you diagnose a patient who walks back and forth screaming at the top of his lungs one minute, then sits in a chair weeping uncontrollably the next?”

A young man in the rear raised his hand and answered, “A basketball coach?”

Hit and Run

The hit-and-run victim was just getting to his feet when a policeman ran up to help. “My mother-in-law just tried to run me over!” the shaken man told the cop.

“The car hit you from behind,” the officer said. “How could you tell it was your mother-in-law?”

“I recognized the laugh!” he replied.

That Explains It

A Scottish mother visits her son in his New York City apartment and asks, “How do you find the Americans, Donald?”

“Mother,” says Donald, “they’re such noisy people. One neighbor won’t stop banging his head against the wall, while the other screams and screams all night long.”

“Oh, Donald! How do you manage to put up with them?”

“What can I do? I just lie in bed quietly, playing my bagpipes.”

Rabbit Riddle

Q: What do you call a parade of rabbits hopping backwards?

A: A receding hare-line.

Obviously

While he was visiting, my father asked for the password to our WiFi.

“It’s taped under the keyboard,” I told him.

After three failed attempts to log on, he asked, “Am I spelling this right? T-A-P-E-D-U-N-D-E-R-T-H-E-K-E-Y-B-O-A-R-D?”

Call It Even

The exterminator called one of his clients. “I’m very sorry to tell you this, Mrs. Lee,” he said, “but your check just came back.”

“We are even then,” the lady said. “So did those ants you promised me you had driven out of my house forever.”

On the Lighter Side (Continued)

Easy Answer

Three friends from the local congregation were asked, “When you’re in your casket, and friends and congregation members are mourning over you, what would you like them to say?”

Artie said, “I would like them to say I was a wonderful husband, a fine spiritual leader, and a great family man.”

Eugene commented, “I would like them to say I was a wonderful teacher and servant of God who made a huge difference in people’s lives.”

Al said, “I’d like them to say, ‘Look, he’s moving!’”

The Mom Test

As a mother was out walking with her four-year-old daughter, the little one picked something up off the ground and started to put it in her mouth. The mom quickly took the item away and told her not to do that.

The child asked why, and Mom said, “Because it’s been on the ground. You don’t know where it’s been, it’s dirty, and probably has germs.”

Her daughter asked, “Momma, how do you know all this stuff? You are so smart!”

The mother said, “All moms know this stuff. It’s on the Mom Test. You have to know it, or they don’t let you be a mom.”

The little girl thought for a minute and replied, “So, if you don’t pass the test you have to be a dad, right?”

“Exactly,” came the immediate response.

Self Examination

A man went into a Jewelry store and asked to look at a piece of jewelry. The jeweler showed him the article that cost \$100. “Oh no,” the man said, “That’s too pricey.” The jeweler showed him \$80 jewelry and same answer, too pricey all the way down to \$20 jewelry. The man said he would like to see something really cheap and the jeweler handed him...a mirror.

Dog Employment

A dog was ambling down the street and saw the sign. He looked at it for a moment, then pulled it down with his mouth and walked into the manager’s office.

The office manager laughed and said, “I can’t hire a dog for this job.”

The dog pointed to the line, “Equal opportunity employer.”

So the manager said, “Okay. Type this letter.”

The dog sat at the computer and a minute later had a finished and perfectly formatted letter.

The manager wasn’t convinced. “I still can’t hire you for this position. You have to be bilingual.”

The dog looked up at the manager and said, “Meow.”

High Hopes

I was talking with one of the politicians the other day, and he asked me if I had heard his last speech. I told him, “I sure hope so!”

Sleeping Babies

Getting babies to go to sleep is hardest when they are about 18 years old.

It’s No Use

Realizing that their home just wasn’t big enough with the new baby in the house, Little Johnny’s parents discussed moving to a bigger one. Little Johnny sat patiently listening to his parents, then piped in, “It’s no use. He’ll just follow us anyway.”

Contagious Visitation

A young boy called the preacher of another congregation to come and pray for his mom who was very ill with the flu. The preacher asked, “Son, shouldn’t you be calling the preacher of your own congregation?” The little boy replied, “Yeah, but we didn’t want to take a chance that he might catch whatever it is that mom has.”

