

The Advocate of Truth



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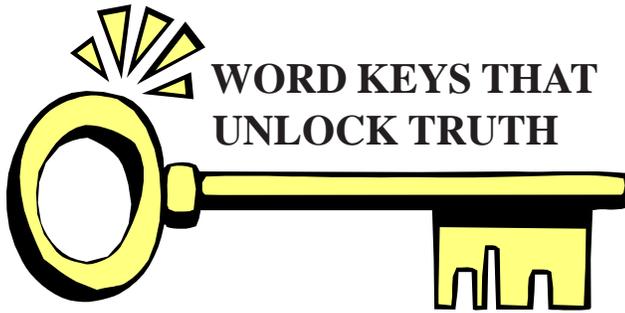
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LIGHT

Light is the opposite of dark. Light is that force, agent, or action in nature which, by its operation upon the organs of sight, renders objects visible. God spoke light into existence. Genesis 1:1-5 records: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day." The word is also used in a figurative sense to denote illumination of the mind. Both uses of the word are found in the Bible.

Light is a type of God's favor. "There be many that

say, Who will shew us any Good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us" (Psalm 4:6). "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:11). "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1).

God's word produces light. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the light of the world. His power illuminates the mind of man and acts as a guiding beacon to His followers. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4-5). "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them" (John 12:35-36).



"Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Exodus 20:7

First, let us consider one of the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." By many this is understood to mean profane

language in which God's name is irreverently used. We know that this is one meaning of the commandment. Many scholars hold that the reference is to the wide use in eastern countries of special oaths to seal special bargains or contracts. In taking these oaths, one would often swear by the name of a diety; the Israelites, of course in the name of their God. Thus it is said, what is referred to by not taking the name of the Lord in vain, which would be done if His name were thus used and the oath not hon-

ored.

However, another meaning may go deeper than this. Those who dedicate themselves wholly to God are subscribing to His name. Concerning the calling of the Gentiles, James 15:14 records: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."

The Lord said that Israel had profaned His name among the heathen, or Gentiles. "Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes. O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whether ye went" (Ezekiel 36:22). God's children are expected to reverence and adorn His name, and bring glory to it through their faithfulness to His laws and precepts. Those who are unfaithful to their covenant with Him are guilty of taking His name in vain.

Matthew 6:1-6

Jesus said, "Take heed to that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (vs. 1). Jesus enlarges upon this with the admonition not to sound a trumpet to announce our giving of alms. This, He indicates, would be seeking the plaudits and rewards of men rather than of God. Jesus indicated that hypocrites did this very thing in the synagogues in His day. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (vs. 2 last part). Their reward comes from men, not from God.

The giving of alms, Jesus explained should be done in secret, and when this principle is carried out, our Lord will reward us openly. Read verse four. Jesus applies the same principle to praying. The main point is that our service to the Lord, and our prayers, should be in His name, and therefore not made a public display.

Mark 7:5-8

The Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus why His disciples did not practice the traditions of the elders. "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, THIS PEOPLE HONoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (vs.6). Jesus was quoting from Isaiah 29:13. The text in Isaiah adds, "THEIR fear toward me is taught by the precept (traditions) of men."

In Jesus' day, the traditions of the elders failed to hold before the people the great God of the Bible as the God of love. The Scribes and Pharisees held the people more or less through fear. Jesus made it plain that He did not want His disciples to follow the example of the Scribes and Pharisees. He wanted them to be loyal to the Word of God. In doing this, their teachings would lead to love for God, love for one another, and for the whole world of mankind.

Traditions of men frequently, although not always, lead in the opposite direction. The washing of pots and cups in itself did not inculcate fear, but those who did not follow this and other traditions were ostracized and threatened. They were made to feel as though they were disloyal to God.

Our opening verse, Matthew 7:21, is right on the point of this lesson. It shows that mere lip service is not enough. It is only those who actually do the will of God who will enter the Kingdom of heaven. We might deceive men, by a "Lord, Lord," but not the Lord Himself.

Contributed

The Daily Purpose Of A Child Of God

We give thanks to the Lord for giving us the opportunity to exercise communion and to be able to enjoy the moments in which the children of God are united with only one purpose. That one purpose is to strengthen the bonds that unite us in the love of God.

Child of God, don't wait for your brother to get close to you. Instead, experience the feeling of meeting a new child of God whom you haven't yet met. Maybe you know him, but only because you saw him before. Today, give a hug to that brother or sister whom you have been missing. Young people, try to converse with the elders, and you will have new experiences.

Today will be the day when you decide how you want it to be and how you want to live it. It will be exciting if that's how you are going to live it. It will be sad if you reject it. But today is the opportunity of serving the Lord by strengthening the friendship among brethren.

Brother Jose Mendoza
Houston, Texas



THE APOSTLE JOHN

The Apostle John was the son of Zebedee and one of the "sons of thunder." He was closely associated with Peter, both during the earthly ministry of Jesus and after Pentecost. His Gospel account of the life and teachings of Jesus represents one of his major contributions to the spiritual upbuilding of the entire church.

While the fourth Gospel bears John's name as the author, nowhere in it does he directly identify himself as the writer. When necessary to refer to any part that he played in connection with the experiences of Jesus, he refers to himself as "that disciple which Jesus loved." Some have used this in an attempt to prove that John was not the author of the fourth Gospel, arguing that he was too humble to speak of himself as being specially loved by Jesus. But this seems like a weak argument. How much more humble is the attitude thus reflected than if he had used the pronoun "I."

John's humility is also reflected in his three epistles. In the first, he makes no reference to himself at all. In the second and third, he identifies the writer simply as an "elder." In the book of Revelation, which this apostle also wrote, he refers to himself simply as "His servant John," or just John (Revelation 1:1,4).

The Lord in His wisdom has chosen to emphasize various aspects of His plan through the varying personalities of those whom He has used as His inspired servants. David's background as a shepherd lent itself to this end, and Peter's difficulty in connection with Jesus's suffering and death later served to enrich his ministry in connection with the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

While John was one of the "sons of thunder," he also evidently had a loving disposition which appreciated companionship. We see this exemplified in his closeness to Jesus on various occasions. It would be just such a per-

sonality that could the better appreciate the precious truth which Jesus taught concerning the partnership His disciples were to enjoy with Him, both now and when glorified with Him in the kingdom.

