

The Advocate of Truth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Word Keys That Unlock Truth 3
 Our word this month is "disquieted".

Thanksgiving A Day Of Gratitude 3-4
 It would be good if Americans were on their knees giving thanks to God.

The Seed 4-7
 The seed is the most important part of the plant.

"O Lord, My Strength ... In Whom I Will Trust." 8-9
 God is indeed a rock, a fortress, and a deliverer.

Communicate 10-13
 The lack of communication causes many problems.

God's Design For Marriage 13
 God never changes His values. He meant for marriage to be a life long commitment.

The Signs Of The Times 14-15
 Some medical students start a new religion claiming there are no absolute truths.

Questions And Answers 16-17
 Will you please comment on Paul's letter to Philemon?

The Church Around The World 18-19
 This month we look at the dedication of a new church building in Garikapadu, India.

The Children's Pages 20-23
Sabbath School Lessons
A Story - "Extra Thanks"
Games and Puzzles

We hope you have a blessed Thanksgiving, and that you will thank the Lord for His wonderful blessings every day.

The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
 PUBLISHING HOUSE
 P.O. Box 328
 Salem, WV 26426-0328**

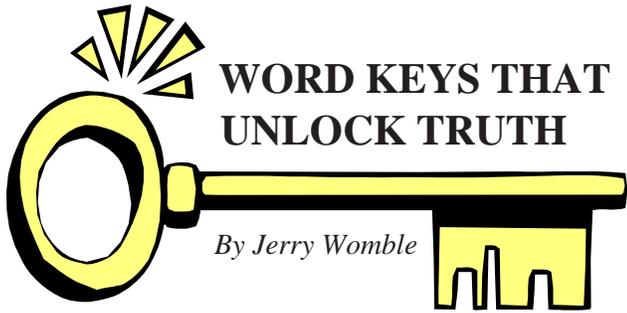
**Telephone: 304-782-1411
 Fax: 304-782-2248**

E-Mail: cogsevday@aol.com

Web site: www.churchofgod-7thday.org

Del DeLong
Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff
Gary Mills Managing Editor
Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor
Fred Hardman Printer

Volume LV Number 5
November 28, 2005
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940



DISQUIETED

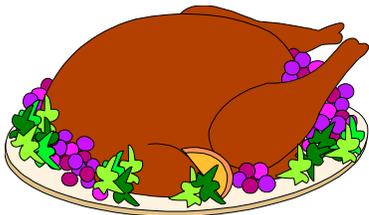
One text where disquieted is found is in Psalm 42:5, and it means despair or disturbed to the point of moaning and groaning within one's own self. David knows that his enemies are many and they want to take his place as king; therefore, he feels depressed, but he knows he shouldn't. He questions himself about why he feels this way. In the last part of this verse, he realizes that there is a brighter

side to his situation, and that he needs to take a more cheerful look at the matter and not to let his mind rest on the darker side with its discouraging things. This despair that he felt must have been heavy on his heart, because he talks about it again in verse 11. In this, we see that he was continually seeking God's guidance in his life. When he started this chapter, he was comparing himself to a deer that is thirsty and in need of water from the brook. He says that he has the same thirst for God, not just the testimonies, judgments and statutes of God but for God Himself.

We, ourselves, as with David, can not find much satisfaction in keeping God's ordinances unless we are making God Himself the center of our lives.

We can relate to the situation that David is in, because we, too, can have this despair in our lives at times. It may be in our jobs, our health, our family or the ones to whom we are trying to teach the word of God. Instead of being disturbed, let us count our blessings.

THANKSGIVING A DAY OF GRATITUDE



By Bond Tennant



This year, November 24th is Thanksgiving Day here in America. Some other countries also have a day of thanksgiving each year.

The very first immigrants to reach these shores gave emotional thanks to God just for having spared their lives during that first severe winter. President Abraham Lincoln officially decreed that all America should set aside a day especially to give thanks unto God for so richly blessing us with such bountiful abundance.

America continues to observe this day each year. However, like our other holidays, even this one has become nothing more than a shallow holiday. It has become a vehicle for commercialism! Many Americans use it for

gluttony and drunkenness. This follows the basic pattern of our pagan-inspired holidays such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas. However, of all our festivals, Thanksgiving is one holiday not rooted in paganism.

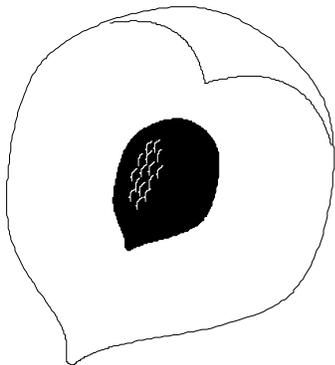
It would be well for Americans to be on their knees giving thanks to God for more than just one day of the year. Unfortunately, many in America, like many in other countries, have been spoiled by success. Many have come to believe that "we did it all by ourselves." As a people, we are no longer dependent upon our Heavenly Father. We have even invited Him to leave many of our fine establishments! Many believe that their success has come to pass due solely to their own hard work and determina-

tion. Many also feel that all our technology and scientific breakthroughs are developments which have been wrought by our own hands.

It is certainly true that God is a functional and a practical God, and He does expect us to achieve material success through diligent physical and mental efforts. When God blessed the first man and woman, He told them, "..., Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

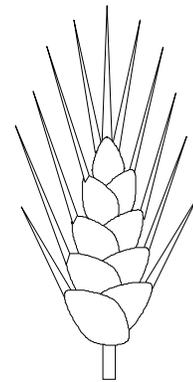
America does not really feel the gratitude that it should for the abundant blessings which God has poured forth upon it. Our present ills are in direct relationships to our lack of praise to the One who has provided all things.

This Thanksgiving Day, as you meet around a table filled with abundance to fellowship with family and friends, please bow your head and give sincere thanks to our Heavenly Father. Satan runs rampant during these evil days. Only God can heal the gaping wounds which he has inflicted.



THE SEED

By Carol Buechner



The dictionary states that a seed is the part of a flowering plant that typically contains the embryo (tiny plant) with a protective covering and stored food that can develop into a new plant. The seed is the most important part of the plant since it is the part that is able to produce a new plant. In order for a seed to sprout and begin the growing process, it must have air, moisture and the right temperature. Once these conditions have been provided, the seed sprouts send tiny rootlets into the ground. Then the tiny plant that has been dormant inside the seed can grow and push through the soil to receive the sun that it

needs to continue its growth. The tiny plant that sprouts must have proper conditions for the plant to thrive. These include the right amount of moisture, sunshine, air and good soil. As the plant grows larger and larger, it continues to need the proper conditions for it to continue being a healthy plant. If moisture is withheld from the plant, it will wither and die. If the proper nutrients are not available in the soil or through the use of fertilizer, the plant will not grow to its fullest quality. Think of a bean. Inside it is a tiny, tiny bean plant lying dormant. The food is stored around it, and it is protected by the outside covering. The

JESUS DIED FOR US

"And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him" (Mark 15:20).

Crucifixion was a terrible way to die. It was a painful and degrading death which was reserved for the worst criminals and the lowliest enemies of the Roman state. From Jesus' humble birth to His painful death, His life was not what one would expect of a Savior who came to walk the earth.

The Greeks and Romans expected their gods to come to earth and to act lawlessly, sinning with impunity. But in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the example of a Savior who stripped Himself of His former glory and lived a humble and holy life among the dregs of society.