Lesson Learned!

A businessman was driving home from work when he was pulled over for not wearing a seat belt. Two days later—same ticket, same cop. “So,” the officer said, “have you learned anything?” “Yes, I have,” said the man. “I’ve learned I need to take a different way home from work.”

A Quote So True

“If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn’t sit for a month.” – Theodore Roosevelt

Break Room Food

Free food in the break room is like oxygen masks on an airplane. You get yours first, then you inform others.

On the Lighter Side (Continued)

Need Mommy

A husband and wife experienced several problems while assembling a new computer system, so they called the help desk.

The man on the phone started to talk to the husband in computer jargon, which confused them even more. “Sir,” the husband politely said, “please explain what I should do as if I were a four-year-old.”

“Okay,” the computer technician replied. “Son, could you please put your mommy on the phone?”

Glad You're Not Smart

A fellow computer programmer for a consulting group had designed some software for one of our largest accounts. He asked my help in putting it into operation.

At first, he handled most of the work. Eventually, though, he asked me to help with the last phase of the training. When I sat down with one woman and told her I would be showing her how to make changes to the files, she sighed with relief. “I’m so glad you’re teaching me instead of him.”

Surprised, I said that my colleague was far more experienced than I was.

“Yes,” she said, “but I feel much more comfortable with you. I get nervous around really smart people.”

Oh, For Small Blessings

Our new office computer system was down as much as it was working. My co-worker Cathy decided to stay late one evening to catch up on the work that had accumulated. On her way home, a police officer stopped her for speeding.

“What a perfect end to an awful day!” she exclaimed. “Our computer is up, then down — up, then down. I

stay late to catch up, and now this!”

The officer was unaffected by Cathy’s griping, and he went to his car to prepare a citation. After what seemed an eternity, he returned with her license and registration. As he handed them to her, he smiled and said, “Our computer is down.”

Don't Look Now

A defendant was on trial for murder. There was strong evidence indicating guilt, but there was no corpse. In the defense’s closing statement the lawyer, knowing that his client would probably be convicted, resorted to a trick.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I have a surprise for you all,” the lawyer said as he looked at his watch. “Within one minute, the person presumed dead in this case will walk into this courtroom.” He looked toward the courtroom door. The jurors, somewhat stunned, all looked on eagerly. A minute passed. Nothing happened.

Finally the lawyer said, “Actually, I made up the previous statement. But, you all looked on with anticipation. I therefore put to you that you have a reasonable doubt in this case as to whether anyone was killed and insist that you return a verdict of not guilty.”

The jury, clearly confused, retired to deliberate. A few minutes later, the jury returned and pronounced a verdict of guilty.

“But how?” inquired the lawyer. “You must have had some doubt; I saw all of you stare at the door.”

The jury foreman replied, “Oh, we looked, but your client didn’t.”

Got a Beef With You

A dog ran into a butcher shop and grabbed a roast off the counter.

Fortunately, the butcher recognized the dog as belonging to a neighbor of his. The neighbor happened to be a lawyer.

Incensed at the theft, the butcher called up his lawyer neighbor and said, “Hey, if your dog stole a roast from my butcher shop, would you be liable for the cost of the meat?”

The lawyer replied, “Of course, how much was the roast?” “\$7.98.” said the butcher.

A few days later the butcher received a check in the mail for \$7.98.

Attached was an invoice that read: Legal Consultation Service: \$150

You Don't Say

A linguistics professor was lecturing to his class one day. “In English,” he said, “A double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative.”

A voice from the back of the room piped up, “Yeah, right.”

Half-Baked Theories

– When a cat is dropped, it always lands on its feet, and when toast is dropped, it always lands buttered side down. Therefore, if a slice of toast is strapped to a cat’s back, buttered side up, and the animal is then dropped, the two opposing forces will cause it to hover, spinning inches above the ground.