John picked up this thought from Jesus and reveled in it. This fact is reflected in his Gospel and also in his epistles. He saw Jesus, both as the Logos and, forever, as the Son of God. He perceived that as many of the Jewish nation as believed on Jesus were given the authority to become the son of God (John 1:11-12).

Those intimate lessons of partnership which Jesus taught to His disciples in the Upper Room the night before He was crucified were recorded only by John. "I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (John 15:1-9). "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye

may be also" (ch. 14:1-4). "Father, I will that they also, whom thou has given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou has given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world" (ch. 17:24).

It is no wonder that John later wrote, "Beloved, now are we the son of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). John realized that in preparation for this glorious future association and partnership with Jesus, we need to enjoy the fellowship of one another, and of the Father and the Son even now. He wrote, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

Yes, John was an apostle of love, but he also was firm in his defense of the truth and in safeguarding the interests of his brethren. He wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 1:9-11).

This beloved apostle must have rejoiced in the privilege that was given to him by the resurrected Jesus of recording those precious promises to the seven churches: "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). "..., To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17).

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; AS THE VESSELS OF POTTER SHALL THEY BE BROKEN TO SHIVERS: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27).

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5).

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of

my God, which is new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Revelation 3:12). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

There is every good reason to believe that John lived to a very old age, continuing faithfully in the service of our Lord to the very end. The exact time of his death is not really known. The dates which have been assigned to his death range from A.D. 89 to A.D. 120. The year of his death is not important. Like the other inspired writers of the Bible, his service to the Lord's people has never ceased!

TBC TODAY:

Whadaya Expect From A miraculous Book?

Southeast of the Dead Sea what is thought to be the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah have been discovered. Known as Bab edh-Dhra, discoveries in the cemetery provided clues to its destruction. Excavators determined that buildings for burying the dead were burned from the top down.

This agrees with the biblical account: "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven" (Genesis 19:24). The reasonable conclusion is that burning debris fell on the buildings from the air. This agrees with the archaeologist's findings.

Geologist Frederick G. Clapp visited the area in 1929 and 1934 and recorded fault lines along the east and west sides of the Dead Sea. Others have noted that earthquakes are common to the area. Clapp's research revealed asphalt and petroleum accompanied by natural gas in this region. Genesis 14:10 notes that the valley of Sodom was full of tar pits or naturally occurring asphalt. Archaeologist Bryant Wood speculates that, "these combustible materials could have been forced from the earth by subterranean pressure brought about by an earthquake resulting from the shifting of the bounding faults. If these combustibles were ignited by lightning or some other agency as they came spewing forth from the ground, it would indeed result in a holocaust such as described in Genesis 19." (Bryant Wood, Associates for Biblical Research, 1995, 2001). After shooting up into the sky, the burning material only had one place to go - down to the rooftops of Sodom.

The Berean Call /From the Internet

SOME ARE SPOOKED BY HALLOWEEN ROOTS



REPRINTED

By Tom Tiede



GEORGETOWN, Del. (NEA) - Every year at Halloween the people of this Currier & Ives community hold a small parade to celebrate the traditions of the autumn observance. They gather the children on a Sunday afternoon and let them strut and posture around the traffic rotary in the center of town.

It is meant to be a soap-and-water occasion. The idea is to have well-scrubbed and innocent fun. The kids dress up like weird folk and goblins, the parents turn out with Cokes and cameras, and, after the last foot has fallen, the whole lot goes into the neighborhoods for harmless tricks and treats.

But is it harmless, at that? There are those who say the All-American ritual is an affront to decency and even to God. At a time when Christian fundamentalists are questioning many of the nation's habits and predilections, the festivities of Halloween are coming in for a share of the credibility.

The complaint here in Georgetown is that the invocation of spooks is purely and simply sacrilegious. And Mallory Derby, for one, thinks it should be forbidden. She is an evangelical housewife who last year petitioned the town council to cancel the Halloween parade in the name of Jesus Christ.

She says the ceremony is wicked at its core. She says it is "satanic and evil." She claims Halloween originated as a pagan rite, which means it has its roots in decidedly pre-Christian principles: irreverence, for example, human sacrifice and the public glorification of disembodied spirits.

And she is right about that. The origin of the commemoration was not a Sunday parade. It was started by the Celts, probably before the birth of Christ, and it was initially intended as a festival of death to close the calendar year; the Celtic year ended with the last harvest

of October.

The Celts were Iberians, of course. And they were surrounded by priests who were called Druids. The Druids believed that specters and demons had to be pacified with attention, and the initial Halloweens were characterized by burning people for appeasement in large wicker baskets.

The barbecues were abandoned when the Christians of Early Europe co-opted the celebration. And then All Hallows Eve, or Halloween, was adopted to suggest a pious and saintly flavor. The glory of the disembodied spirits, however, the things that go bump in the night, has been maintained to this day.

That is why Derby and others complain in Georgetown. And they are joined by similar religious conservatives around the nation. The Amish, for example, do not celebrate Halloween because they believe the tradition continues to dwell in superstition, and no Christian purpose is involved.

The Jehovah's Witness organization concurs. So do some elements of the Southern Baptist, the Church of God and broadcasting evangelist, Pat Robertson, has reportedly condemned Halloween on his Christian Broadcasting Network, saying that witches are not compatible with the Holy Ghost.

And yet that is about the extent of the serious opposition. The protest is passionate, but thin. None of the mainline churches object, and even most of the hardcore Christians, the fire and brimstone adherents, say the complaints about skeleton costumes are exaggerated and misplaced.

Dr. Herbert Carter is one of the latter. He is a third-generation Bible thumper, the past president of the Pentecostal Free Will Baptist, and he says the origin of Halloween has nothing to do with the modern observation.

He says it is merely a day for children now and is satanically insignificant.

He says the tots with their painted faces are cute. And the collection of treats can be a wholesome family affair. He says many churches in the nation hold parties on Halloween, to add a measure of security, and "who can object to boys and girls bobbing for apples or scaring one another?"

Besides Carter continues, Halloween is not the only national moment with a suspicious past. Easter can also be said to have started as a pagan rite, in some respects, and the Puritans wondered so much about Christmas that they banned it in some parts of New England until the 19th century.

And that is the argument that carried here in Georgetown last year, when Mallory Derby tried to get the Halloween parade canceled.

