

**The
Advocate
of
Truth**



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SERVITUDE

I believe that to be great you need to be a servant. What do you think of when you think of a great person? Do you think of someone who is highly educated, wealthy, or powerful? If we're honest, most of us do.

Dr. Martin Luther King once said, "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love." These are beautiful words, but I'm not sure I understood them until an event several years ago. Through this experience, I came to believe that service is a privilege.

I have practiced law for over 25 years. I have had the privilege of providing pro bono representation for people seeking asylum here in the United States. Through that experience, I've had the opportunity to hear the stories of very brave people who faced prison and torture because of their race, their pro democracy activities or how they worship God. It feels pretty good to help someone.

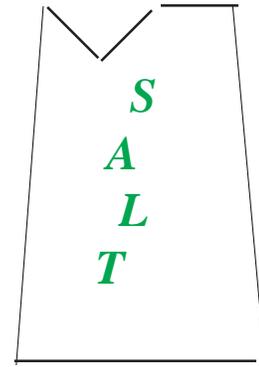
A number of years ago, I represented a young man from Zaire, now called Congo. He had been a pro democracy activist. This resulted in his arrest. He had mi-

raculously managed to escape and make his way to America. His wife and children were in hiding in the town of Brazaville. I assisted this young man to obtain political asylum here. Months later, he showed up at my office with his wife and children. They were no longer in hiding, but now making a new life in the United States. He introduced me to them and thanked me. I told him it was my pleasure. He looked at me, paused and said, "No, I know what you did for me, you gave me my life." Then it hit me. It was I who was getting the most out of his relationship. Most people never get a chance to hear something like that. This was perhaps the greatest moment in my career. It was unobserved and produced no money, but it was as close as I've ever felt to greatness. I learned that it is a privilege to serve others.

So, this act of service on my part resulted in the highest compliment I've ever received. Jesus once told His disciples, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." I think He was telling the truth.

By William Holston who is an attorney in Dallas, Texas

The Tragedy Of Turning Back



A quitter, a deserter, a coward is no asset to an army, to a church or any other institution. The church especially needs strong stalwart soldiers who will fight the good fight of faith until the end. Jesus said, "...No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). There are always reasons for turning back.

Let us consider some examples of turning back.

SAUL TURNED BACK FROM FOLLOWING GOD. "Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night" (I Samuel 15:10-11). Notice that this word of the Lord grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night. We need men like Samuel today.

Saul was stubborn and rejected the word of the Lord. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (verse 23). He accused the people of taking the spoil. Saul said to Samuel, "But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal" (verse 21). This is the same route that Eve, Adam, Pilate and others have taken. He blamed some one else for his own sin.

ORPAH TURNED BACK. "And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law" (Ruth 1:14-15). She followed Naomi a short distance from home, but turned back. She kissed her, but she turned back. Notice that verse 14 says, "...Orpah kissed her mother in law;

but Ruth clave unto her." There was a lot of difference between Orpah and Ruth and between kissing and cleaving. Ruth couldn't be forced to turn back. Orpah wouldn't pay the price to go on.

Ruth goes on, but Orpah turned back. Ruth went on to greatness, Orpah turned back to obscurity. The ties holding Orpah were too strong. She saw no extra gain by sticking with Naomi. Verse 15 says, she is (1) "...gone back unto her people..." Relatives cause many to turn back. (2) She went back "...unto her gods..." She loved her idol gods more than she did the true God.

LOT'S WIFE TURNED BACK. "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah

brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:15-26).

She was warned by the angel, "...look not behind thee..." (verse 17). But she rejected his advice and "...looked back...and she became a pillar of salt" (verse 26). No one will ever know for sure the real reason she looked back. Perhaps she had so much of Sodom's society in her system that she just couldn't be happy any other place, even in the company of heavenly angelic personalities. The pull of Sodom was just too strong. She couldn't resist a last look at the Sodomite city. There was something there she still wanted. It was imbedded so deeply in her heart that neither God, man, nor angels could extract it from her.

EPHRAIM TURNED BACK. "The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle" (Psalm 78:9). After all that God had done for them, they turned back. This action was not calmly considered. It was a cowardly act in the day of battle. They had no excuse. They were armed and carrying bows. The strong always become weak when God is forsaken.

MANY DISCIPLES TURNED BACK. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Many of Jesus' disciples were offended at His word. They were tested by doctrine. The Apostle Paul said, "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" (II Timothy 4:3). Paul also spoke of good doctrine when he wrote to Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained" (I Timothy 4:6). He also said, "... give attendance...to doctrine" (verse 13).

The beloved Apostle John said, "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" (II John 9).

JOHN MARK TURNED BACK. "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them,

who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" (Acts 15:37-41).

Paul and Barnabas planned a preaching mission. Barnabas wanted to take his nephew, John Mark, but Paul refused. The reason was that John Mark had "...departed from them...and went not with them to the work" (verse 38). Was he lazy or cowardly? Perhaps he was just homesick. Did he depart from them because he did not like his part in the program? Perhaps the glamour had worn off. Maybe the good times of the bright lights were calling. Perhaps he was tired of hearing the same two preachers all the time.

However, John Mark made a change. Later Paul said that Mark was, "...profitable to me (Paul) for the ministry" (II Timothy 4:11).

DEMAS TURNED BACK. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia" (II Timothy 4:10). Paul said, "Demas hath forsaken me..." This man turned his back on the greatest preacher of his day. He had rather hear worldly prattle than powerful preaching. He enjoyed playing more than praying, sensuality more than sacrifice and carefree living more than carrying the cross of eternal life. The glitter and glamour of this present world shined brighter to him than the "Bright and Morning Star."

Children of God are warned many times against loving this present world. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16).

"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" (James 4:4).

Let us not turn back!