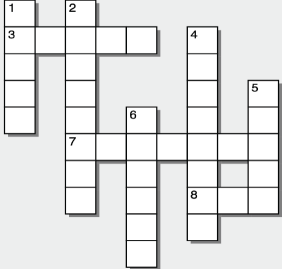
– Why Yawning Is Contagious: You yawn to equalize the pressure on your eardrums. This pressure change outside your head unbalances other people’s ear pressures, so they then yawn to even it out.

Bible Puzzles

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Crosswords

± CrossWORD



"In the Beginning..."
Genesis 1

Across

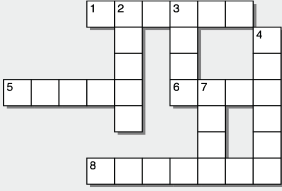
- Let us make Man in Our...
- Dark side of a day.
- Allow

Down

- Day God created light.
- God called this "night."
- God told Adam and Eve to do this.
- The first "Let there be..."
- What God called the firmament.

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± CrossWORD



"God's Command"
Genesis 2

Across

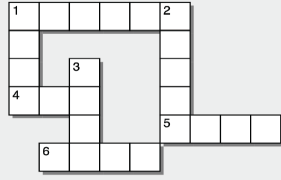
- God planted a ___ in Eden.
- What Adam called his wife.
- God commanded the man not to eat of the ___ of the knowledge of good and evil.
- God blessed the ___ day.

Down

- It is not good that than should be ___.
- What man is made of.
- God breathed into man the ___ of life.
- It had yet to do this upon the earth.

BulletinDigest.com

± CrossWORD



"The Serpent Tempts"
Genesis 3

Across

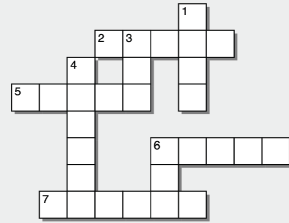
- "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the ___?'"
- The serpent told Eve she wouldn't ___.
- What the serpent would eat after God's punishment.
- Second-hand eater.

Down

- Eve saw that the tree was ___ for food.
- Without clothing.
- He shall bruise your ___.

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± CrossWORD



"The First Murder"
Genesis 4

Across

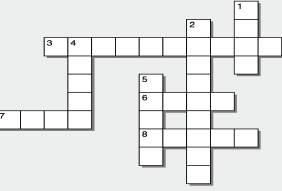
- An emotion Cain felt.
- The place where Cain killed Abel.
- Abel's professional occupation.
- What Cain tilled.

Down

- "If you do ___, will you not be accepted?"
- Cain's new home.
- "Am I my brother's ___?"
- Something at Cain's door.

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± CrossWORD



"Adam's Family"
Genesis 5

Across

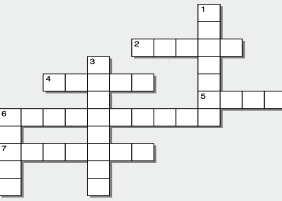
- Lived 969 years.
- First man.
- Adam's son that replaced Abel.
- Methuselah's father.

Down

- Son of Lamech who would built a ship.
- A book that lists family members.
- Son of Seth
- Enoch's father.

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± CrossWORD



"Building the Ark"
Genesis 6

Across

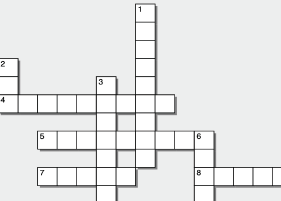
- Measuring unit Noah used.
- Reason the ark was built.
- Man's thoughts were focused on ___.
- Wood the ark was made of.
- Noah would bring two of each of these.

Down

- God was ___ in His heart because of man.
- God would establish this with Noah.
- Noah found this in the eyes of the Lord.

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± CrossWORD



"The Flood"
Genesis 7

Across

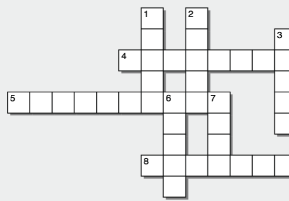
- These were covered by the waters.
- God saw that Noah was this.
- Days and nights it rained.
- Number that went into the ark.

Down

- Noah did all that the Lord ___ him.
- A son of Noah.
- A son of Noah.
- A son of Noah.