Jesus' death confirms that He did not come to be a king among us who would lord it over us. Christ died for all the transgressions of mankind, so that everyone who believes in Him and keeps His commandments may not die but have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

bean can be kept on the shelf for months, and it will not do anything. The potential is there for a new plant, but that is not enough. As soon as the bean is planted in the ground and provided with water, the sprouting begins quickly and continues as long as the proper conditions are present. Soon the plant will be producing a wealth of the beans to eat as well as grow more plants. Seeds are extremely important to the survival of the human race because they reproduce a large part of the food we need to stay alive.

There is a seed that is extremely important, and it is discussed in the Bible in Luke, chapter eight. Jesus has spoken the parable of the sower to the people who have gathered to hear Him. After He gives the parable, the disciples want to understand more about it so Jesus explains what the seed is in this parable. "Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God**" (verse 11). Keep that last statement in mind as examination is made of the parable and what each of the four parts mean.

Jesus, the Almighty Son of God, has come in person to "sow" (spread, broadcast, disseminate, propagate) the word of God to all who would listen. Many people have come from nearby cities to hear what this "prophet" has to say. They have heard about His teachings and the many miracles that He has performed. Will they hear what they want to hear, and will they understand it?

Jesus begins the parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it" (verse 5). The explanation for it is in verse twelve: "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

What can be concluded about the first part of the parable? The word of God is sown in a heart that is not really tuned into hearing the word of God. They may give brief attention to what they hear but it does not last long. They are overly involved in the ways of the world and in their own selfish needs. Satan can easily influence their thoughts and cause them to turn their attention back to the world.

The second part of the parable of the sower states: "And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture" (verse 6). Jesus explains this to mean: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy;

and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (verse 13).

What can be concluded about the second part of the parable? The word of God is sown in a heart that seems to be fertile. They may profess the word of God for a while, but it does not really take root in their hearts. As soon as life gets difficult and the trials begin, they wither away and return to the ways of the flesh.

The third part of the parable is delivered: "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it" (verse 7). Jesus defines this meaning: "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (verse 14).

What can be concluded about the third part of this parable? The word of God is sown in a heart that seems receptive, but then the ways of the world and the needs of the flesh begin growing and pushing out the spiritual growth needed to become stronger. The old ways of the flesh soon cloud the word of God and the growth of the word in the heart becomes stunted, eventually dying out completely. Thorns are sharp and penetrating. It does not take long for them to push out the good plants.

The fourth and final part is revealed: "And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred fold" (verse 8). Jesus clarifies this as: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Verse 15).

What can be concluded about the fourth part of the parable? The word of God is sown in the heart of fertile soil that is ready to receive more and more. Roots can grow deep into the soil because the heart is receptive to changing and not allowing the world to return nor the ways of the flesh to be revived. Fruit is produced with a bountiful harvest. More seeds of the word are planted reinforcing what has already been planted.

What is the significance of this parable delivered by Jesus? Remember that Jesus spoke definitely that, "**The seed is the word of God.**" Put this parable in terms of today. Jesus is not delivering the word of God in His personal body, but He is delivering the word into our hearts, the soil, through the written word of God, the Bible. As you contemplate what each part of the parable means, connect it with your heart and the condition it is in for

receiving the word of God.

As you have seen from the parable of the sower that Jesus spoke, the word of God is extremely important in your spiritual development. Have you ever stopped to think about the significance it can have in your life and how it can change your whole life? How much of God's word are you sowing into your heart, and are you reaping a bountiful harvest in your life?

The word of God reveals everything you need to know about God and His ways. It is impossible to fully live your life in spiritual abundance when you don't study what God has written for your benefit. How can you know the will of God unless you know what the Bible says? Jesus instructs, "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother" (Mark 3:35). Paul states, "...doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:6). The author of Hebrews says, "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (10:36). Doing the will of God is vital and the only way to do it is to know His will through His word planted in your heart on a daily basis.

The word of God reveals the promises God has in store for you. Peter informs you, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: of God is to discover them by studying the Bible. You can go by the words of another person but need to discover them on your own. Remember that "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise..." (II Peter 3:9). What God has promised in His word, He will give you if you know what He promised to give His children.

If you are truly a child of God, then you have been given the "Great Commission" to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19-20)." Jesus left instructions to all of His servants to be ambassadors for Him taking the message of salvation to all that can be possibly reached. This includes you. But, how can you take the message of salvation to those you come in contact with if you don't know Jesus and His loving ways? How can you represent Jesus if you have no idea what He has said and what He expects?

Knowing the word of God in detail is the best defense that you have against Satan. How can you stand strong if you do not have the right words to say to Satan to stop him from pulling you down to his ways? Jesus

used the word of God to stop Satan during His time in the wilderness. "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. ...It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. ..Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:4,7,10). With these words, Satan left Jesus and the "angels came and ministered unto him" (verse 11). Doing as Jesus did, you can use the word of God to repel Satan. You can see the power of the words written in the Bible. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). How can you use this weapon if you have no knowledge of what to say?

It is quite obvious that knowing the word of God is a vital part of your Christian walk. However there is one essential area of your life that the word of God cannot be overlooked. Here is a clue to that area. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is an unquestioning belief in God that does not need evidence or proof. If God says in His word that He will do it, you can depend on Him to keep His promise. It is significant to understand where faith comes from. It was stated clearly in Romans 10:17. It comes through the word of God. If you feel that you are lacking in faith, what should you do? Pick up the Bible and read it. That is how you develop faith. If you are struggling in a certain area of your life, see what the Bible says about it, and let it sink into your heart. This produces faith that will overcome your struggle. For example you may be having financial problems. Turn to Malachi chapter three and see what God has to say concerning the possibility that you might be robbing Him, which could be the source of your financial struggles. There are many other passages that you can discover as you spend time delving into the word of God. How can you develop faith if you are not reading, studying, meditating on, memorizing, loving, devouring and using God's word in your life? Remember that "without faith it is impossible to please him (God): for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Build your faith every day by reading God's word and letting it penetrate into your heart.

The Bible has much to say about the importance of the word of God. As you read the following passages,

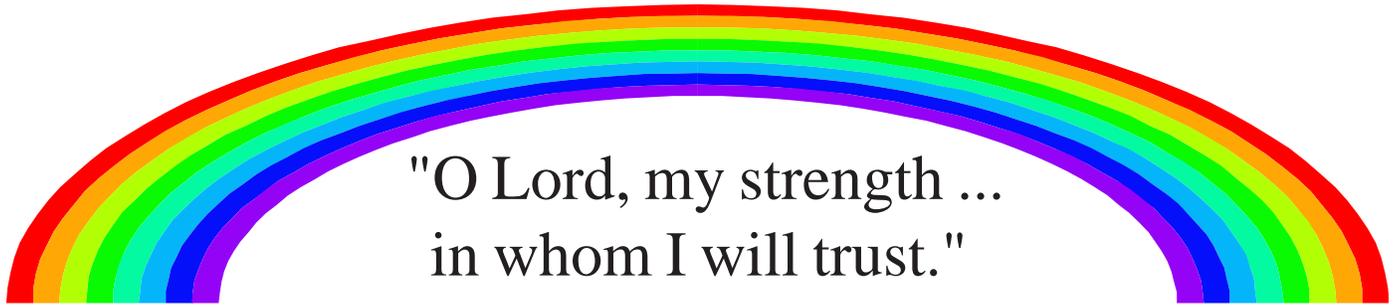
note what the word can do for you: Proverbs 2:1-12, 20-21: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things. That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it." Proverbs 3:1-4,8,13-14,21-23,26,35: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken. The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools." Proverbs 4:4,20-23: "...Keep my commandments, and live. My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh."