TO REALIZE

1. To realize the value of a sister, ask someone who doesn't have one.
 2. To realize the value of ten years, ask a newly divorced couple.
 3. To realize the value of four years, ask a graduate.
 4. To realize the value of one year, ask a student who has failed a final exam.
 5. To realize the value of nine months, ask a mother who has given birth to a still born.
 6. To realize the value of one month, ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.
 7. To realize the value of one week, ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.
 8. To realize the value of one hour, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
 9. To realize the value of one minute, ask a person who has missed the train, bus or plane.
 10. To realize the value of one second, ask a person who has survived an accident.
 11. To realize the value of one millisecond, ask a person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.
 12. To realize the value of a friend, lose one.
- Time waits for no one.
Treasure every moment you have.
You will treasure it even more when you can share it with someone special. -Adapted from the Internet

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Jesus Christ was not merely a good man and a great teacher. He was-and is-the Son of God! Let us examine a few evidences of this tremendous fact. The greatest evidence is His resurrection.

The Claims Of Christ

To mere human appearances, our Lord Jesus Christ was merely a rather obscure itinerant preacher with not much formal education who ministered in the small Roman province of Palestine with a motley group of disciples. He was finally executed as a criminal.

However, He made amazing claims concerning Himself. These were claims which-if not true-would have branded Him as either a madman or a charlatan. His claim to be the Son of God led to His arrest and crucifixion.

It is remarkable that these very claims have proved themselves for over 2000 years to be amazingly fulfilled prophecies. Let us consider the implications of just three of them:

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

Millions of His followers throughout the centuries have tested and proved the reality of this promise. Many have unanimously testified that they have found "the light of life" in following Him.

His life and teachings, His atoning death and resurrection have served as the theme and the inspiration for the world's greatest music, art, literature, schools, and hospitals.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

He never wrote a book or even a sermon, but His teachings are the most read words in all the world's literature. His words are universally acknowledged as the greatest, most memorable, most uplifting words ever spoken.

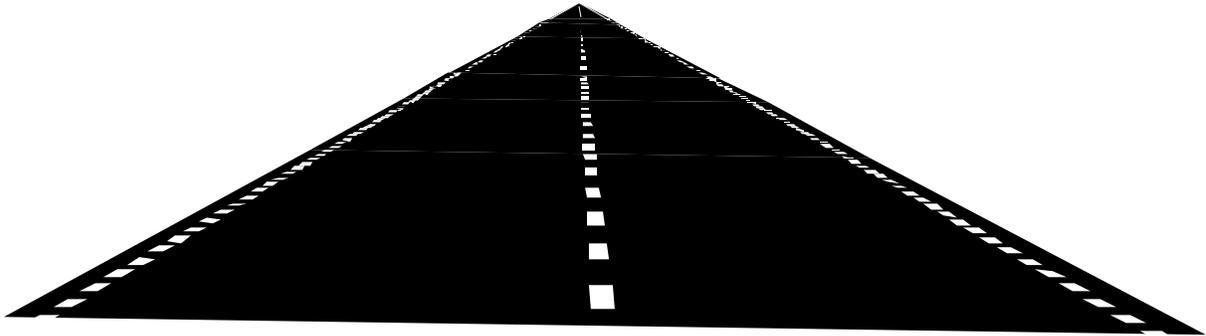
"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32).

His death as a condemned criminal, His body being lifted up on a tree, was hideous and brutal. However, the story of it has drawn men of every nation to believe on Him as their Savior and Lord.

Contributed

THE ROAD LEAST TRAVELED

BY SIEGFRIED MAYWALD



The trend in our modern society today is to please people and their opinions about God. The saying goes that all people believe in a supernatural being and that there are different avenues that lead people to Him. The idea is that one should accept all faiths as equal in value and accept the understanding that there is none that is supreme above the other. The World Council of Churches is an ecumenical movement that promotes uniformity and acceptance of all faiths. What they propagate is a unity in a "faith" that is of man's making and very popular with the majority of people.

In an article published in the Lethbridge Herald on May 7, 2005 under the heading "Maturing church network offers spiritual support in rural areas" Joyce Sasse, a retired United Church minister, says: "As churches, we are building on a tradition of enabling rural community revitalization that stems directly from the 19th century vision and teaching of Nicolaj Grundtvig, a Danish clergyman and cofounder of the Folk School Movement that is prevalent in Europe to the present time." This idea is composed of Ecumenical partners who support each other and help to build rural spiritual values and offer the church as the heart of small communities. It is a movement that is trying to encourage people to accept different faiths as equal to theirs. The idea is to promote "good feelings" and "a sense of belonging." Their belief is that feelings of isolation and despair can be overcome when people of the Lord gather to share stories about positive possibilities. They say that this is especially important in our difficult financial times. But the road that is most chosen and now most traveled is a road of least resistance that follows the crowd. Dreams, feelings and compromises are not following the word of God. Let us distinguish six points

of this crowd-pleasing road. They are:

1. It is a road that leads to selfishness and injustice.
2. It is an easygoing road because it requires no discipline, restraint or limitation to ethical and moral behavior.
3. It is a road that is filled with compromise to please people, but it delivers no true guidance from the word of God.
4. It is the road of least resistance. There is no critic or rejection.
5. It is the road that suits the majority of people.
6. It is a road that concentrates more on physical feelings, well-being and pleasure rather than on people's genuine spiritual needs.

The question remains how can there be so many different ways leading to the same God if according to the Scriptures there is only one way leading to the God who is the Creator and Sustainer of earth and all that therein is. It in comparison is like if one places all the different types of milk of various animal species into the same container just because it is all called milk and expects it to remain fresh and wholesome. It certainly will stink in a very short time. Likewise, how can there be so many different gods and/or ways that lead to the same God who is the Creator? "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things

that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). How then can people fall for such deception and follow those ideas and think to be wise? All they follow is their own perception of a "god" that does not exist. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (vs. 25). How can a tree, a man made statue or mother earth for that matter become a "god" in the eyes of some people in the world? All are objects of God's creation! "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). James 4:4 warns: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

In Exodus 23:2, we read: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment." Deuteronomy 7:4-5 records: "For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire."