BEING AN OVERCOMER



You can be an overcomer! Let us consider seven areas on which we must work that will help us to be overcomers and please our Lord Jesus Christ.

RESPOND TO RESPONSIBILITIES

He who shirks his duties or looks for an easy way out will never reach his potential. Push yourself and launch out into the deep. Be willing to try new things.

Upon learning to ride a bicycle, you may hit a telephone pole or some other object which may cause you to bleed much. You greatly desire to ride that bicycle, so you get up and try again. Finally you will accomplish your goal.

FORGET YOUR FAILURES

Many never reach their goal because they are wallowing in the mire of self-pity. They excuse themselves by saying, "I tried once, but I failed." You can't avoid mistakes, but you can learn from them. Don't allow your past mistakes to ruin your hopes for the future. Let them become stepping stones. People will always make mistakes until Christ returns. Remember to forget your failures. Respond to responsibilities, and forget the mistakes made today.

MASTER YOUR MIND

Mastering the mind requires work! We read in God's Word, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:13). Confusion, depression, and oppression often creep in because we become temperamental in life-style. We have not learned to master the mind. Discipline yourself by doing constructive things and meditating on God's Word. The Psalmist tells us, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). Master your mind, forget your failures, respond to responsibilities.

CONQUER CRITICISM

The best of men and women have been slandered. Reputations have been ruined and hearts broken by the maligning of others. If we are to reach our potential, we must not allow criticism to stop our progress.

There once was a minister who could not accept criticism. He could not deal with it! There were many good things about his ministry, but he could not handle the criticism. If any negative thing was said about him, he would become discouraged and disenchanted. Many letters came

to his residence concerning his ministry. Eighty percent of them were positive, and twenty percent of them were negative. His wife suggested that he dispose of the negative ones and hang the positive ones in a special place. In six months, his room was filled with beautiful positive letters of encouragement. The Apostle Paul said, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). Whatever it takes, whatever is necessary, conquer criticism!

DEVELOP DETERMINATION

Determination has always characterized great men. Successful men have been willing to pick up the pieces and go on when all seemed lost. Determination is necessary for success both in your spiritual life and secular business life. Remember that there is victory through Christ!

LEARN TO LOVE

We are told in I Corinthians 13:1-2 that without love we are nothing. One of the greatest hindrances to any spiritual progress is bitterness. Only service that is motivated by love will succeed in reaching the goal.

Remember that without love, we are nothing.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Only as we saturate our hearts and minds with the Word of God can we find wisdom when we are confused, strength when we are weak, and nourishment when we are famished. Some may say, "I just can't memorize." Even though some of us may not have good memorizing skills, we still have access to the Word of God.

To be an overcomer, the child of God must strive to develop the above areas in his or her life.

Contributed

HOW TO GET ALONG IN LIFE

1. Be **obedient**, even when the plan doesn't make sense to you.
2. **Love** your neighbor as yourself. Give to those less fortunate.
3. Be **generous**.
4. **Relax** and enjoy the ride.
5. **Don't be afraid**.
6. **Take time** to rest and enjoy the company of friends.
7. **Value, honor, and enjoy your family**, no matter how strange they seem to you.
8. **Help** widows and orphans.
9. **Don't watch too much TV**.
10. Whatever your lot in life, remember **not all things are in your control**.
11. Remember, **you were created and have a purpose**. Others were too, even if they seem way different from you.
12. **Have fun and enjoy** the abundant **life that our Lord Jesus Christ can give**.

-Adapted from the internet

NEA Pushes Homo- sexuality in School Booklet, Group Says (Excerpts)



A 24-page pamphlet sent to all 16,000 public school Superintendents in the United States - by a coalition led by the National Education Association and the American Psychological Association - is "a renewed effort" to protect the well-being of all students, including, the pamphlet says, "those who are at higher risk because of their sexual orientation."

"Just the Facts About Sexual Orientation and Youth; A Primer for Principals, Educators and School Personnel" serves as a guide for public school employees "who confront sensitive issues involving gay, lesbian and bisexual students," the coalition of 13 national associations said in a news release announcing the distribution of the booklet, "Sexual Orientation and Youth."

According to the "group of education, health, mental health and religious organizations," the brochure "includes the most recent information from professional health organizations, as well as up-to-date information on the legal responsibility of school officials to protect students from anti-gay harassment."

"The opportunity for students to learn is diminished when they do not feel safe or supported at school," the coalition stated. "In addition to assault and harassment, gay, lesbian and bisexual students experience high rates of emotional distress, suicide attempts and substance abuse."

"These factors hinder their emotional and social development, as well as their ability to succeed in school," the

organization added. "It is our responsibility to provide accurate and factual information. We believe this publication will be a valuable tool to help educators, administrators and others concerned with caring for America's students."

Led by the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), the coalition includes the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Counseling Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the American Federation of Teachers and the American School Counselor Association.

The release was distributed by the APA, "The largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States" and "the world's largest association of psychologists."

The Berean Call
From the Internet

Homosexuality was one of the reasons that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gommorah. Those who are drawn into such behavior must be warned that they are going against nature and the laws of God. Many would have us believe that this is a perfectly acceptable lifestyle, but it is not.

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

IS GOD PLEASED WITH ME?

THIS ARTICLE IS FROM THE JUNE 24, 1957
ADVOCATE OF TRUTH

"For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ..." (II Corinthians 2:15).

To be a sweet savour to God, we must be as Christ--have the same mind, have the same purpose, live in the same attitude--"...not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:36). He "...came not to be ministered unto, but to minister..." (Matthew 20:28). "...Lo, I come to do thy will, O God..." (Hebrews 10:9). For our lives to be as fragrant perfume in the nostrils of God, it must be said of us, "he (or she) pleased God."

Turning to the Scriptures, let us look at a few characters who pleased God--surely their lives were as a sweet savour in the nostrils of God.