Did you realize that all of these positive outcomes are the result of knowing and doing the word of God? Review to be sure you get the full scope. The word of God helps you understand the fear of the Lord, find the knowl-

edge of God, and gives wisdom, knowledge, understanding. It is a buckler (shield, defense) for you, keeps you in paths of judgment and preserves your way as a saint. The word of God will help you have discretion (the ability to make right decisions and choices), preserve you, deliver you from the evil person and those that speak against you. It will help you walk with others who know the word and will keep you on the path of righteousness. The word of God further states that it will bring you length of days, long life and peace. It will give you favor and good understanding with God and man. The word of God is health, happiness, grace, safety, confidence, security and faith. But most of all the word of God will bring you eternal life! Did you notice that Proverbs spoke of the word as being a treasure, better than silver or gold? You can have that treasure in your heart if you continually fill it with God's word. Once a week will not produce much and will leave room for weeds to start to grow.

You can know the Bible quite well and be able to speak the word fluently, but if you are not OBEYING the word by putting it into practice in your life, it is useless. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22). Notice you must put it into practice in your life and not look at others to see how the word can apply to their life. Now what happens to those that disobey the word. "...when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thessalonians 1:7-8).

Think back to the parable of the sower that Jesus spoke. What about your heart? Is the soil fertile? Is it ready for the seed of the word of God? Are you finally planting new seed to keep the word growing? What kind of harvest are you producing? Are you reaping a sparse harvest or a bountiful one? What fertilizer are you using? Do you water it with prayer? Are you obeying what you know? Are you treasuring the word of God, or are the things of the world crowding out God's word? How much faith do you have? How is your garden going? Is it growing with seeds of God's word or is it polluted with weeds and thorns?



"O Lord, my strength ... in whom I will trust."

By Laura Tennant

"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (Psalm 18:1-3).

Let us think upon these words for a moment... "in whom I will trust." Trust means to have confidence in, to feel safe, and to be free from care. It is defined as a firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, justice, etc. of another person or thing; faith; reliance; a confident expectation, anticipation, or hope.

Trust should involve knowledge. We do not trust a stranger, but rather someone we know. We do not trust in a new product that might cause us harm, unless it has been tested, unless there is evidence of its reliability. Through the knowledge of God's Word, we find many reasons to trust our Heavenly Father. When we trust and obey God's Word, we have His Guidance, His Security and His Comfort. Through God's Word, we see evidence of promises kept and situations resolved. God's characteristics are revealed and nothing is hidden from us. He is indeed, a rock, a fortress, a deliverer. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:4).

Why should we trust in God? "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him" (Proverbs 30:5). "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me" (Psalm 56:11). "Behold God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2). When we trust in someone, we have expectations. We believe in them and their power to back up their claims. Do we come to God with doubt when there is trust? God's qualifications merit trust. As we learn more of God, through His Word and

experience Him in our lives, our trust becomes stronger. Trust in God implies a strength - not in ourselves but in Him. Complete trust brings perfect peace. With such trust there is no doubt. There is no room for worry with complete trust. Trust brings a reliance, a learning, a knowledge that we can't do it ourselves. Trust brings faith. A lack of faith brings mistrust.

We often let lies, deception and short term sight keep us from this complete trust in God. These and many more are tools for our adversary, the devil. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit" (Jeremiah 7:8). "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies; because thou didst trust in their way, in the multitude of thy mighty men" (Hosea 10:13). "Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psalm 40:4).

Another reason for lack of complete trust is a reliance on ourselves. Many people attempt to live by their own strength, under their own power. "I was afraid...not of torture, not of dying, but afraid of losing control of my life. I was afraid to trust you. I didn't really believe you." How many of us are willing to put our lives completely in the hands of another? You have heard the old saying, "If you want it done right, do it yourself." Paul says, "For when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Corinthians 12:10, last part). Paul knew how important it was to put God first, to put God in control. In Proverbs 3:5-7 we read, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be now wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." Trust involves complete surrender.

Trust should involve good judgement. Instead of trust-

ing God completely and yielding to His guiding hand, we often try to help Him out, and this is when we get into real difficulty. When we have trust and are patient and wait on the Lord, and do not try to rush ahead or interfere with His plan, wonderful things can happen. Do we rest in our faith? Do we wait on God to fulfill the promise in His own time and way or do we try to force God's hand? Do we try to speed up the process? Do we try to help God along? Waiting for God's timing is trusting in Him to do what is best for us. It is often hard to wait. Maybe just this one instance of my life God needs help. The road of life has many curves and detours, but we must keep our minds focused on God's Word. We must use good judgment and follow His leading. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

It is not uncommon to hear requests for guarantees or promises. Is this trust? Should we bargain with God? For example, if you will let me have this much needed raise, I will never miss a day of church. This is not how God operates. This is not trust. He gives us a promise to never leave or forsake us. "Let your conversion be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). Trust does bring promises. "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate" (Psalm 34:22). "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

By putting our trust in God, we do not have to carry the load. Often times we do not turn everything over to God. Unconsciously, we harbor some doubt. For some reason we cannot let go. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). We are told to: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22). Trust brings with it a sense of completion, a closure. Trust has to be 100% to be effective.

Perfect trust casts away fear. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:3-4). Trust signifies a certain confidence. "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

It is our responsibility to determine the direction of our trust. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psalm 146:3-5). "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord": (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

Is trust in God just a one time event? "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah" (Psalm 62:8).

As we close on these thoughts, let us remember the lines from a familiar song, "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey."

WHY DO WE HAVE TRIALS?

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

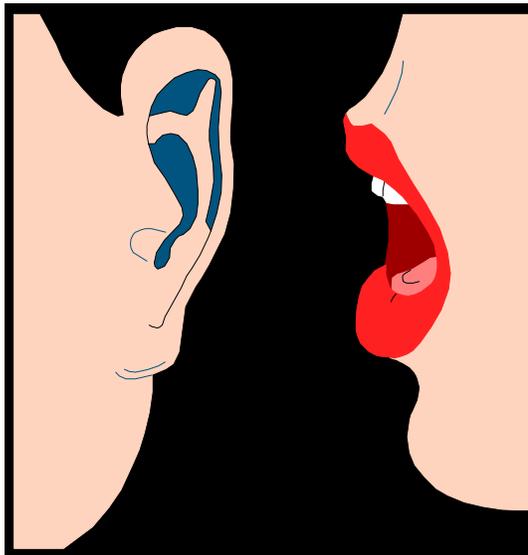
We grow stronger when we are challenged, when things are difficult, and when we do not simply surrender to demanding situations. When we are faced with family or financial problems, illness, work assignments or any condition that requires us to buckle down and face reality, we not only become stronger, we can also grow in our trust in God. Our Father knows all about each of us. The Bible even tells us that He counts the hairs on our heads. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30).

We should never doubt that God is aware of all the daily issues with which we are faced. Just as any father is pleased to see his children rise to any occasion. Our Lord also is pleased when ever we rise and face difficult situations. True children of God will stand up to the challenges of life, and they do not give up or take the easy way out.

Even when we feel that we have failed in our various endeavors, if we accept our challenges and do our very best, we should know that God is pleased with us. Knowing, living and trusting God is our ultimate challenge in this world, and when we do His will, we are successful.