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± CrossWORD



"Dry Ground"
Genesis 8

Across

- "Be ___ and multiply on the earth."
- Then God ___ Noah.
- The waters ___ continually from the earth.

Down

- "I will never again ___ the ground..."
- The dove brought a leaf from this tree.
- First thing Noah built after the flood.
- First bird Noah sent out.
- Second bird Noah sent out.

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Crosswords (Continued)

✚ CrossWORD

"Covenant With Noah"
Genesis 9

Across

- 3) God set this in the cloud.
- 5) Covenant was with God, man, every ___.
- 6) "But you shall not eat ___ with its life..."
- 7) The bow was a ___ of the covenant.
- 8) Never again would a ___ destroy earth."

Down

- 1) "Thus I establish My ___ with you;"
- 2) "Surely for you ___ I will demand a reckoning"
- 3) "So God ___ Noah and his sons."

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✚ CrossWORD

"Noah's Descendents"
Genesis 10

Across

- 2) A son of Noah
- 5) A city Nimrod built
- 6) A son of Noah

Down

- 1) A son of Noah
- 3) A mighty hunter
- 4) In his day the earth was divided

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✚ CrossWORD

"The Tower of Babel"
Genesis 11

Across

- 2) They learned to make ___ for building.
- 6) Name of the tower location.
- 7) "Let us make a ___ for ourselves"
- 8) The whole earth had one ___.

Down

- 1) From there, then Lord ___ the people abroad.
- 3) Man found a plain in the land of ___.
- 4) "Indeed, the ___ are one..."
- 5) "Let us go down and ___ their language..."

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✚ CrossWORD

"A Promise to Abram"
Genesis 12

Across

- 3) ___ was 75 years old when he left home.
- 5) "I will make your ___ great."
- 6) "I will make you a great ___"
- 7) Abram's wife.

Down

- 1) Abram's land of destination.
- 2) "In you all the ___ of the earth shall be blessed."
- 4) "Get out of your ___"

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Word Scrambles

Word SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

HUESAURAS

Clue: King in Esther's Day

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Word SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

ICNOCSLUON

Clue: "Let us hear the ___ of the whole matter" (Ecc. 12:13).

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Word SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

DPHESHER

Clue: He knows His sheep.

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Word SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

THOREPIDES

Clue: A man who loved to be first.

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Word SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

T E S L V I E

Clue: The Priestly Tribe

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Word SCRAMBLE


Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

R O B O H A M E

Clue: Son of King Solomon

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Word Scrambles (Continued)


Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

H N L T A N A E A

Clue: Jesus saw him under a fig tree

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

R O H A H A P

Clue: A king of Egypt

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

R H E T B E N R

Clue: Fellow Christians

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

V A P O S E R S

Clue: When a Lamb was killed

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

T M H L E H B E E

Clue: The city where Jesus was born

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

K H I Z E E A H

Clue: 25-yr-old King (2 Chron. 29:1)

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Word SCRAMBLE 

Unscramble the letters to form a Bible word!

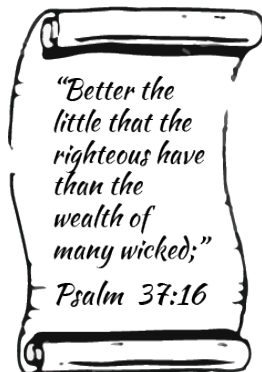
M I Y O T T H

Clue: Paul called him a son in the faith

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For we walk by
 **Faith**
 2 Cor. 5:7
 not by sight.