The disciples had to exercise discipline and restraint within themselves to keep themselves clear from the corrupt, deceptive and evil ways of the world which is under the influence of Satan. We as modern Christians must exercise ourselves in like manner or we also become deceived through Satan's influence. Our job according to the Scriptures is to expose all those imaginations and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Corinthians 10:5). Jesus even forewarned us that many false prophets would rise and prophecy in His name and deceive many. Read Matthew 7:22-23 and 24:11. Deuteronomy 5:7-9 reads: "Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

We are to walk the narrow road as Matthew 7:13-

20 informs us. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

The Scriptures describe the narrow road which leads to life:

1. It is the road of truth guided by principles as set forth in the word of God.

2. It is the road of duty and discipline.

3. It is the road that is least traveled and not accepted by the majority of people.

4. It is the road that brings with it resistance and rejection.

5. It is the road of our conscience.

6. It is a road that leads to true joy and peace.

7. It is the only road that leads to eternal life.

In John 10:7-9 Jesus said: "..., Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6). "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:5-6).

This is the narrow road that leads to eternal life. It does not indicate that there is a difficult road to find or to travel on, but that there is only one way that leads to eter-

nal life. A few people will choose to walk thereon. The reason that there is only one road to everlasting life is that God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. There is none other by whom man can be saved. Only through Jesus Christ's sacrifice are we made right before God. Jesus said, "..., I am the way; the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth" (Psalm 119:142). To abide by his will and laws is not a popular idea with the majority of people today, because His Word sets limits and moral standards of behavior that are declared to be too restrictive or discriminatory and therefore not applicable to our modern society.

We must understand that Jesus is the door by which we are saved, find pasture and a life that is more abundant. See John 10:9-10. His word is truth by which we are sanctified, and the Holy Spirit is the entity that testifies of Jesus, teaches and leads into all things that brings to remembrance whatever Jesus said. Read John 14:26 and 16:13. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25).

Matthew 5:3,5 tells us that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit and the meek shall inherit the earth. To be poor in spirit and meek means the attainment of godly character and living contrary to worldly standards and wisdom. One has to be willing to give when others take, to love and help when others hate and abuse. This type of character trait is contrary to the natural spirit of man and therefore hard to understand. Only when one is poor in spirit and meek can one endure and overcome the pain of ridicule, rejection, sacrifice and conflicts in the spiritual realm. Still it is the human tendency to avoid pain at all cost. Yet the pain of rejection is a schoolmaster of teaching and admonition. Conflicts prepare us for more understanding and peace. They strengthen our character and faith. If we would have no conflicts in the world, we wouldn't know the meaning of peace. We would not appreciate the sunshine if there were no rain. We would not be able to appreciate joy if there were no sorrow. Jesus said in John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the

world."

As the Apostle Paul's advice to the Romans and Ephesians was; "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure faith" (Romans 12:2-3). "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:29-32).

What we have to recognize is that we cannot choose what life deals us, but we can definitely choose to get on with it by facing the problems we are confronted with. Just because we follow the Word of God does not guarantee that our lives will be free from difficulties and trials which we will have to overcome. It is through conflicts that we are fine-tuned and strengthened. Our senses are sharpened. We grow in the knowledge and grace of God by way of God's Holy Spirit. His Spirit helps us to overcome all obstacles that life throws our way. We present our problems before God and ask for guidance in prayer. Our eyes must always stay focussed on Jesus Christ and His Word if we want to walk above the confusion that is now spread about in the world in the name of Jesus Christ. If we do not watch, we will become deceived with teachings and ideas of men. We will find ourselves walking the road that in the end leads to destruction.

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4). This time has come!

May God grant you understanding and wisdom to differentiate deceit from truth, and may He guide all your paths toward the straight and narrow way.

LEADERSHIP



What is it, and what are seven sins that Christian leaders must avoid?

Leadership is not about impressing people, but serving others.

Leadership is not about manipulating people but motivating them.

Leadership is not about controlling those under your supervision but about communicating to them a vision for God designed excellence.

God has entrusted leaders with the privilege of influence and to develop others for eternity's sake. We most often focus on the positives. What are those aspects of leadership that can derail a leader's influence and impact? Let us list seven deadly sins that can shatter the effectiveness of a leader:

1. Haughtiness

Haughtiness is when one is high on himself and low on others. It displays an attitude of superiority, which looks with condescension on others and their accomplishment. It is an attitude of insolence that thinks no one else has the ideas or insights that you do.

2. Arrogance

Arrogance is a sense of self-important smugness that claims much for the leader and gives little to others. It displays an attitude that others are there to serve the leader. L.L. Moody observed, "God sends no one away empty handed except those who are full of themselves."

3. Pride

This is not the healthy self-respect for one's work or ministry but an unhealthy, egotistical pride. Pride exhibits itself as being absorbed with the leader while ignoring others and their needs. It has been said that pride is the only

disease that makes everyone sick but the one who has it.

4. Disdain

Disdain compares the leader with others in a derogatory way. It looks down its nose with scorn on those around the leader and belittles the accomplishment of others.

5. Presumption

Presumption claims privileges above the leader's rights. It is a me-first attitude concerned more with the "perks" and "privileges" of power than of true leadership.

6. Assumption

Assumption takes for granted what others say is true without objectivity or investigating it for yourself. The result is going way out on an all too tight limb.

7. Vanity

Vanity, perhaps, may be the most destructive of the seven sins. Vanity is an intense craving for admiration and applause. This leads the leader to misunderstand the situation as he follows his own personal agenda.

All of these leadership snares center on a self-motivated ego. Conceit and arrogance will kill effective leadership. If we allow them to take hold, we end up focusing on ourselves, not on others. That is not leadership, but manipulation.

To be a Christian leader, means you operate under the guidance and control of the Saviour. We need to ask ourselves often, "Am I building people or am I building my own dreams and using people?"

For the leader, people must come first. People are not the means to an end. They are the end!

Contributed

POWER OF PRAYER



A young university student was home for the summer. She had gone to visit some friends one evening and time passed quickly as each shared their various experiences of the past year. She ended up staying longer than planned, and now had to walk home alone.

As she walked along the tall elm trees, Diane asked God to keep her safe from harm and danger. When she reached the alley, which was a short cut to her house, she decided to take it. However, halfway down the alley she noticed a man standing at the end as though he were waiting for her. She became uneasy and began to pray, asking for God's protection. Instantly a comforting feeling of quietness and security wrapped round her, she felt as though someone was walking with her.