COMMUNICATE

By David DeLong
(Reprinted)



At one time, the earth had one language (Genesis 11:1-9). Communication then was much simpler than it is today. The story in Genesis goes on to tell us that a common effort was made by the people who spoke that one language to build the city and tower of Babel. Now, the building of a city and tower is not, in itself, sinful. But there are at least two sins that can be readily seen in connection with the building of this city and tower. First, the people wanted to "make us a name." They were full of pride and ambition. Second, the people did not want to be scattered upon the face of the earth, which was in direct disobedience to God's command to man to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it..." (Genesis 1:28). The result from these sinful ways is explained in Genesis 11. The Lord saw the people were one in purpose made possible by the one language that they had. He also knew that the people would not stop at doing just this particular wickedness, but would conspire to do anything that their hearts desired. The tower was an affront to God who had promised not to destroy the earth with a flood again. Thus, the Lord confounded their language. This one act by God, alone, was enough to completely stop the building of the city and tower of Babel. The people, by force, were scattered over the face of the earth.

From this incident, we can see the tremendous power that communication, or the lack of communication, has upon man. One of the definitions of communication is "the exchange of thoughts, messages, etc." Through the power of thought-exchange and thought unity that God has given to communication, mankind can do almost anything that

he sets his mind to do - whether it be for good or evil.

The ability to communicate is not only an important privilege, but is also a great responsibility. For one to communicate properly, the result can be one of great good or advantage. But, when a person communicates improperly, or not at all, the results will almost always be harmful. In fact, every last problem in the world can ultimately be traced down to poor communication or a lack of communication. This can be seen: (1) in the home (2) in the church (3) in the world.

In the home, families are falling apart in appalling numbers. Even in Christian homes, family unity is not all that it should be. The reason is a breakdown in communication. In recent years, we have been hearing the term "generation gap" as related to the lack of association between the older generation and the younger generation. Actually, the term should be more properly called "communication gap" since the split is between more than just the older and younger generations.

The divorce rate is reaching heights that are almost astronomical. Again, the reason is a breakdown in communication. Why is this so? In the first place, the major reason for break ups in the family is a lack of communication to God. Thousands of people have never come to Him, through Jesus, in repentant prayer. Without this vital step, a person cannot be associated with God at all. In the second place those who have come to God, through Jesus, are not keeping a living communication open to their Father in heaven, James 4:1-3 says, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence,

even of your lusts that was in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In the third place, poor communication, or the absence of communication among family members tends to separate, or alienate those family members. So it is with the church.

This comes down to our second consideration: problems in the church. We have just seen that if our prayer life (or communication link) to God is suffering, then we cannot possibly have harmonious family relations. This is absolutely true with our relationship to members of the church. Without first a proper "touch" with God, we cannot be in good relations with our spiritual brethren. If we are not on good relations with our spiritual brethren, then the body of Christ suffers as a whole.

Consider, for a few moments, the terrible affect that "evil communication" has upon the church. LIES - this is undoubtedly one of the biggest factors that causes splits and division among brethren. It was assuredly one of the factors in heaven that caused one third of things to follow after "the father of lies," Satan (John 8:44). Again, it was Satan's lie that prompted Eve into sinning against God (Genesis 3:1-6). The Bible tells us, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Proverbs 12:22).

GOSSIP - Very closely associated with lying is gossip which is based upon rumor. Gossiping has caused many a true follower of Jesus to become discouraged or hurt, thus providing a chance for Satan to take advantage of them. Gossiping (or talebearing) was, and still is, another abomination to God. Proverbs 6:16-19 says, "These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood. An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." In Leviticus 19:16, we read, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the lord."

BACKBITING - This sin is closely associated with gossiping because it is saying something about a person maliciously when that person is not present to defend himself. This is a form of "character killing" and is a kind of

murder. Many have fallen victim to this form of injury. So important is it for us not to participate in backbiting, that the one who does this, without seeking repentance, will be excluded from God's Tabernacle and Holy hill. Notice the admonition in Psalm 15:1,3: "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue...": The rest of Psalm 15 is also required, obviously, as well as following the rest of the Bible for one to have favor with God. But backbiting alone like any sin can keep a person from having eternal life.

MOCKERY - If you have noticed, each sin so far mentioned, is very similar to the one preceding it. Mockery of a person is associated closely with backbiting. Both are sure to injure the character or reputation of an individual.. Sometimes a person becomes the object of an unkind joke, or jest. The person so treated is actually enduring a form of persecution. And worse yet, the "joke" becomes a direct insult to God Himself. We can deduct this from the principle of Proverbs 17:5 which says, "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." The same principle applies, I believe, to all of God's children. If we mock them, we are reproaching God. Ephesians 5:4 tells us several things that are not to be "once named" among the saints. These are: "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:31-46 that whatever is done, or not done, to His people is counted as if it were done, or not done, to Him.

INAPPROPRIATE SPEECH - Once again, we can see that this sin is associated with the preceding one of mockery. If a person is really a Christian, then he will never tell a "dirty story". However, sometimes a Christian's speech is not appropriate. The words expressed may even be said in thoughtlessness. Perhaps the problem is one of using "slang" words that need to be curbed. In any case, we need to guard the words that come out of our mouths. Jesus said in Matthew 12:37, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Now, if there are many problems in the church due to improper communication, think of the multitude of problems that are caused in the world from this. Here again, the main source of the problems comes from a lack of communication with the Heavenly Father. Thus, the result

is that the people of the world remain unconverted. The point now that I want to bring out, is that the people of the world really do want to communicate. However, they are either unwilling, or do not know how, to repent of their sins. That is the tragedy of the situation.

People tend to congregate where they communicate - where they are understood. And so it is with the people of the world. Those who tell dirty stories gather around others who tell such stories. Those who take the Lord's name in vain gather where others do the same. Hundreds of "movements" and groups were established so that people of like interests could come together and communicate to one another about those interests. Thus, we see the many lodges and clubs that are prevalent with the world today. Some in the world are so desperately trying to communicate that they take drastic measures such as using drugs or trying to commit suicide to be heard. But, the single fact remains the people everywhere, even in the world, are sincerely seeking to communicate to someone - sometimes anyone - about their problems, interests, and hopes. The sad part is that the communication of those in the world is often misdirected - and thus does them no real good. Then, too, the fact comes home that perhaps Christians are not listening to these misdirected phrases of the people of the world. What is the Christians's duty to the people? What is the church's duty to them? We will go more into this later.

Let us now take a look at the way the Lord wants His church to be - and thus the way each Christian is to be - when communication is being used to its full advantage. First, let us consider that communication is always two-sided. We must receive as well as give. Therefore, we start with the Lord's communication to His people. The Lord communicates to His people today primarily through one source - the Holy Bible. Individuals may receive a vision or message from the Lord in a dream, but it will never contradict the Bible. There can be no substitute for daily, private Bible study. Reading the Bible is letting God speak directly and personally to us as individuals as well as collectively. The Bible is full of statements regarding "Thus saith the Lord." Jesus is called "The Word." He is the direct communication of God in living form. Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." God has never failed to communicate to His people. It is His people that sometimes break the link of communica-

tion to Him.