Word Search

WORDSEARCH

Birth of Christ (Matthew 1:17-25)

T R W V N C U A J W W R
 W R B O V A B L E S E V
 A N G E L P M U S W J C
 N C E L H J D E U H O A
 B V A W I O U F S V S L
 A V W T Y S L V H H E L
 J P O M I L C D S W P A
 B M V T Z E Y V P Q H H
 G M X R Y C H I L D E R
 G R D D G J M E T Z O H
 O V J N B E I N G C Z N
 L O R D A Z E P Q J S N

ANGEL JESUS
 BEHOLD CHILD
 JOSEPH NAME
 LORD BEING
 CALL

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WORDSEARCH

Flight Into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15)

S A Y I N G E D
 L A F R Y M G E
 H O N Y O O Y P
 Q E R C U T P A
 O Q R D N H T R
 K P R O G E N T
 C H I L D R L E
 A R I S E I Q D

HEROD ARISE
 EGYPT LORD
 SAYING CHILD
 DEPARTED YOUNG
 MOTHER

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WORDSEARCH

Genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1:1-17)

J O W U C Z M H Z J G F
 A H V R H A Q W T G E O
 C W E Y R X P P W G N U
 O W V A I H Z O Y R E R
 B M P B S D X B Q R R T
 A Q R R T A U Z D W A E
 B O A A H Q A A Q B T E
 Y V I H I H A E L E I N
 L P M A G G C E A G O V
 O I C M V P W W D O N V
 N A B I J A H X T T S S
 X H K S H W D A V I D B

Christ Begot
 Generations Jacob
 Fourteen Abraham
 Abijah David

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WORDSEARCH

Visit of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12)

B W R P K X M V H L
 C E O R G I S T E K
 X S T R M N N T R J
 K Q G H S A I G O V
 I X M X L H L H D R
 C O M E V E I T V U
 H Q T Z T C H P C L
 Q G B O R N P E Q E
 O C D H G H O K M R
 W H E N S T A R G G

COME KING
 HEROD WHEN
 RULER BETHLEHEM
 WORSHIP STAR
 BORN

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WORDSEARCH

Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

J O I F V G F Y F F M R D W
 J O D J Z G I D O I T I O H
 S H R J G T Y Q X T W G M K
 G A S D W L C M X T T H B K
 Q Z I P A Q Z J X I W T J X
 K C P X I N B T H N W E D N
 L P V R V R D V E G R O D Z
 D R Y T E U I C A J C U D I
 W E G S I V P T V I T S G E
 J I O S B Y E D E M T N I S
 B F T X S Y X N N Y Z E Y S
 B E L O V E D L T E X S O O
 L K N G H R B M X P G S B N
 G D A S L B P E R M I T Q W

PERMIT RIGHTEOUSNESS
 JORDAN SON
 BELOVED HEAVEN
 FITTING PREVENT
 SPIRIT

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WORDSEARCH

Home in Nazareth (Matthew 2:16-18)

P E G Y P T R P J K J L
 J G T O Z I K P Z Q U V
 X A D X Q Q V J U N D H
 S L N R S C T M A A E L
 F I V Q E W U H V Z A U
 T L V Z D A B A F A J X
 I E F Y G E M Z E R O D
 I E Q R Y Z M G A E S J
 Y N N T T K U T S T E K
 P A N G E L J Y K H P Y
 I S R A E L R E U O H V
 D K T P R O P H E T S J

JOSEPH JUDEA
 DREAM GALILEE
 ISRAEL EGYPT
 ANGEL NAZARETH
 PROPHETS

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Word Search (Continued)

WORDSEARCH

John Prepares the Way (Matthew 3:1-12)

Z I K V J R J R M P R Z
 H D C H A O U P Y R R L
 Y O D A R U D R C O G O
 O I N J K X E E U P I C
 U B M E E O A A B H I U
 M N N A Y J A C Q E O S
 O B J R R H Y H M T M T
 K D Z D A L M I F K B S
 C R Y I N G T N X D L V
 B A P T I Z E G H V F O
 D N T M A R E P E N T S
 W I L D E R N E S S Y P

CRYING
 REPENT
 WILDERNESS
 LOCUSTS
 JUDEA

PREACHING
 BAPTIZE
 HONEY
 PROPHET

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WORDSEARCH

Massacre of Innocents (Matthew 2:16-18)

A K H N J A J E F B M J
 X N X H G U E A N W O D
 U M G I T C R Y Z Y U E
 P H F R G M E Q V V R A
 N I R J Y C M V Q S N T
 V E J H I B I W K T I H
 F K R Z V K A P S G N E
 B E T H L E H E M C G R
 F Z J P W E E P I N G O
 V O C H I L D R E N Q D
 J K M J V X O C Z T D J
 E K C S R A M A H F V T