When she reached the end of the alley, she walked right past the man and arrived home safely. The following day, she read in the newspaper that a young girl had been raped in the same alley just twenty minutes after she had been there.

Feeling overwhelmed by this tragedy and the fact that it could have been her, she began to weep, thanking the Lord for her safety. She decided to go to the police station and try to help this young woman. She felt she could recognize the man, so she told them her story.

The police asked her if she would be willing to look at a lineup to see if she could identify him. She agreed and immediately pointed out the man she had seen in the alley the night before. When the man was told he had been identified, he immediately broke down and confessed. The officer thanked Diane for her bravery and asked if there was anything they could do for her. She asked if they would ask the man one question. Diane was curious as to why he had not attacked her.

When the policemen asked him, he answered, "Because she wasn't alone. She had two tall men walking on either side of her."

Moral of the story" Don't underestimate the power of prayer!

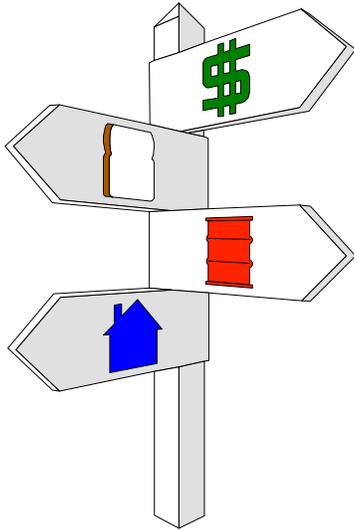
Adapted from the internet

The Lord Takes Pleasure In His People

"For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation" (Psalm 149:4).

Our opening verse tells us that the Lord takes delight in His people, and He will beautify the meek with salvation. The significance of this wonderful verse comes alive when we think of how much pleasure parents and grandparents receive when they are surrounded by their family for some special occasion. It is such a blessing to be close to those you love, and the feeling of togetherness is bound by true affection for each other. Passing along family values to our children is beneficial to family life. More importantly, the virtues and qualities that children witness with their families will remain with them throughout their lives.

God wants us to receive joy from those around us. The closeness that families develop should be a reflection of our closeness with our Heavenly Father. Our Lord takes delight in His people. The delight and closeness that we share with our loved ones is an example of God's love toward us. The eternal blessing that we share as being a part of God's family is salvation.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

The following articles appeared in the *Houston Chronicle*.

It's official: Planning revenge really is sweet, study shows

Results could help explain economic, social decisions, researchers say

**by Lauran Neergaard
Associated Press**

WASHINGTON - Dirty Harry had it right: Brain scans show revenge really might make your day.

Planning revenge sparks enough satisfaction to motivate getting even - and the amount of satisfaction predicts who will go to greater lengths to do so, report Swiss researchers who monitored people's brain activity during an elaborate game of double cross.

That may not sound too surprising. Just consider the old saying, "Revenge is sweet."

But beyond helping to unravel how the brain makes social and moral decisions, the study illustrates growing interest in the interaction between emotion and cognition - which in turn influences other fields such as how to better model the economy.

The new study chips "yet another sliver from the rational model of economic man," said Stanford University psychologist Brian Knutson, who reviewed the Swiss research. "Instead of cold, calculated reason, it is passion that may plant the seeds of revenge," he said.

People often are eager to punish wrongdoers even if the revenge brings them no personal gain or costs them

something. From a practical standpoint, that may seem irrational.

In research reported in Friday's edition of the journal *Science*, University of Zurich scientists used PET scans to monitor the brain activity of game players to determine what motion violates that type of revenge.

Two players could either trust and cooperate with each other so they both earned money. Or one could double cross the other and keep an unfair share. Sometimes the double cross was deliberate; other times, rules of the game dictated it. The victim could retaliate by fining the double-crosser different amounts, but sometimes had to spend his own money to impose that fine.

All 14 players chose revenge whenever the double cross was deliberate and the retaliation free. Only three retaliated when the double cross wasn't deliberate. Twelve of 14 players punished a deliberate double cross even if it cost them money.

The PET scans showed a brain region known to be important for enjoyment and satisfaction, the dorsal striatum, became active in players who decided to retaliate.

When the retaliation cost them money, a second brain region that helps weigh costs and benefits got involved, too, but the striatum remained key. The level of activity predicted which players would spend more money to get revenge.

The study involved only men. Work is needed to see if women react similarly, Knutson said.

The research is important as scientists try to dissect how analytical decision making interacts with emotion, he said.

"For a long time, sociologists and economists have not paid a lot of attention to people's feelings, especially before an event," Knutson said. "It's almost like your mind imagines the outcome before it happens. That's a lot of what motivates behavior."

Comment

Revenge is never sweet although it may seem so to the natural man! It is of the world and contrary to God's Word. Romans 12:17-21 reads, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, VENGEANCE IS MINE; I WILL REPAY, saith the Lord. Therefore IF THINE ENEMY HUNGER, FEED HIM; IF HE THIRST, GIVE HIM DRINK: FOR IN SO DOING THOU SHALT HEAP COALS OF FIRE ON HIS HEAD. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

You gotta know when to fold 'em

Experts warn that the new poker craze among teens could lead to addictions

**By Martha Irvine
Associated Press**

CHICAGO - Now that high school football season is over, Zak Coppinger has been playing poker every chance he can get.

With his mom's blessing, he's turned the family dining room, complete with green walls and a chandelier, into a poker parlor for himself and his buddies. He also keeps a deck of cards at school so he can play impromptu games during class or lunch.

"It's better than homework, I can tell you that," the 19-year old from Austin says with a chuckle.

He's just one of the many young people who have become avid players of Texas hold 'em and other poker games - a trend sparked, in part, by TV shows that feature tournaments for celebrities and professional poker players. But gambling opponents wonder if some teens, and the adults who let them play, are taking it too far.

"It's fun. It's exciting. It's glamorized on TV and in the media in a way that other addictions are not," says Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling. "There's the impression that through skill you can beat the odds. But randomness is always going to have a bigger factor in determining the outcome than your skill."

"And unfortunately, that's not the message these kids get."

Some parents have heeded the warning, cutting back on casino nights at after-prom parties and other events. And officials at growing number of schools are curtailing this activity - from New Trier High School, north of Chicago, to Apple Valley High School in suburban Minneapolis - these have recently started banning poker-playing on their campuses.