We read in Genesis 4:4: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering." The first thing we notice is the fact that "Abel...brought." It was a willing offering--no doubt the act was one which God had commanded Adam, and which he taught his son. But the fact remains, "he ..brought." He did not sit back and let the rest of the family or community do the bringing, but in obedience he himself brought.

We note next, he brought "of the firstlings of his flock." He brought the best he had and gave it to God. There was no hunting around and bickering to find the lame or lean, but he brought the best to God. God will always honor those who give their best to Him--whether it is their substance, time, talents or life. He wants the best, and as we give our best, we become a fragrant perfume in the nostrils of God.

Then in Hebrews 11:5, we read of another man of God whose life was a sweet savour to God, Enoch. It is

said of him, "for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Although we do not read lengthy stories of Enoch's life, we do read the most important thing that should be said of every child of God, but, alas, cannot be said of many, "Enoch walked with God." If your name was substituted in the place of Enoch's, could such be said of you? Are you walking with God? Are you pleasing God?

The very fact that it is said that Enoch walked with God denotes godliness--God is holy, and how "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). To walk with God, one must set Him continually before him, to live in His will, to love in close, real communion with Him. How can one walk with God when "No. 1" is as important as "I am?" When once we put our hands on a circumstance to "help God" we turn our blessings into a curse--our rose petals fall, and we are left holding the thorns. We cannot take our own way and please God and have it be said that we are walking with God. In nothing do we want to offend Him when we desire to walk with Him and to please Him.

We remember another character whose walk and life pleased God--Noah. "...Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD...and Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:8-9). It is said of Noah that he "was a just man and perfect." This could not be said unless he was upright in conversation, honest in his dealings, kind and considerate in his actions, devout and sincere in his devotion to God. In Hebrews 11:7, we read that he was "moved with fear." When one is wholly yielded to God, there is a godly fear that causes that one to move with fear before the great God--not afraid of Him, but afraid of displeasing Him.

Our lives are changed when we live with a godly fear of displeasing the One who has bought us.

Then there was Abraham who "...was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23); and Moses who "...was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). God said of him, "My servant Moses..is faithful in all mine house" (verse 7). And there are many other characters we read of in the Scriptures whose lives pleased God. But their lives pleased God only because they pleased not themselves.

If you and I are sincere, we want to live to please God, also, but we cannot continue in our ways and hope in the end to please Him. We read in Romans 8:8, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Anything we attempt to do in our own strength for our own profit will not please God. Then again we read, "...if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). Often we are determined to please not

our own selves, but unconsciously we are attempting to please men--this is not accepted of God, for He alone is the One to please, and often when we are pleasing Him only, we will not be the popular one among men.

How can we please God? "But without faith it is impossible to please him..." (Hebrews 11:6). We must have faith in God, and the stronger our faith becomes, the closer to Him we shall live, and the sweeter our lives will become to Him--we will truly become a sweet savour to God. How our hearts hunger to live as our Saviour: "...for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).

Again we say, to become a sweet savour to God, we must be as Christ, for it is "of Christ" that we are a sweet savour to Him. It is as we yield to Him, letting the Holy Spirit lead and guide in our lives, that we become a sweet savour to God. How He must be pleased, how fragrant the life must be to Him, how it must thrill the very heart of God, when one of His children live for Him only. Oh, to please God!

FOUR CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLESHIP



"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth

his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:32-39).

The word *disciple* in the Greek means "a learner". But the word conveys much more than that. It implies the acceptance of the views and practices of the teacher, not only in the mind but also in the life. The truth of the statement that the Apostle Paul made to the Corinthians must be accepted as fact: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). The early saints and many others since have understood the

price that must be paid to enter into a state of true discipleship.

Let us now consider four conditions of discipleship.

The disciple must reckon himself to be dead.

No one can be a disciple until he has reckoned himself to be dead. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). We hear the commandments of God, and we say, "Lord, these things are too hard. I can't do these things that You are requiring of me. Love my enemies? Bless those who curse me? Lord, they've told lies about me. They have tried to ruin my name. I can't do it!" But the Lord says to us, "That is what I require of My disciples. If you want to be my disciples, that's what you are going to have to do."

Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." How can we do this? It seems impossible. It is impossible for that old man, that person we were before we were saved. But that old person is dead! He or she isn't alive anymore!

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Rome under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:6-8).

So a disciple must first reckon himself to be dead.

A disciple must live a life of self-denial.

The Bible can be read and even memorized, but until its principles have been applied to our own lives, it is of no benefit to us. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Man's natural tendency is to think of himself first. What is going to profit me? How can I be helped? But the true disciple is to give himself away in service to others.

The Lord Jesus knew that selfishness was at the root of all problems. So when the 12 apostles began to have strife among themselves over who was going to be the

top dog of the group, He said, "...The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke 22:25-26).

So we see, a disciple must live a life of self-denial.

A disciple must live a life of discipline.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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" (Romans 12:1-2). Paul understood that without discipline nothing great could ever be accomplished.

A concert pianist knows that the years of grueling practice and self-sacrifice cannot be escaped if that one hour of perfect performance is to be realized. An astronaut knows stern discipline will be required to prepare for that day on the launching pad. The athlete who wants to be a member of the Olympic team must count on years of training, hard work, and discipline if the gold medal is to be worn. The Apostle Paul realized this when he wrote, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

God is no "respector of persons." What He enabled Paul to do, He will also enable us to do. We can be disciplined and be true disciples.

A disciple must live a life of devotion.

A Bible student wrote that "devotion is the wholehearted and irrevocable giving up to God that which may never be taken back again." Our devotion to Christ and His cause must be without reserve and without return.

Paul exemplified devotion when he told the elders at Ephesus, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry,

which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:22-24).

Everyone is devoted to something or someone. The child of God who would be a true disciple must be devoted to Christ. That devotion must be lived out daily by applying the teachings and commandments of our Lord to life's situations.