It is vital that we keep this "communication link" open to God through prayer. The biggest reason why this link is sometimes broken is probably because of sin in our lives. Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Probably the next biggest hindrance in our prayer life is doubt. God will not answer our requests to him if we have doubt in our hearts. See James 1:5-8. How must we come to God in prayer? We must ask of God the desires of our heart (Matthew 7:7-8; John 16:23-24). But, we must also ask according to His will (I John 5:14-15)). We must ask abiding in Jesus, and His words abiding in us (John 15:7; I John 3:22). Also, we must ask in Jesus' name (John 14:13-14). Finally we must ask believing (Matthew 21:18-22). Sometimes, we must even ask in group prayer (Matthew 18:18-20). The type of prayer that we must have just been discussing could be called the prayer of petition and is closely associated with several other kinds of prayer, especially the prayer of intercession for others. Let us consider I Timothy 2:1. It says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayer, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." It is the responsibility of every Christian to "intercede" in prayer for the lost. I believe that through prayer of intercession, if we are right with God, that we can "pray" members into our congregations.

This last aspect that we have been discussing ties right in with a third type of communication that we must be involved in to be acceptable unto God. We have already considered God's communication to us through His Word, and our communication to Him through prayer, and now we will discuss our communication to others. A heavy responsibility has been given to the minister of God's church. Acts 20:28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he (Jesus) hath purchased with his own blood." But the responsibility of the care of the churches is not only upon the minister's shoulders. The charge that Paul gave to Timothy can be applied, I believe, to every Christian today: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:2).

Certainly, it is also the responsibility of every Child of God to bring the message of salvation to the lost. We have been declared by Jesus to be "The salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." In Isaiah 43:10,12, the people

of God are declared to be "witnesses" of the Lord. Again, in Matthew 24:14 it is stated that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations". Acts 1:8 declares that after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit, they would be witnesses to the whole world. We are witnesses of the Lord today. After we have been made right with God, the next most important role of God's work on earth is that we must live out is to be witnesses for the Lord. What an awesome responsibility we have! What an important communication we have to others!

On the path of life, we can encourage the downhearted and weary by kind, living, and sympathetic words and deeds. Sometimes that is all it takes for a discouraged person to take faith again in the Lord.

Before we close this study, I want to point out another important, but little thought about, type of communication. This is "self-communication". Psalms 4:4 says, "Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." We must communicate to God and to ourselves before we can properly communicate to others.

Once more, I want to emphasize that I believe the world's problems as a whole: the individuals, the family's, the church's, even the people of the unsaved world, stem from one source: an improper communication or a lack of communication to God and to man. Communication does not refer to just our words, but it does include them. James 3:2-10 tells us how utterly hopeless it is to try to control our tongue - our spoken communication - by ourselves. Only by God's help can we accomplish this. Unless our communication is controlled by God, our very lives will become corrupt. I Corinthians 15:33 says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Let us heed the words of the writer of Proverbs, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

By William F. Scriggins

God instituted and defined marriage in the beginning as a man and a woman, committed to each other for life; however we live in a time when it is possible that more people fall outside of that definition than inside those bounds. God never changes His values to compensate

for our behavior and he never lowers His standards, so we will feel better about our behavior. This is God's ideal and even if nobody lives up to it, we cannot redesign what God has already designed.

Our behavior as a culture has drifted far from this ideal. We can continue to allow our own behavior to define our values or we can face up to the fact that we are sinners and we live in a fallen world where we all fall short of His values.

How does a society arrive at "values" if there are no absolutes? There's always a conflict between what I ought to do and what I want to do. We're fallen creatures and we can rationalize anything. As a society with no God the temptation is to not change the behavior but to change the thought to. When we do this, values are being determined by the flesh and not by a sovereign and personal God who holds me personally accountable. The fact is that we cannot maintain a moral standard without God. We're not just making the rules up as we go along but we're involved with a God who doesn't change.

Even if our society redefines family, that will not change the reality of the pain and suffering of children growing up without a father or mother. Research studies show that there is a high correlation between disrupted homes and every social problem in our culture.

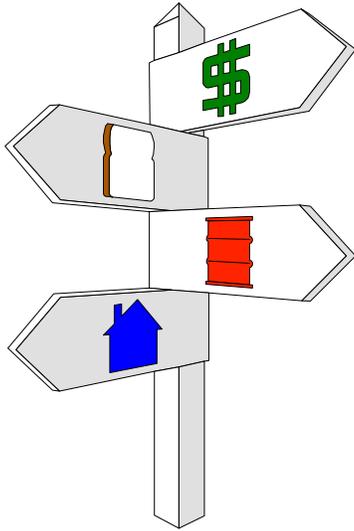
We can pour millions of dollars into programs to help our young people, but when we erase God and get rid of the taboos on divorce, we snip the last cord of hope for these problems.

What does this mean for single parents? Does this mean they are second class citizens? Of course not. All of us live in a fallen world and we all fall short of God's standards. That's why Jesus came to sacrifice His life so that He could release us from the eternal penalty of our sin and free us from the guilt of our sin.

Children from these homes have special needs. A study was done of children who had grown up in single parent or disrupted homes and how they had grown to be successful in their lives. The common denominator in every case was that a significant adult plugged into their lives at a critical time and walked them through difficult situations.

As we celebrate God's definition of marriage, people will then be drawn to His standard and we are also made aware of our great need for a Saviour.

Adapted from the Tuscaloosa Christian Family magazine



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 appeared in *The Berean Call* by way of the internet.

"No Doubt We're In The Last Days" News Med student starts new religion claiming no absolute truths

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. -Ford Vox started a religion in his spare time.

He calls it Universism and is recruiting atheists, deists, freethinkers and others who can rally around the notion that no universal religious truth exists and that the meaning of existence must be determined by each individual.

Vox, a University of Alabama at Birmingham medical student, says Christianity, Islam and to a lesser extent other world religions, are harmful because they attempt to impose their own version of moral certainty on others.

"Religious faith is very powerful" Vox said. "It is so powerful that it is dangerous. It's very difficult to find an alternative to that."

Vox said he started Universism in 2003 and has drawn about 7,500 sympathetic souls who have signed on through his Web sit, universist.org. It also drew the attention of the evangelical Christian group Focus on the Family, which has studied it as part of a course on different world views.

In Birmingham, the Universists are showing a documentary called *The God Who Wasn't There*, which questions traditional beliefs about Jesus. A University group in New York, plans to show the documentary in June.

Universist activities have involved meetings once or twice a month at bars and coffeehouses, along with e-

mail and on-line discussions on how to define their relativist philosophy.

"We absolutely reject absolute truth" said Vox, who envisions organized Universist communities like churches.

The Bible should be treated as literature, not history or revelation, Vox said. "We would treat it like Shakespeare; people can learn from it like any great story," he said. "We want people to continue exploring in a religious realm, but do that safely - an individual sitting down, thinking about his own view of the world" (Garrison, *Star-Telegram.com*, May 28, 2005).

Comment

Absolute truth is not popular today. Most people are more concerned about what satisfies them, what pleases them and what works in their lives. Because of that, their judgments and their opinions will vary depending on the situation. A person may believe something today, but tomorrow he may not believe it because the situation has changed. For him there is no objective truth.

Living in a society that is absolutely intolerant of absolute truth, people want the liberty to decide from themselves what is right and what is wrong. Yes, they want the liberty to look upon the Bible as good literature but without authority. When they read it, they have a "take-it-or-leave-it" attitude.

However, whatever anyone says or believes, the authority remains. The Bible speaks with authority. Anyone who refuses to listen does so at his own peril because its message is the absolute truth of the true God.

Defining victory over terror difficult

Benchmarks of success will vary and violence won't cease, experts say

**by Pauline Jelinek
Associated Press**

"The best we can hope for is to reduce the level of conflict, the deadliness of conflict and the frequency."