Teens argue that, with the standard \$10 buy-in to get into a game, the stakes aren't particularly high.

"You're paying for entertainment," says Eli Godlfarb, a freshmen at Columbia University in New York. "The long and the short of it is, I have fun playing poker, and when I play well, I can buy more burritos. What's not to like?"

Dan Romer, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, worries about kids who take gambling too far.

"At a minimum they should be monitored," says Romer, director of research at the Adolescent Risk Communication Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.

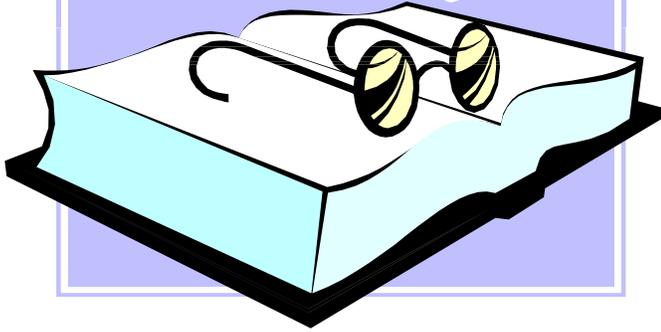
He oversaw the 2003 Annenberg National Risk Survey of Youth, which found that about 8 percent of the young people surveyed showed signs of having a gambling problem. Those results led him to conclude that schools should teach about the dangers of gambling, the same way they teach that alcohol can be addictive.

Comment

Playing poker for gain is trying to get something for nothing. This contradicts our instructions that God gives us! "Recompense to no man evil for evil. PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN" (Romans 12:17).

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Why must we not lie?

Answer: Ever since Satan said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," (Genesis 3:4) lies and liars have been part of human history. It seems to be the nature of man to deceive others, even with untruths, if a particular advantage can be obtained. And the general attitude of this century is one of tolerance instead of censure.

A sociologist at the University of California said that children have to learn to lie in order to function in our society. A national survey taken among young executives revealed that they thought it was practically impossible to be a success and be completely honest. This is a terrible indictment against this age!

What is a lie?

Winston Churchill humorously called a lie a "terminological in exactitude." However Funk and Wagnall tells us that a lie is "an untruth deliberately told," and that to lie is "to speak or write knowingly and wrongly that which is not truth."

There are different kinds of lies. They can be classified roughly as follows:

1. Benign lies-designed not to hurt the other person.
2. Hysteroteliess-told to attract attention, or to make others feel sorry for the liar.
3. Defensive lies-to extricate one's self from a difficult

situation.

4. Compensatory lies - to cover up feelings of inferiority.
5. Malicious lies-to deceive for profit.
6. Gossip-to hurt a specific persona and derive personal satisfaction.
7. Implied lying-refraining from telling the truth by remaining silent.
8. Pathological lying-observed in those with fantasizes and delusions.

Why do people lie?

Most studies and surveys made on this subject show that more lies are told to escape censure or punishment than for any other reason. A study of nearly seven hundred instances of lying confessed by high school students, college students, and adults showed the following reasons for the lies:

41 percent were told to escape punishment or censure, 14 percent were told so that the person could get his own way, 8.5 percent were told to get sympathy or praise, 6 percent were told to avoid work or a tedious situation, 4.5 percent were told to avoid ridicule, 3 percent were told in an attempt to impress others, 1.7 percent were told to protect another, or to avoid hurting feelings; The rest were told for miscellaneous or undetermined reasons.

Why is it wrong to lie?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us re-

view the ingredients of a lie. A lie generally involves (1) the expression of what is false or misleading, (2) the intention to deceive, (3) a violation of some moral obligation.

The Apostle Paul condemned lying upon the premise that one must put off the old man with his deeds. Please read II Corinthians 5:17-21. Lying is one of the deeds and a part of the nature of the old man, and, therefore, specially, must not be a part of the life of a children of God. You see, Satan is the master author and editor in chief of lies. Jesus told the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Since Satan is the father of lies, in a sense all liars are his children, and you cannot be the child of the devil and the child of God simultaneously! So, lying is wrong because it is of the devil. It is part of the old man, the old nature, which must burn away in the crucible or the Refiner's fire.

Lying is wrong because it violates the new man. Paul further said, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:9-10).

The old man comes to Calvary bent beneath a load of guilt because of sin; he leaves Calvary a new man freed from this load because of Christ. According to Paul, he has undergone a renewing process that results in a new man "after the image of him that created him." After whose image? After God's image, and God cannot tell a lie—even a little one! "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

Lying is also wrong because it hurts others as well as the liar. In Ephesians 4:25, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Wherefore putting away lying, SPEAK EVERY MAN TRUTH With HIS NEIGHBOR: for we are members one of another."

Abraham's lie brought plagues to Pharaoh's house. Read Genesis 12. Gehazi's lie to Naaman brought a curse upon his posterity. "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from the presence a leper as white as snow" (II Kings 5:27). Lies may not always cause plagues, but

they can and do hurt others.

Lying hurts the liar. Did you know the entire nervous system is affected by lying? Medical authorities say that lying can, and frequently does have a damaging effect on the general health.

Lies, even little ones, have a damaging effect on the spiritual health. Solomon said that it was the little foxes that spoiled the vine. A little lie is a little fox that will spoil the moral tone of any relationship or persona. Lies destroy testimonies and confidences. They destroy friendships and reputations. The Roman Philosopher, Epictetus, even says that lies are at the base of all the sins and crimes of the world!

In a certain university, the students one morning found that the professor had suspended in the air a solid beam of iron, hanging perfectly motionless. He took up a little pellet of paper and threw it at the beam, which remained motionless. But he went on throwing these paper pellets until, struck repeatedly in the same place, the beam began to tremble, and then slowly to swing to and fro, finally acquiring a considerable momentum.

Little lies are like that. At first they seem insignificant; but if repeatedly engaged in, they will achieve a momentum almost impossible to stop. It usually takes a big lie to cover a little lie and a bigger lie to cover the big lie so the pendulum of disaster has begun to swing! The best advice is that of Exodus 23:7, "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked."

Question: Is it possible for a child of God to attain sinless perfection in this life?

Answer: In no way can a child of God attain sinless perfection in this life. Let us quote I John 1:8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Let us also quote verse 10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." Since this epistle was written to Christians (I John 2:12-14, 19, 3:1; 5:13), it is clear that children of God, while in the flesh, must never make the claim to have attained sinless perfection.