Discipleship is required of us by our Master. He will help us attain to it. He will not require of us something that His grace will not enable us to do .

Yes, to be disciples we must be dead, but Jesus said, "...he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). A disciple's life is a life of self-denial, but Jesus said, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure,

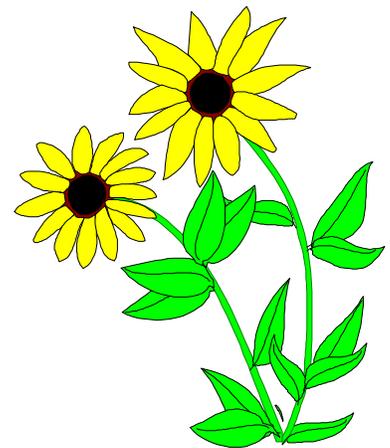
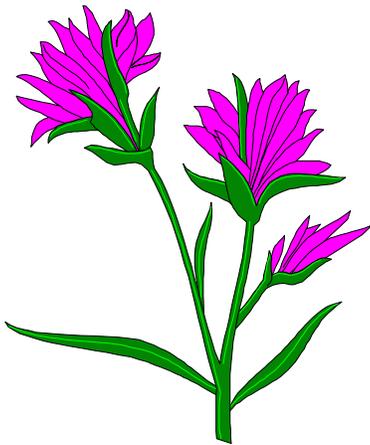
pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom..." (Luke 6:38). A disciple must put on the yoke of discipline, but Jesus said, "...my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). A disciple's life is a devoted life, but the Bible says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..." (II Timothy 2:12).

To be saved costs nothing, but to be a disciple costs everything. Discipleship has its price, but it is worth the cost. We can say with the Apostle Paul, "...if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 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" (Romans 8:17-18).

Contributed

AN INSPIRING EXPERIENCE OF LONG AGO

BY BOND TENNANT



While searching for a certain subject on the internet, I came across a letter by a gentleman named Stephen which told of an incident that took place in his life several years ago. I wish to share this inspiring letter with you. Here it is:

An incident in my life that took place many years ago has been on my mind lately. It just seems to keep coming up with the thought to write a story about it. Well, it is on my mind again this morning, so maybe the Lord has been moving me to tell you about it.

When I was in elementary school in the 1950's and about the age of 8 or 9 years old, I befriended this elderly couple who lived a couple of blocks away from where I lived. How we met I am not sure. Maybe it was while I was on one of my money making enterprises as a kid.

Money was hard to come by as a kid in those days, and my parents weren't handing us money whenever we wanted it. Hunting pop bottles for the two cent refund was also hard work, (a lot of walking sometimes for just one or two bottles). One of my schemes that I came up with was to go house-to-house selling flowers. The only problem was the only flowers available to me were wild flowers such as dandylions. When I knocked on the front door of this couple to ask if they'd be interested in buying some flowers, she saw what I had, took me to the backyard to her garden, and cut a bunch of flowers for me to sell instead of the weeds I was peddling.

That started a relationship that I still remember today. I went over to their home on Sunday a couple of times. They would invite me in, sit me down on the sofa, and

offer the newspaper to read. I think all I did was glance at the pages. Their home was between my house and the school I went to and was one of the ways I would take coming home from school. One day it came to mind that I could stop by on the way home for lunch for a short visit. So I did. I rang the door bell, and the little old lady came to the door to see who it was. We greeted, and I asked her how they were doing. She said they were fine.

One day it came to mind that I could stop by on the way home for lunch for a short visit. So I did.

That was pretty much the conversation, not even a couple of minutes. The next day I did the same thing, and the conversation was about the same. You probably already know where this is leading. The third day I stopped, the conversation was a little different. When she answered the door, I asked how they were doing. She said they were fine, but then she asked, "do you like ringing my door bell?" The rest of the conversation was me trying to let her know that I was only stopping to see how they were. I wasn't trying to bother them by ringing their door bell.

Looking back I can see how it could have been a bother to them having to get up to answer the door. But I can still feel how I felt when she said those words to me, and I can still hear those words from long ago. Those words cut to the heart that day, and were very painful. I don't believe she realized at the moment what she had said and the impact it had on me. I never went back to see them after that day.

There are a few things to gain from this story. It is a true story by the way. We all suffer rejection from others at times in our lives whether intentional or otherwise. There are times even today when I feel I am being pushed away by others. But to give the benefit of the doubt, I realize I don't always see the right picture of what is really going on. And I know I have pushed people away at times as well. These days for me personally, if someone thinks enough of me to want to be a part of my life, I don't want

to reject them or push them away from me. We can be so busy with the "things" of life that we let relationships with others suffer at times. (See I John 2:15-17.)

Jesus speaks to this in respect to children when His disciples tried to chase them away (Matthew 19:13-15). "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence."

Also in Hebrews 13:5 it reads, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." When Jesus was out and about, He had time for those around Him, and He didn't turn them away. Since He returned to heaven and sits at the right hand of our Heavenly Father, we have been given His Spirit as Christians. We are always in His presence. He is our ultimate Friend and companion in this world.

I don't fault the elderly lady for responding to me that way she did back then, but I do wish it had gone a different way. Also, others in this life aren't Jesus, so they aren't going to always be perfect in their relationship with me. I won't be with them either. But let's not end a relationship because of the imperfections that are a part of it.

One last Scripture if you don't mind.

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24).

It is the kind of friend written about above that I want to try to be to those the Lord has brought into my life. By His grace I will be. I am here for you and don't mind the phone ringing in the middle of the night. Praise the Lord for life's experiences!

Love to all in Christ Jesus...Stephen



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.

Cambodia bans door-to-door evangelism (Excerpts)

A new directive has been issued by the government in Cambodia that essentially eliminates Christian evangelism, according to a report from "Voice of the Martyrs".