Shireen Hunter

Center for Strategic and International Studies

WASHINGTON - The war on terror might eventually be won, depending on one's definition of winning.

Victory might mean a drop in the number of terror attacks or a drop in death tolls they inflict. But almost no one foresees a complete end to terror tactics that have succeeded in getting attention for Islamic extremists and others. Witness the Middle East, for example.

President Bush reignited a continuing controversy early this week by saying he doesn't think the war is winnable; then he reversed himself, saying flatly that it is.

The truth is probably more nuanced, say experts on the military, Islam and international issues.

And though Bush asserted that the United States is winning, there's wide disagreement on that as well.

It won't be time to even think about declaring victory until the United States goes "many years" without a catastrophic attack like the September 11, 2001, assaults that killed almost 3,000 Americans, said Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst for the liberal-oriented Brookings Institution, which operates a sort of loyal-opposition commentator here when Republicans hold the White House.

Even then, O'Hanlon said, attacks would continue, perhaps at the level of the October 2000 bombing of the USS Cole off Yemen that killed 17 sailors.

"The best we can hope for is to reduce the level of conflict, the deadliness of conflict and the frequency," agreed Shireen Hunter, Islam specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a national security-oriented research group.

That will require protecting the homeland, crushing the current generation of al-Qaida and its sympathizers,

and stemming the rise of new generations of like-minded Islamic radicals, analysts said.

Americans are split on how it's going. A survey last month showed four in 10 saying the war is being won, four in 10 saying that it isn't and the rest not sure.

Analysts appeared more worried.

The war's not being won, O'Hanlon said, "because we're doing a good job against the first generation of al-Qaida but not...the second."

Al-Qaida was scattered from its haven in Afghanistan, arrests of some leaders and operatives have been made around the world, and international coalition efforts have stemmed the flow of some money sent to finance terrorist activities.

"We are doing damage to the other side," said Joshua Muravchik of the Americans Enterprise Institute.

At the same time, some U.S. actions have increased contempt for American among Muslims, thus helping terrorists recruit new followers, O'Hanlon and others said.

For instance, though Bush says the Iraq war is part of the counterterrorist war, critics say it was a setback and unnecessary diversion from the real battle because of the failure to find weapons of mass destruction there - or any proof of a working link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaida.

Even those supporting the invasion of Iraq say almost nothing has been done toward the long-term task of changing minds in the Middle East, the breeding ground for most Islamic terrorism.

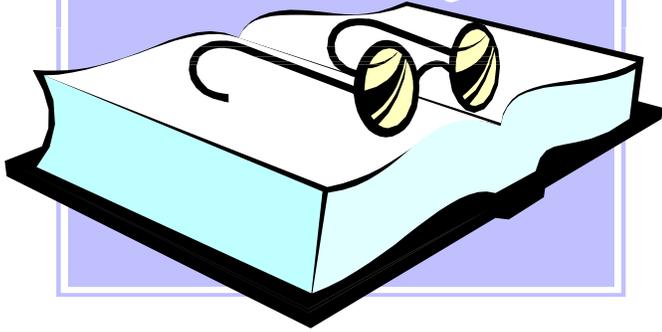
Comment

Terrorism is a sign of the last days. There can be no victory over it, and it will wrongly increase! Jesus said, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:25-26).

Terrorism plus the weird actions of the forces of nature will, no doubt, be the main causes for the failing of man's hearts.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Will you please comment on Paul's Epistle to Philemon?

Answer: The Apostle Paul probably had not the slightest idea that his friendly note to this friend, Philemon of Colosse, would be preserved in the sacred canon. Unlike any other portion of the New Testament it deals with no matter which concerns the history or doctrine of the church. It gives us valuable insight into true Christianity and shows us that the highest and most noblest friendships are possible only in Christ

Some literary critics have referred to it as the most perfect example of letter writing in existence. When one understands the evidence of its divine inspiration, it is not hard to understand.

When Colossians was written in the prison at Rome and sent to the church, this private letter to Philemon was doubtless sent along to him as a member of that group. In Colossians 4:9, Philemon's slave is said to have been an inhabitant of Colosse, so it is evident that this was the city of Philemon's residence.

In addressing Philemon, Paul speaks not as an apostle, but as a friend who is in the prison suffering for the Gospel. This would appeal to the heart of Philemon, his convert. In verse two, it will be noted that this letter was to be shared with the church that gathered in Philemon's home. No doubt the letter was read to the group as a precious apostolic message, and many copies were made. We find it quoted in writings of the second century, so it is evident that it is widely circulated and considered divinely inspired.

The epistle was included in the list of New Testament writings given in the Muratorium fragment on the canon in 170 A.D. It is found in the old Latin Version made before the end of the second century.

The first three verses consist of greetings. Verses 4-7 give us a glimpse of the character of Philemon. Beginning with verse eight, we have the intercession for Onesimus, the worthless runaway slave of Philemon who had come under the Apostle Paul's influence by a curious irony. The name "onesimus" means "serviceable" or "profitable," but he had believed his name. He had stolen from his master and then run away. Paul knew from the law that Philemon could inflict an extreme punishment on this slave now found. Death was not unusual in such cases. Paul had led Onesimus to Christ, but since Philemon could not know how his slave's character had been changed, Paul sent his letter on ahead to prepare the way for the return of Onesimus.

It seems likely that Onesimus, on reaching Rome, had fallen in the hands of someone who had dealt with him and then taken him to the prison to see Paul. At Rome at this very time, we find a link between Paul and Colosse in the person of Epaphras, the founder edangelist of the Colossians church (Colossian 1:7-8; 4:12). Some believe it was Epaphras who took Onesimus to Paul and who carried the letter to Colosse on his return there.

"I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus," wrote Paul, whom I have begotten in my bonds" (Philemon, verse 10). The Way Translation gives: "I plead with you on

behalf of my child, for his spiritual father I have become here in prison."

Onesimus was being sent home a new man in Christ, one whom Paul himself was glad to own as a brother. What joy to Paul to be able to furnish his friend with such a demonstration of the transforming power of the Gospel! It is a thrill to any believer to know that God has used him in the reclamation of some soul deep in sin. Can we say that we have any spiritual children?

Oh, let us faithfully sow the good seed. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5). Dr. F.B. Meyers used to say: The farmer sometimes steeps the seeds before sowing them so that they will germinate more quickly. It is well if the Lord's worker keeps his testimony in prayer and tears. One may sow lavishly and accomplish little, but add real heart concern and prayer and the second half of the text is sure not to be fulfilled."

Playing on the meaning of the name "Onesimus," Paul says: "In time past he was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me" (Philemon verse 11). Paul had seen evidence of the reality of this man's conversion in the loving service he had rendered to him in prison. "I would have retained him with me," He wrote, "that in thy stead he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel" Yes, God can transform the worst characters in place of a good for nothing thief and runaway, Philemon was getting back a devoted, conscientious, trustworthy, godly servant. Well could he not afford to praise the Lord for all that had occurred.

"I have sent his again," continues the letter: Therefore receive him that gives a piece of my very heart" (Verse 12). As much as Paul desired the presence of Onesimus, a wrong had been done, and it could be righted only by the return of Onesimus to his master.

"Without thy sanction, would I do nothing" (verse 14). Paul would in no way take advantage of a friend. It is well to keep friendships in good repair. Let no obstacle develop. As one has said: God gives us our relatives, but we can choose our friends. Yes, and we can lose them by getting the best of them for some selfish purpose.