For any to say that they have attained sinless perfection in this life is in itself a sin. It is a lie!

Only Jesus's blood can make us spotless.



The Philippines

These are pictures taken during our visit and conference in Cebu City, in June, 2005.





AGAINST ISRAEL

LESSON I

SAUL CONSULTS THE WITCH OF ENDOR
(PART II)

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 28:11-25.

Golden Text: I Samuel 28:14 (last part)

"...And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself."

NOTE: We last learned that Saul is afraid of the Philistines, and the Lord did not answer his pleas. Saul then disguised himself and went to see the witch of Endor. We will now learn what the results of his visit with the witch will be.

1. What was Saul's request of the witch? I Samuel 28:11.
2. Did the woman recognize Saul in I Samuel 28:12?
3. What did she tell Saul she saw, and what did Saul do? I Samuel 28:13,15.

NOTE: Saul remembered how Samuel helped guide him when he was alive. His foolishness made him believe that the witch could make Samuel return from death. The witch makes Saul believe that he is talking to Samuel.

4. What does Saul say to Samuel in I Samuel 28:15?
5. What does Samuel (the witch) tell Saul about his future? I Samuel 28:16-19.
6. Was Saul afraid, and why did he not have strength? I Samuel 28:20.
7. What did the woman do for Saul before he left her house? I Samuel 28:21-25.

LESSON II

DAVID IS SAVED FROM FIGHTING

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 29:1-11.

Golden Text: I Samuel 29:7.

"Wherefore now return, and go in peace that thou displeasest not the lords of the Philistines."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that Saul enquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not hear him. He then turned to the witch of Endor for information about Samuel. This had been strictly forbidden by the laws of Moses. Now let us see why David was not allowed to fight against Israel.

1. Where were the Philistines and Israelites gathered with their armies? I Samuel 29:1-2.
2. What did the princes of the Philistines say to Achish? I Samuel 29:3.
3. Were the princes of the Philistines wroth with David? Did they want him to go to battle with them? I Samuel 29:4.
4. What question did they ask concerning David? I Samuel 29:5.
5. Achish called David to him. What did he tell David in I Samuel 29:6-7?
6. What did David think about the Philistines wanting him to go away in peace? I Samuel 29:8.
7. Did Achish know that David was an angel of God? What did the princes of the Philistines say about him? I Samuel 29:9.
8. What did Achish order David to do the next morning? Did they comply with his orders? I Samuel 29:10-11.

LESSON III

THE DEATH OF SAUL

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 31:1-13.

Golden Text: I Samuel 31:6.

"Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together."

NOTE; We are now studying I Samuel 30, but if you wish to read the chapter, it will prove to be very interesting. In this chapter, David recovers all the spoil which the Amalekites have taken. Now we shall see how Saul was slain.

1. Who was fighting Israel in I Samuel 31:1?
2. Who was slain in I Samuel 31:2?
3. What happened to Saul in I Samuel 31:3?
4. What request did Saul make of his armourbearer? Did the armourbearer grant his request? What did Saul finally do? I Samuel 31:4.
5. When Saul's armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, what did he do? I Samuel 31:5.
6. What did the Israelites do when they found out Saul and his three sons were dead? Who then dwelt in the cities? I Samuel 31:7.
7. When the Philistines found Saul and his three sons fallen in Mount Gilboa, what did they do with their bodies? I Samuel 31:8-9.
8. What did they do with Saul's armour and his body? I Samuel 31:10.
9. When the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, what did they then do with their bodies? I Samuel 31:11-13.

LESSON IV

DAVID'S GRIEF OVER THE DEATH OF SAUL,

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 1:1-27.

Golden Text; II Samuel 1:11.

"Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that king Saul had reigned 40 years. Saul killed himself by falling upon his sword. His three sons and his armourbearer also died. David had not yet heard about Saul's death. Now we shall see what effect Saul's death has upon David.

1. Where is David living now? II Samuel 1:1.
2. Who came to David on the third day? II Samuel 1:2.
3. From whence had he come, and what did he tell David? II Samuel 1:3-4.
4. What story did the Amalekite have to tell David? II Samuel 1:6-10.
5. What had he brought of David in II Samuel 1:10?
6. Did David and all his men mourn for Saul? II Samuel 1:11-12.
7. What did David do to the Amalekite who brought the message? II Samuel 1:14-15.
8. David lamented over Saul and Jonathan his son. Read II Samuel 1:17-27 which will show his deep love for them.

CAN YOU FIND?

Look up the Scriptures below and find the answers.

1. How did we get the Bible? Look up and write out II Timothy 3:15 and II Peter 1:21.
2. How long will the Bible last? Find Psalm 119:89 and Isaiah 40:8.
3. When will the words of Christ pass away? Find Matthew 24:35.
4. Give a reason for studying and memorizing the Bible in Psalm 119:11; II Timothy 3:15; II Timothy 2:15.

TIME OUT

Game-time! The starting whistle blows. We carry the ball and head for the goal. But sometimes we fumble the ball. Sometimes we are downed and miss the goal. The coach calls, "Time-out!"

We regroup. We recover our senses. We regain our confidence. We review our strategy. We renew our will to win. The whistle blows and we begin again.

Everyone needs time-out - whether from the hustle of a big game or the hassle of trying to succeed at whatever we are doing in our day-to-day activities.

Sometimes we make mistakes and fumble the ball. Sometimes we miss the goals we have set for ourselves. Sometimes we must accept the fact that we cannot be first-place winners at everything we do. We must realize that doing our best is most important, whether we win or not.

Our ideas and ambitions may get knocked down, and we may wonder if we can even get up again, if it is worth the effort to start over.

We must keep our heart receptive to the call of our Head Coach, the Lord Jesus. We must know when to take "Time-out! He wants to talk with us to help us through any of our fumbles or needed decisions or just to give us a needed rest. We need to remember that we need His strength to renew ours.

We can spend some time with Him. We can read His Word to be sure we understand the ground rules of Christ's way of living. He refreshes our spirits. We can find our confidence in Him.

The whistle blows. The game begins again.

REMEMBER TO TAKE TIME-OUT WITH THE LORD!

Make a list of all the things you want to do. Check the things that seem most important to God. Let these be first in your life.