Sources told the Christian ministry that works to serve members of the persecuted church worldwide that the new directive from the state Ministry of Cults and Religions ordered that Christian groups no longer are allowed to visit door-to-door in Cambodia.

That, the government concluded, "disrupts society."

The directive also said the distribution of religious literature should be confined to church buildings VOM said. And those church buildings, of course, can only be built with government approval.

Government officials told VOM sources that the ruling was aimed at reducing Christian evangelism throughout Cambodia, a primarily Buddhist nation.

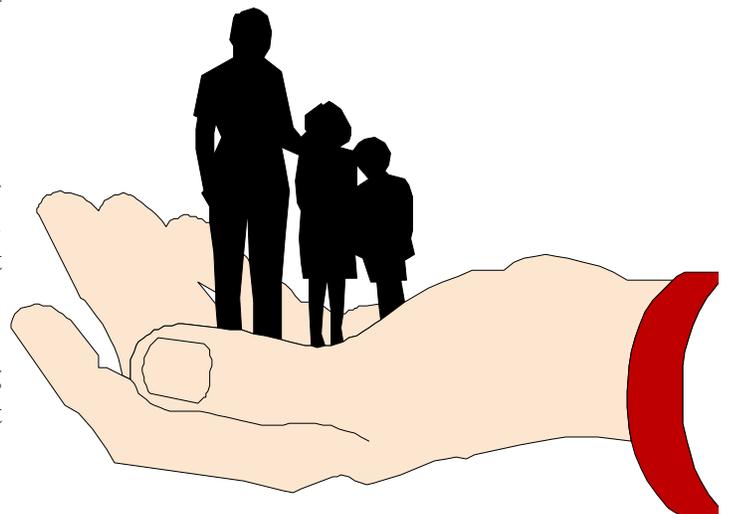
"They can do any activity inside their institutions, but are

not allowed to do door-to-door," Sun Kim Hun, a deputy minister of Cults and Religion, was quoted as saying.

Authorities said the limit will be applied to all non-Buddhist groups, but its target is the Christian community, which the government accused of participating in campaigns such as offering clothing, food or language lessons, and then introducing people to Christianity.

Reports said in addition to disrupting peoples' lives, such activities also "cause other insecurities."

The Berean Call
From the Internet



CHILDREN ARE RUNNING LOOSE IN A VIRTUAL JUNGLE



Bill O'Reilly
(Excerpts)

Here's what many parents and grandparents do not understand: The internet is profoundly changing the behavior of American children and stunting their emotional growth. Many 8-year-olds now are exposed to things that 13-year-olds didn't know just a decade ago.

In Syracuse, N. Y., not exactly Sodom, at least nine girls, ages 11 to 13, took nude pictures of themselves and electronically sent them to various boys. Quicker than you can say "incredibly dumb," said pictures were posted on the internet so that every kid in town could take a look.

A 17-year-old, Michael Wixson, has been arrested, but not for posting the pictures on the net--apparently that's legal in New York state if there's no sexual activity involved. No, Wixson was only charged after he sent the naked pictures to a 15-year-old, which involved "corrupting a minor."

Police say they were stunned some of the parents of the involved girls thought this was no big deal. In fact, according to reports by WSYR-TV, a few of the parents are angry with the cops for even investigating. So now we get a hint as to why their children would do such a thing. What they see and hear on the machines that now dominate their lives has changed their thinking patterns.

Every child can see images of Britney Spears and Paris Hilton flaunting their sexuality without consequence. Kids have instant access to salacious material that was very difficult to obtain just ten years ago. If a parent is not proactive in monitoring computer and cell phone use, children can run wild in cyberspace.

The internet has broken down almost all boundaries.

There now are actual clubs for child molesters, and web sites that tell predators how to abuse kids, where to find them and how to get away with the evil act.

There are torture web sites, virtual child porn displays--which the Supreme Court ruled legal--and all kinds of criminal acts acted out on the computer screen. And every kid with a mouse can find these things.

It's a high-tech "Lord of the Flies," a free-for-all destructive behavior driven by millions of innocuous looking machines that sit openly in family rooms all across the country.

Here's an instant message every parent should understand: this situation is dire.

From the Facts
Clute, Texas

Comment

Our country's moral fiber seems to be unravelling at an alarming rate these days. We know what happened when the whole world turned against God and His Commandments - the greatest devastation in history was poured out upon the earth in the form of a great flood. There will be a time when God once again will deal with the wickedness here on this earth. It is called the Seven Last Plagues. His saints will be protected on the Sea of Glass just as Noah and his family were protected in the ark. We don't know when this event will occur, but Jesus will catch up His followers first when He comes. Please be ready to escape the wrath of God!



Questions and Answers

Question: In Matthew 22:13, we read: "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness..." Who was or who is this man?

Answer: He is the self-righteous man. This is the man whose pride and presumption has sold himself on the idea of his own importance. He is the man who thinks that he does not need to prepare for eternity. He thinks that he does not need to be born again of the water so that he can be born of the Spirit in the resurrection. He believes that he does not need the garment of righteousness, which is the righteousness of Christ. He has nothing to do with the testimony of Jesus!

But when King Jesus came in and looked over the wedding party, He says, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" And the man was speechless! This man was ordered then by the king to be cast "into outer darkness."

Question: When we strive for righteousness, are we striving for holiness or for perfection? It seems to me I can never be perfect, and even when I aim for holiness, I miss the mark more often than not. Am I just not trying hard enough?

Answer: Our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Righteousness is not something for which we strive. It is

our garment given to us by Jesus Christ. Please read Matthew 22:11-12 and Revelation 19:8. We receive this garment by faith in Christ Jesus. Romans, chapter 8, tells us that what the Law of God could not do and our striving could not accomplish, God did by sending Jesus.