"He departed for a season," says Paul, "that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (verse 16). He suggests the design of God in the whole affair. "There is a divinity that shapes our ends." In the midst of sin and suffering, God is able, by unlikely methods and in unexpected

ways, to turn all for good. Thus, this escapade of Onesimus and Philemon's loss of his labor for a time, with all the general upset in the family circle because of it, ends in the hope of glory for Onesimus and for Philemon a consecrated servant who was also his brother in Christ.

One thing impresses us. Onesimus had to run away from Rome to become saved. A church met in the home of his master. We wonder if Philemon had thought of his slave as too ignorant and shiftless to be touched by the Gospel.

"Receive him as myself," says Paul. "If he oweth thee aught, be debit me with that...I will repay it" and then he adds: "by the way, Philemon, don't forget how thou owest me thine own salvation" (Verse 17-19). We cannot repay one who has led us to Christ. With this debt outstanding, Philemon would be able to meet any account of Onesimus.

Paul was willingly chargeable for another who was truly penitent. What an illustration of the tempted righteousness of Jesus Christ see to the account of every truly penitent unbelieving soul. Jesus wants us to receive Him and present Him with our sins. He has paid for all of our sins! Read Romans 4:6-8, 24-25 and II Corinthians 5:19.

Because on account of our sin, He has suffered what we deserved. His righteousness is imputed to us that we may have what He deserved. Thus, we are received in the Father's house, not as slaves but as Christ Himself - as sons beloved. May we, all our days, be His willing bondslaves, our affections set on the things above.

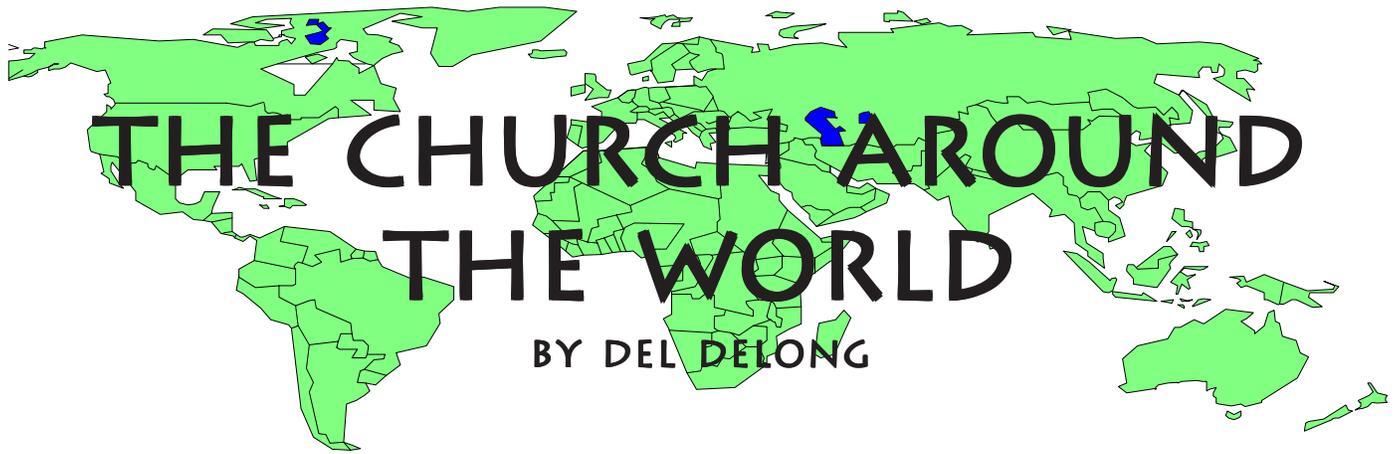
Question: Who does Lot's wife typify in Luke 17:32?

Answer: Luke 17:32 reads, "Remember Lot's wife."

The context shows that she typifies those who start to flee from judgment but turn back and are overcome by it. This is exactly what Lot's wife did. "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26).

Lot himself was a justified believer as shown by II Peter 2:7-8. "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"

Lot's life was saved when Sodom was destroyed, but his wife was an unbeliever, and she went out of Sodom only a short distance, following "behind him." All the time her heart was really in Sodom. Therefore, the judgment overcame her.



India

The following photographs are those of the dedication of the new church building in Garikapadu, India. This is the home church of our Apostle, M. Yehoshuva. He is the son of our overseer, M. Kanakarathnam. The brethren in India have been working hard on new church constructions.





LESSON I

DAVID ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 2:1-14.

Golden Text: II Samuel 2:4 (first part).

"And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah."

NOTE: We have learned that King Saul is dead and that David grieved much over his death. David was certainly a person with a heart of love to lament so much over the death of Saul, who had so continuously sought to kill him. Now David is about to be anointed king over Judah. Let us study how this was done.

1. David relied upon the Lord. What did he ask the Lord, and what did the Lord tell him to do in II Samuel 2:1?
2. Did David go? Who went with him? II Samuel 2:2-3.
3. Who anointed David king of Judah? What did they tell David? II Samuel 2:4.
4. Who did David send to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and what was the purpose of this trip? II Samuel 2:5-7.
5. What did Abner, the son of Ner, do in II Samuel 2:8-9?
6. Who was Ishbosheth, and how old is he when he began to reign over Israel? How long did he reign? II Samuel 2:10.
7. How long was David king in Hebron over the house of Judah? II Samuel 2:11.
8. What did Joab and the servants of David do in II Samuel 2:13-14?

DAVID'S SERVANTS SMITE THE ENEMY

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 2:15-32.

Golden Text: II Samuel 2:31.

"But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned that David was anointed King over Judah. He reigned seven and one half years. We are going to study at this time how David's servants fought for him against the enemy.

1. Who was Ishbosheth, and what did he and his servants do to the enemy at Helkath-hazzurim? II Samuel 2:15-16.
2. Who was beaten by the servants of David in II Samuel 2:17?
3. Who was Asahel, and who was he following? II Samuel 2:18-19.
4. What request did Abner make of Asahel when he discovered Asahel was pursuing him? Did Asahel obey Abner? II Samuel 2:20-23.
5. Who then pursued Abner? II Samuel 2:24-25.
6. What did Abner say to Joab in II Samuel 2:26, and what was Joab's reply in verse 27?
7. Did Joab pursue the enemy anymore? II Samuel 2:28-29.
8. How many of David's men were smitten, and how many of Abner's men were smitten? II Samuel 2:30-31.
9. Where did they bury Asahel? II Samuel 2:32.

LESSON III

DAVID ANOINTED KING OF ALL ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 5:1-12.

Golden Text: II Samuel 5:4.

"David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years."

NOTE: David has been king over Judah seven and one-half years. Saul's son, Ishbosheth, reigned over the rest of Israel. You may read the third and fourth chapters of II Samuel to learn how the rival kings fought over Israel. Now David is going to be king over all Israel, and he will dwell at Jerusalem.

1. Who came to David and spoke to him? II Samuel 5:1-2.
2. Who anointed David king over all Israel? II Samuel 5:3.
3. How old was David, and how long did he reign? II Samuel 5:4.
4. King David and his men went to Jerusalem. What did the Jebusites say unto David? II Samuel 5:6.
5. What did David reply to the Jebusites? II Samuel 5:8.
6. Did David go on and grow great? Why? II Samuel 5:9-10.
7. What did Hiram, king of Tyre, do for David? II Samuel 5:11.