Think about your daily schedule. Is there time in it for prayer, work, and play? If so, you have a balanced day.

LOOK IN YOUR BIBLE

How excited Jan was! Now at last the day had come when she was to take the train alone to Aunt Jane's. She was very quiet as she entered the station with Father. Finally she squeezed Father's hand and stammered, "Dad - I am afraid." Then a tear rolled slowly down her cheek.

Father put his arms around Jan as he asked, "Is it the train ride you are worried about, Jan?"

"Uh-huh. I guess. I thought it would be so exciting to go on the train alone. I was going to brag about it at school, but here I am - scared. And I am scared to go by myself. I am scared because it is all new. What if Aunt Jane does not meet me. What if-" Her voice trailed off.

"I understand," answered Father. "Do you remember Joshua? When he became the leader of Israel, God promised to be with him wherever he went. God will be with you along the way, everywhere and every day. God told Joshua to be strong and brave and not to be afraid. Let us memorize Joshua 1:9."

Soon Jan had learned the verse. She was no longer afraid of the trip.

A few days later, Jan returned. She hugged her Dad happily. "God did take care of me. And the conductor on the train helped me, too. Everything was just great. I love you, Dad! Thanks so much! If you had not helped me learn Joshua 1:9, I know I would have been afraid!"

Father smiled and hugged his daughter. It was a good day; one they would both remember. More importantly, however, he hoped Jan would always remember Joshua 1:9.

LOOK ME UP

Below you will find some familiar verses. See if you can find the book, chapter and verse where they are found.

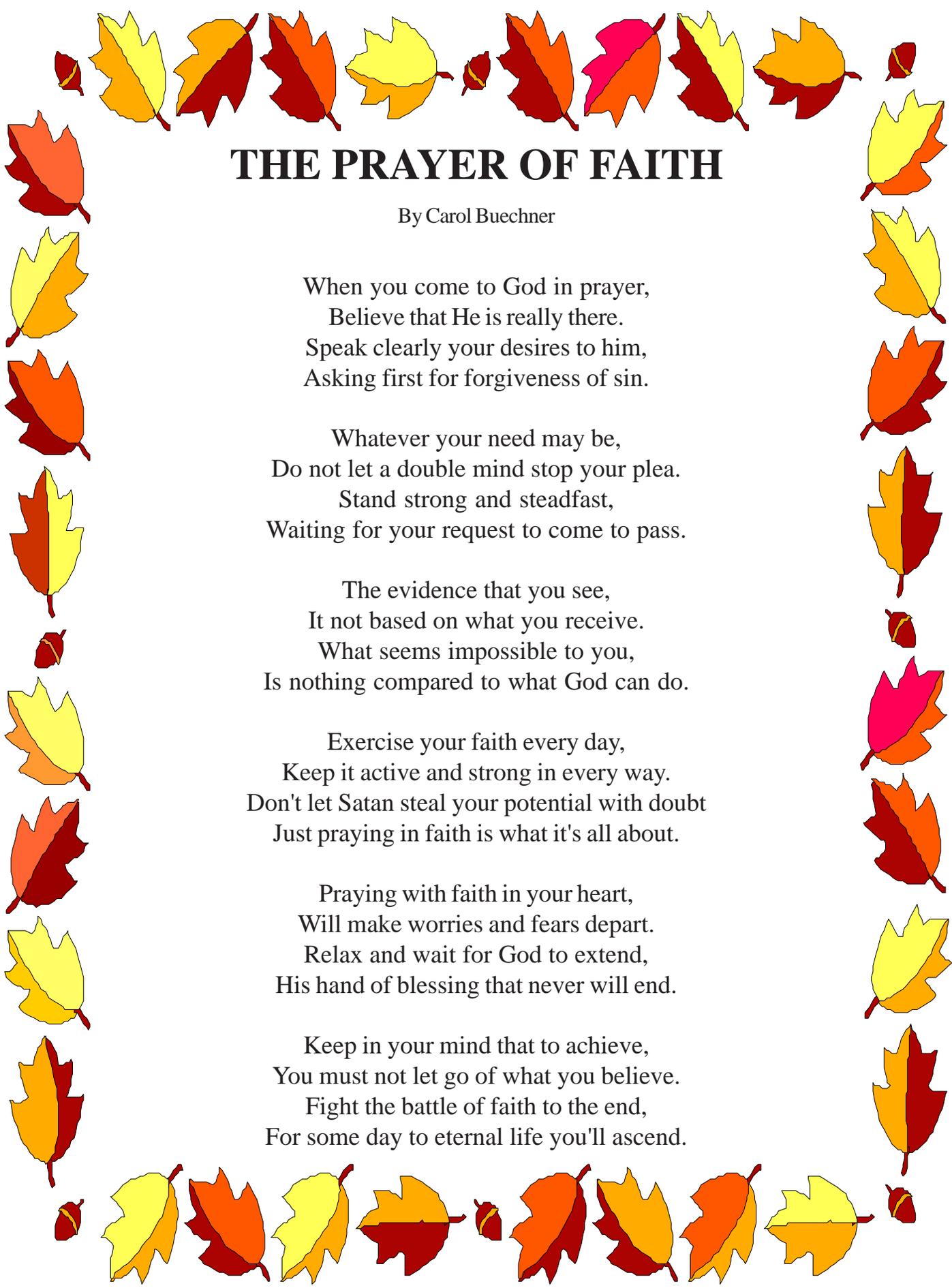
1. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

2. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

3. "For the time is come that judgement must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." James 4:8





THE PRAYER OF FAITH

By Carol Buechner

When you come to God in prayer,
Believe that He is really there.
Speak clearly your desires to him,
Asking first for forgiveness of sin.

Whatever your need may be,
Do not let a double mind stop your plea.
Stand strong and steadfast,
Waiting for your request to come to pass.

The evidence that you see,
It not based on what you receive.
What seems impossible to you,
Is nothing compared to what God can do.

Exercise your faith every day,
Keep it active and strong in every way.
Don't let Satan steal your potential with doubt
Just praying in faith is what it's all about.

Praying with faith in your heart,
Will make worries and fears depart.
Relax and wait for God to extend,
His hand of blessing that never will end.

Keep in your mind that to achieve,
You must not let go of what you believe.
Fight the battle of faith to the end,
For some day to eternal life you'll ascend.