As we believe in Jesus, and as we walk in His footsteps, and if we are obedient to His words, we please Him and receive His righteous garment. Righteousness is not striving of the flesh. It is the obedience that brings about holiness and perfection.

Question: Please explain the vision that Peter had which is found in Acts 10. What does it mean if it does not mean that we now are permitted to eat unclean meats?

Answer: In Acts 10, we have recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit the great plan of salvation by the everlasting gospel that was to be preached "...unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6).

Some will say this vision Peter had while in a trance (deep sleep) on the house top was to show him that he could now (literally) eat of all the fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. God had cleaned them all, and there were none that were common or unclean. What an abominable perception this would be of the truth of God's Word! But this is not the truth of the matter for the answer is given in this

same chapter, and rehearsed again in chapter 11. It is like Peter speaking of the Apostle Paul in his epistles, that there "...are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest (twist), as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:16). To partake of the unclean foods, which are found in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 in this dispensation or any other dispensation, is an abomination to God and in the end results in destruction. Please read Revelation 21:8.

No, this vision had absolutely nothing to do with the literal eating of everything. God was working through visions by His Holy Spirit to bring the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles. Cornelius was a Gentile, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, and he gave alms to the people, and he prayed to God always. He saw in a vision an angel of God coming unto him and calling him by name. "And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4).

You can see now that the thing God was going to perform in answer to Cornelius' prayer was of greater scope and far more important than satisfying the appetite with literal eating. He was told to send for Simon, whose surname was Peter, and three men were sent to find him.

We will now switch the scene to Peter, who was simultaneously performing God's will through a vision that was given to him by the same Holy Spirit. Peter was also a praying man as he "...went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat" (Acts 10:9-13). Peter was well aware of the dietary law of the clean and unclean, and he strictly practiced it. "But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean" (verse 14). This shows that there existed the common or the unclean. God has never changed His dietary law, nor did He at that time.

Why was this vessel let down three (thrice) times? The answer is found in verses 17-20. "Now while Peter

doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Did the Holy Spirit send these three men to Peter to literally eat a meal? Absolutely not! Peter questioned them when he went down to meet them, and said "...Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?" (verse 21) The answer in substance was that Cornelius being warned from God by an holy angel to send for Peter, wanted "...to hear words of thee" (verse 22).

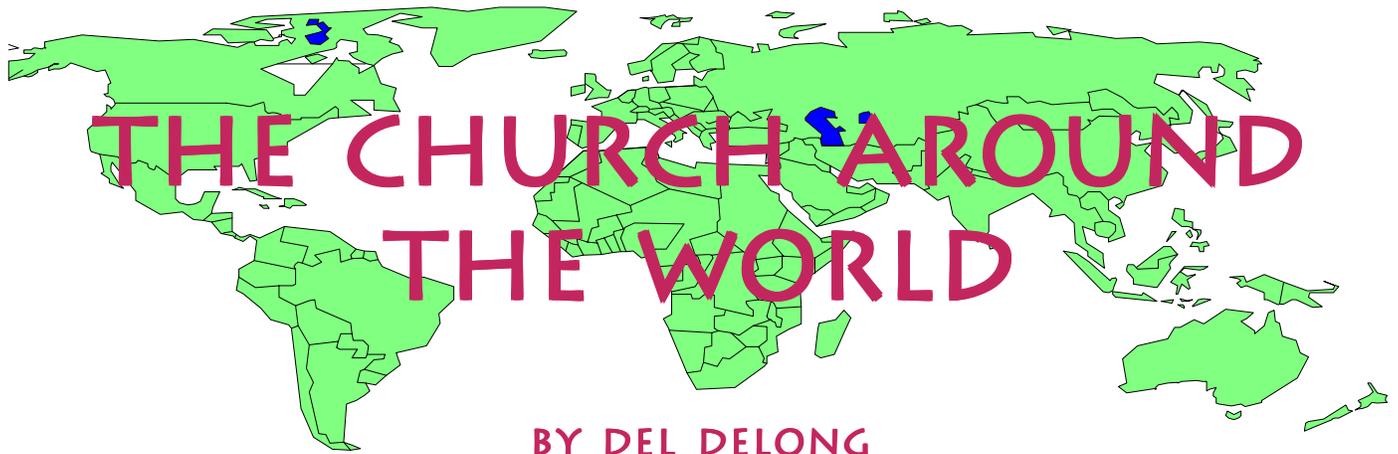
When Peter came to the house of Cornelius, "...he went in, and found many that were come together" (verse 27). In the next verse, we find the answer to the question: what did God show Peter? "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (verse 28).

Cornelius, a Gentile, then explained fully to Peter his vision. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (verses 34-35).

Peter preached to Cornelius and these Gentiles gathered in his house, Jesus Christ and salvation through Him. Please read to the end of Chapter 10. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (verses 44-45). This is the answer to the true vision Peter had on the house top.

Question: What two Bible chapters are alike?

Answer: The two chapters in the Bible that are alike are II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37. Both are regarded as the work of Isaiah, relating a series of events which in one book are placed in their proper historical setting and in the other find their true place among the prophecies.



Myanmar

Brother Kawl Lian Thanga sent these photos of their youth retreat (below) at Khampat and other pictures of their churches, a baptism, and a photo of his new motorcycle.





Children's Sabbath School at Halcheley (left). Below right is the Lord's Supper Service at Hakha in Chin State. The baptism service at the bottom is being conducted by Elder Khen Cung at Sailo. Elder Kawl shows his new motorcycle(left center). These photos were taken in 2007.



LESSON I

CHRIST DIES ON THE CROSS

Scripture Reading: John 19:16-24, 33-38.

Golden Text: John 19:16.

"Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away."