HEROD
 WEEPING
 JEREMIAH
 DEATH
 ANGRY

BETHLEHEM
 MOURNING
 RAMAH
 CHILDREN

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WORDSEARCH

Temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11)

A K X Z N N E T F B
 S N I F G S C E S R
 T Z G N D A N M P E
 O E T E G L S P I A
 N A E S L D O L R D
 E S H A Y S O E I E
 S M Y X O P R M T V
 K W O R S H I P S I
 T Y L P R H P K Z L
 F T E M P T E D R F

SPIRIT
 WORSHIP
 TEMPTED
 TEMPLE
 STONES

DEVIL
 ANGELS
 KINGDOMS
 BREAD

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WORDSEARCH

Jesus at Capernaum (Matt. 4:12-17)

D A L C J W D Z R C
 N A V I Y M Z E I N
 A A R H G O L B S A
 O V Z K H H A U A P
 H U Q A N F T L I H
 K E Z V R E D U A T
 F F J R G E S N H A
 P R I S O N T S X L
 R E P E N T Q H N I
 Y G A L I L E E M V

ISAIAH
 PRISON
 LIGHT
 REPENT
 DARKNESS

GALILEE
 NAZARETH
 NAPHTALI
 ZEBULUN

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WORDSEARCH

Calling the Disciples (Matt. 4:18-22)

F K L M U I J S A P
 M O C Q J Q V I N M
 G A L I L E E M D B
 B P J L N L L O R N
 W O S X O J R N E E
 O C A P Z W S Q W T
 R C K T G B E A C S
 G V J A M E S D F S
 F I S H E R M E N H
 K P Z J O H N S Z S

ANDREW
 FOLLOWED
 JOHN
 FISHERMEN
 JAMES

GALILEE
 NETS
 SIMON
 BOAT

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WORDSEARCH

His Fame Spreads (Matt. 4:23-25)

S F T T L X P J P M
 I O Y E L V L N R U
 C L Q A Y H K D E L
 K L N C R E Q I A T
 N O B H T A M S C I
 E W C I O L L E H T
 S E C N Q I A A I U
 S D J G Z N Z S N D
 F A M E F G L E G E
 A F F L I C T E D S

FOLLOWED
 DISEASE
 MULTITUDES
 FAME
 TEACHING

AFFLICTED
 PREACHING
 SICKNESS
 HEALING

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Word Search Solutions

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Solution: Birth of Christ

T R W V N C U A J W W R
 W R B O V A B L E S E V
 A N G E L P M U S W J C
 N C E L H J D E U H O A
 B V A W I O U F S V S L
 A V W T Y S L V H H E L
 J P O M I L C D S W P A
 B M V T Z E Y V P Q H H
 G M X R Y C H I L D E R
 G R D D G J M E T Z O H
 O V J N B E I N G C Z N
 L O R D A Z E P Q J S N

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Solution: Flight Into Egypt

S A Y I N G E D
 L A F R Y M G E
 H O N Y O O Y P
 Q E R C U T P A
 O Q R D N H T R
 K P R O G E N T
 C H I L D R L E
 A R I S E I Q D

WORDSEARCH

Solution: Genealogy of Christ

J O W U C Z M H Z J G F
 A H V R H A Q W T G E O
 C W E Y R X P P W G N U
 O W V A I H Z O Y R E R
 B M P B S D X B Q R R T
 A Q R R T A U Z D W A E
 B O A A H Q A A Q B T E
 Y V I H I H A E L E I N
 L P M A G G C E A G O V
 O I C M V P W W D O N V
 N A B I J A H X T T S S
 X H K S H W D A V I D B

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Solution: Visit of the Wise Men

B W R P K X M V H L
 C E O R G I S T E K
 X S T R M N N T R J
 K Q G H S A I G O V
 I X M X L H L H D R
 C O M E V E I T V U
 H Q T Z T C H P C L
 Q G B O R N P E Q E
 O C D H G H O K M R
 W H E N S T A R G G