A CHILD'S PRAYER

Father, we thank Thee for Thy Son,
 Who loves the children every one.
 Here in our land and far away,
 Bless all, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

LESSON IV

DAVID DEFEATS THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Reading: II Samuel 5:13-25.

Golden Text: II Samuel 5:25.

"And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer."

NOTE: David is now king over Israel and has moved his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem. Let us now study how David seeks the Lord's help in dealing with the Philistines and his victory over them.

1. How many sons and daughters were born to David? I Samuel 5:14-16.
2. When the Philistines heard that David was King over Israel, what did they do? I Samuel 5:17-18.
3. David inquired of the Lord to see if he should go up to the Philistines. What did the Lord tell him to do? I Samuel 5:19.
4. Did David obey the Lord in I Samuel 5:20?
5. What did David and his men burn? I Samuel 5:21.
6. Did the Philistines come again against David and his men? I Samuel 5:22.
7. What did the Lord tell David to do this time in I Samuel 5:23-24?
8. Did David obey the Lord, and what was the result? I Samuel 5:25

EXTRA THANKS

By Jean Gould

It was on Monday, coming home from school, that Billy found the little yellow dog. He was standing under a tree in the rain, crying softly. His fur was matted, and little streams of water ran down his nose and off his paws. He stared at Billy with such sad, pleading eyes - there was just nothing to do but stop and pet him. And the next thing Billy knew, he was bringing the pup home, wondering what Mother would say.

One look at the little dog was enough to tell Mother he needed help, and pretty soon the puppy was warm and dry and had a good meal inside him. When Father came home, they decided to put an ad in the paper, and if no one came for the dog, Billy could keep him. "But you will be the one to look out for him, Billy" Mother said. And she told him all he must do to care for his pet.

Billy nodded, feeling very important. He gave the dog a bath, fixed a place for him to eat in the kitchen and to sleep in the basement. He listened every time that the phone rang, afraid it might be someone answering Father's ad in the paper.

But no one called, and no one came. So now the little yellow dog belonged to Billy, and he had to choose a name for him.

"Buff would be a good name," said Billy to the little yellow dog one day early in November. The puppy wagged his tail and looked at Billy with big soft brown eyes that looked out from shaggy yellow fur.

"Now, Buff," Billy went on, "You must not chew up slippers or leave any biscuit around or bark all night long."

"Woof" said Buff, which meant, "I'll be a good dog."

Billy fixed Buff's collar, gave a short whistle, and the two of them started down the street together. Billy felt very proud and happy.

Halfway down the block, children started running up to them. A new dog was something special.

"Oh, I say, what a nice dog!" It was Linton, the English boy, who came up first with his twin sister Leslie, "Hello, old fellow!" He said, taking one of Buff's ears in his hand and holding it up. When he let go, the ear flopped down over Buff's eye.

"He's cunning!" laughed Leslie. "What's his name, Billy?"

"Buff," said Billy.

Jimmy came up then, and Marjorie and Mary Sue and big Bob. They all crowded around, asking questions about Buff and admiring him. The little dog stood quietly and let everyone pet him, feel his fur and those long ears, and didn't mind a bit.

"He's a good pooch, all right," said big Bob at last. And Billy knew Bob was right.

After that Buff was part of everything that went on. He came running to meet Billy every day when school was out, and the two of them went off together. Buff learned to do tricks like catching a piece of biscuit when Billy tossed it in the air, rolling over on his back, and he would jump through Bill's arms when he held together like a hoop. Billy felt sure there had never been another dog like Buff.

And then, just three days before Thanksgiving, it happened. When Billy came home from school that afternoon, no Buff came running to meet him. "Mother," called Billy, "have you seen Buff?"

"He was outside waiting for you a while ago," Mother said.

Billy looked all around the house, but there was no sign of Buff. He went down the street calling, "H'yuh, Buff; h'yuh, Buff!" But no little dog came running answer to his call. And no one in the block had seen the little dog either.

Billy is worried. His brothers Tod and Tim, took their bikes and rode around looking, but they couldn't find Buff. Mother called the animal shelter, but they said no lost dogs were turned in that day. When Father came home, he said they must put another ad in the paper, only this time it would be in the "Lost" instead of the "Found" column. Billy felt two big tears coming as he thought of Buff being lost.

For the next two days, Billy stayed close to the house when he came home from school, thinking he'd hear some news about Buff. But not a word came; and by Thanksgiving morning, Billy felt all hope was gone. It was about ten o'clock when he saw the big auto drive up. He saw a man get out and behind him came a little yellow dog. It was Buff! It was his very own Buff!

"Is this the place" began the man as Billy ran and

popped the door. But he couldn't finish. For with a glad bark, Buff jumped up and greeted Billy with great laps of his tongue. And Billy hugged the little dog as hard as he could. "I guess this is the place, all right," laughed the man.

Then he explained that Buff had come home with his dog Spot. "I'd have brought him back before this," the man said, "but I was called out of town. The first thing I did when I got home was to look in the paper for an ad. I guess Spot wanted company, and invited Buff to come home with him!"

The whole family thanked the man for returning Buff. Tod and Tim crowded around Buff, petting and hugging him. "Let's take him outdoors," suggested Tod. And the three boys decided to take a romp in the yard with Buff.

Presently Mother called them to come in and get washed for Thanksgiving dinner. When everyone was around the table, Father gave the blessing the way he always did, offering thanks for food, home, health and family and God's loving care. He finished, but Billy's lips moved a moment more before he looked up.

"What's the matter? Did I leave out something, Billy?" asked Father.

"Oh, no. That was just extra thanks - for Buff!" smiled Billy.

Scrambled Bible Saints

Do you recognize the following Bible characters? Look hard, but here's a tip: each name begins with the letter "S."

1. Olsema
2. Hasra
3. Lsisa
4. Oolmsno
5. Asnasnu
6. Umslae
7. Laus
8. Isomn
9. Petnseh
10. Neosmi

"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving...." (Psalm 95:1-2).

Answers:

Scrambled Bible Saints

1. Salome
2. Sarah
3. Silas
4. Solomon
5. Susanna
6. Samuel
7. Saul
8. Simon
9. Stephen
10. Simeon

PROPHETS

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

**AMOS JOEL DANIEL JONAH ELIJAH
 MALACHI ELISHA MICAH EZEKIEL
 NAHUM HABAKKUK NATHAN HAGGAI
 OBADIAH HOSEA ZECHARIAH ISAIAH
 ZEPHANIAH JEREMIAH**

FINDING GOD

I helped a little child to see,
 That God had made a willow tree,
 And He became more real to me.
 I tried to lead a child through play,
 To grow more Christ-like every day,
 And I myself became that way.
 I joined a junior child in prayer,
 And as we bowed in worship there,
 I felt anew God's loving care.
 Lord keep us ever quick to see,
 By guiding children we find Thee.

-Mabel Niedermeyer

JESUS, SAVIOUR

By T.V. Lakshmaiah

***Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Earth's warn paths your feet have trod.
All my pain you, too, have known,
Known the discord of earth's tone.***

***All my pain and all my sin,
Perfect peace above the din,
Courage 'neath the cross You bore,
Love beneath the thorns You wore,***

***'Twas for me You loved and died,
That my bonds might be untied,
'Twas for me You hid my sin,
Thus You came my heart to win.***

***Jesus, Saviour, Son of God,
Earth's warn paths your feet have trod,
May I be through your keen pain,
Ready when you come again.***