1. Who carried the cross on which Jesus was to die? Luke 23:26.
2. What was the name of the place to which they carried the cross? John 19:17.
3. Was anyone else crucified with Jesus? John 19:18.
4. What writing did Pilate put over Jesus' head? John 19:19.
5. Why did the Jews object, and what did Pilate answer? John 19:21-22.
6. What was done with the garments Jesus wore? John 19:23-24.
7. The soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves, but why did they not break Jesus' legs? John 19:32-33, 36.
8. Who came to take the body of Jesus, and what did they do with it? John 19:38-42.

NOTE: This lesson can be found also in Matthew 27:29-54; Mark 15:20-38 and Luke 23:24-47.

LESSON II

JESUS' RESURRECTION

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-12, 36-53.

Golden Text: Luke 24:46.

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead

the third day."

1. What two men wrapped Jesus in linen clothes and anointed Him, and then buried Him? John 19:38-42.
2. How long was Jesus in the tomb? Matthew 12:40; Luke 24:46.
3. What happened when Jesus arose? Matthew 28:2.
4. What did the enemies of Jesus say? Matthew 28:12-13.
5. Were the keepers of the tomb afraid of the angel? Matthew 28:4.
6. Women came to see the body of Jesus and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. What did the two angels tell the women about Jesus? Luke 24:4-8.
7. What did Jesus say to the disciples when He first saw them, and how did they feel? Luke 24:36-39.
8. Where did Jesus lead the disciples at this time, and describe the events that happen in Luke 24:50-53.

LESSON III

SIGNS OF CHRIST'S RETURN

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24.

Golden Text: Matthew 24:33.

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned of Jesus' resurrection and that He returned to heaven. We will now go back to when Jesus was alive to learn what He taught about the signs of His return to Earth.

1. What important question did the disciples ask Jesus as they sat with Him on the mount? Matthew 24:3.
2. Of what did Jesus warn them as He began to answer

them? Matthew 24:4-5.

3. What conditions did Jesus say would take place in the world which will be signs of His coming? Matthew 24:6-11.

4. How did Jesus compare the days just before His coming with the days of Noah and Lot? Luke 17:26-30.

5. What signs would take place both in heaven and earth, just prior to His coming? Luke 21:25-28.

6. Is it possible to tell the exact time that Jesus will come? Why? Matthew 24:36.

7. How do we know that these events are signs of His coming? Matthew 24:32-33.

8. What has He commanded us to do in regard to these signs, and why? Matthew 24:42-44.

NOTE: How many things can you name which are taking place in the world today that are signs of the coming of Christ? Are you looking for the Savior to come? Will He find you ready?

LESSON IV

JESUS OUR FRIEND

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-15.

Golden Text: John 15:14.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

NOTE: When Jesus was alive on Earth, He taught His disciples about love and that He was their friend. We should also learn to love Jesus and be His friend so that we may be saved.

1. How are we to abide in Jesus' love? John 15:9. How did Jesus abide in His Father's love?

NOTE: Abide means to endure without yielding; to ac-

cept without objection.

2. How are we to love one another, and who is our example? John 15:12.

3. What is the greatest way we can show our love? John 15:13. Did Jesus do this?

4. How can we be friends of Jesus? John 15:14.

5. Why does Jesus call us His friends? John 15:15. A true friend will share his valuables, especially if it means a matter of life or death. Have you shared God's Word with anyone lately, or are you keeping it all to yourself? God's Word is life giving.

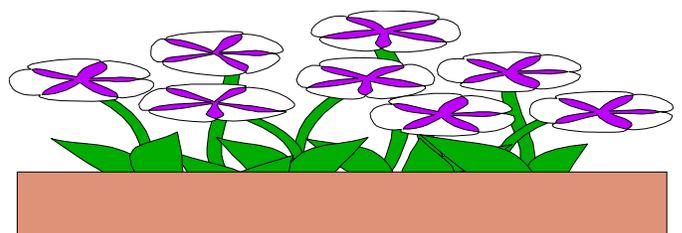
6. Why did Jesus choose us to be His friends? John 15:16. What does "go and bring forth fruit" mean?

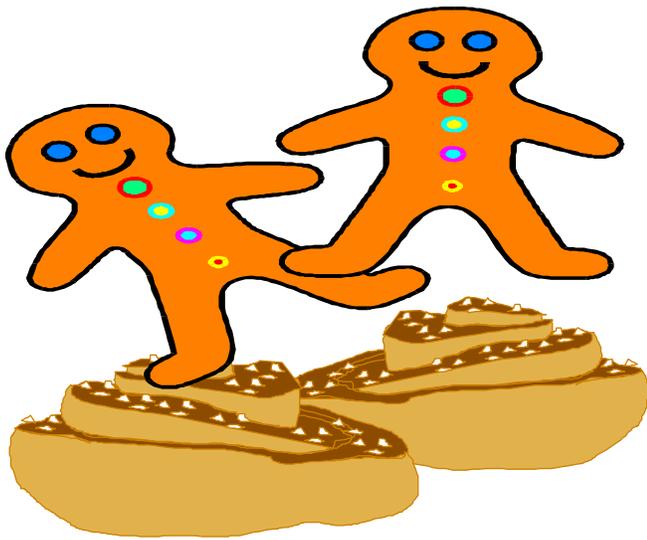
NOTE: We must let Jesus abide in us, and keep His commandments. He showed us He is our friend.

BEST OF ALL

I'm tired of my playthings now;
I want my Mother dear.
She loves me, and my dollies can't;
I want to have her near.
My playthings are real nice, indeed,
I would not give them up;
But when I'm thirsty for a drink,
My Mother holds my cup.
Of her I'll never tired be--
Not when I'm big and tall;
But though I love her, yet I love
My Savior best of all.

GEMS OF TRUTH





AUNT MOLLY'S JOKE

Betty, Edith, Bobby, and Jerry were four little cousins who all lived on the same street. Aunt Molly lived on the same street, too, all alone in a little house that was full of all kinds of strange and curious things, that her father who had been a sea captain had brought from the countries across the sea.