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Solution: Baptism of Jesus

J O I F V G F Y F F M R D W
 J O D J Z G I D O I T I O H
 S H R J G T Y Q X T W G M K
 G A S D W L C M X T T H B K
 Q Z I P A Q Z J X I W T J X
 K C P X I N B T H N W E D N
 L P V R V R D V E G R O D Z
 D R Y T E U I C A J C U D I
 W E G S I V P T V I T S G E
 J I O S B Y E D E M T N I S
 B F T X S Y X N N Y Z E Y S
 B E L O V E D L T E X S O O
 L K N G H R B M X P G S B N
 G D A S L B P E R M I T Q W

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Solution: Home in Nazareth

P E G Y P T R P J K J L
 J G T O Z I K P Z Q U V
 X A D X Q Q V J U N D H
 S L N R S C T M A A E L
 F I V Q E W U H V Z A U
 T L V Z D A B A F A J X
 I E F Y G E M Z E R O D
 I E Q R Y Z M G A E S J
 Y N N T T K U T S T E K
 P A N G E L J Y K H P Y
 I S R A E L R E U O H V
 D K T P R O P H E T S J

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Solution: John Prepares the Way

Z I K V J R J R M P R Z
 H D C H A O U P Y R R L
 Y O D A R U D R C O G O
 O I N J K X E E U P I C
 U B M E E O A A B H I U
 M N N A Y J A C Q E O S
 O B J R R H Y H M T M T
 K D Z D A L M I F K B S
 C R Y I N G T N X D L V
 B A P T I Z E G H V F O
 D N T M A R E P E N T S
 W I L D E R N E S S Y P

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Solution: Massacre

A K H N J A J E F B M J
 X N X H G U E A N W O D
 U M G I T C R Y Z Y U E
 P H F R G M E Q V V R A
 N I R J Y C M V Q S N T
 V E J H I B I W K T I H
 F K R Z V K A P S G N E
 B E T H L E H E M C G R
 F Z J P W E E P I N G O
 V O C H I L D R E N Q D
 J K M J V X O C Z T D J
 E K C S R A M A H F V T

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Solution: Temptation of Jesus

A K X Z N N E T F B
 S N I F G S C E S R
 T Z G N D A N M P E
 O E T E G L S P I A
 N A E S L D O L R D
 E S H A Y S O E I E
 S M Y X O P R M T V
 K W O R S H I P S I
 T Y L P R H P K Z L
 F T E M P T E D R F

Word Search Solutions (Continued)

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Solution: Jesus at Capernaum

D	A	L	C	J	W	D	Z	R	C
N	A	V	I	Y	M	Z	E	I	N
A	A	R	H	G	O	L	B	S	A
O	V	Z	K	H	H	A	U	A	P
H	U	Q	A	N	F	T	L	I	H
K	E	Z	V	R	E	D	U	A	T
F	F	J	R	G	E	S	N	H	A
P	R	I	S	O	N	T	S	X	L
R	E	P	E	N	T	Q	H	N	I
Y	G	A	L	I	L	E	E	M	V

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Solution: Calling the Disciples

F	K	L	M	U	I	J	S	A	P
M	O	C	Q	J	Q	V	I	N	M
G	A	L	I	L	E	E	M	D	B
B	P	J	L	N	L	L	O	R	N
W	O	S	X	O	J	R	N	E	E
O	C	A	P	Z	W	S	Q	W	T
R	C	K	T	G	B	E	A	C	S
G	V	J	A	M	E	S	D	F	S
F	I	S	H	E	R	M	E	N	H
K	P	Z	J	O	H	N	S	Z	S

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Solution: His Fame Spreads

S	F	T	T	L	X	P	J	P	M
I	O	Y	E	L	V	L	N	R	U
C	L	Q	A	Y	H	K	D	E	L
K	L	N	C	R	E	Q	I	A	T
N	O	B	H	T	A	M	S	C	I
E	W	C	I	O	L	L	E	H	T
S	E	C	N	Q	I	A	A	I	U
S	D	J	G	Z	N	Z	S	N	D
F	A	M	E	F	G	L	E	G	E
A	F	F	L	I	C	T	E	D	S

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