Best of anything in the house the children thought was Aunt Molly's cookie jar. Somehow, no matter how many cookies they ate--and four little children can eat a great many--it was always full. There were the big, round sugar cookies, the little dark spicy ginger ones, and the thick molasses squares. The children could never tell which they liked the best.

One morning when the children came running over to Aunt Molly's and asked for some cookies her eyes twinkled as she said, "I am not going to give you children any more cookies after today unless--" (here she paused and looked at them)--"unless you keep all the weeds out of my garden."

Then she laughed, for she never dreamed for a moment that Betty, Edith, Bobby, and Jerry would think of trying to weed her garden, because they were so small.

But Aunt Molly was mistaken. When she had gone

back into the house, the children, who were sitting on the steps eating cookies, looked at each other, then they themselves laughed.

"She is fooling us, she thinks we are too small," said Jerry; "let's show her we know how to weed flower beds."

"Of course we can," said Betty eagerly. "Don't we all help in our own gardens?"

"Let's," cried the other two children.

Then they fell to work with a will. It was hard to tell which one worked the hardest.

"I have two--I have four!" sang Betty as she pulled the weeds out by two, one with each hand. Betty was left-handed but had to learn to use both hands equally well.

"I will take the biggest ones because I am the biggest boy," said Jerry.

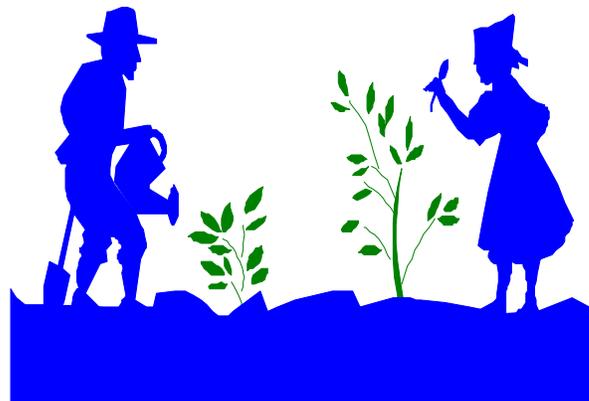
Little Bobby did not say anything. He was busy tugging away at a great big weed. He pulled and pulled and pulled, then he gave a big tug. Up it came and over backward Bobby went, still holding on to the big weed. How they laughed, for he was not hurt a bit, because he fell over on the soft green grass.

"I am glad it came up," he said. "I thought it was growing down to China."

Just then Aunt Molly came out on the porch and saw them.

"See," cried the children, "we have pulled up every weed in your garden. We are going to do it all summer to earn our cookies."

How pleased Aunt Molly was. "That's a joke on me," she said. "I said that to you as a joke, but now the joke is on me. But it's such a nice joke I wish I could have many more like it."





BIBLE CHILDREN

Who are these Bible children? If you do not know by the clue, please look up the Bible text given.

1. A shepherd boy who slew a giant. (I Samuel 17:49)
2. Joseph's youngest brother. (Genesis 35:18)
3. A beautiful orphan girl who became a Persian queen. (Esther 2:7-17)
4. His aunt hid him in a bedchamber. (II Kings 11:2-3)
5. The Lord gave him a wise and discerning mind. (I Kings 3:10-13)
6. Jacob's twin brother. (Genesis 25:26)
7. Maid who came to the gate when Peter knocked. (Acts 12:13)
8. In all of Israel there was none so praised for his beauty. (II Samuel 14:25)
9. He refused to eat the king's meat, nor drink of his wine. (Daniel 1:8)
10. Second son of Adam and Eve. (Genesis 4:2)
11. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. (Genesis 37:28)
12. First born of Israel. (I Chronicles 5:1)
13. He became king of the Israelites when he was only eight years old. (II Kings 22:1)
14. Abraham's son. (Genesis 22:2)
15. Sister of Aaron and Moses. (Exodus 15:20)
16. A Hebrew child reared as a son of Pharaoh's daughter. (Exodus 2:10)

FIVE RESOLUTIONS

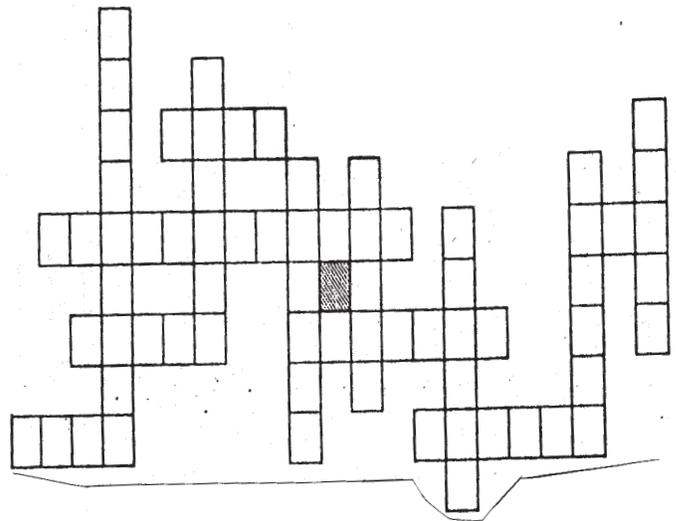
Jonathan Edwards, who was a great and useful man, made five resolutions for himself in his youth and lived by them faithfully. They are worth studying. Anyone who will adopt and follow them will greatly increase his usefulness. The resolutions are as follows.

1. Resolved: To live with all my might while I do live.
2. Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.
3. Resolved: Never to do anything which I should despise or think of in another.
4. Resolved: Never to do anything out of revenge.
5. Resolved: Never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

These are the resolutions of a young man who saw the possibilities and the dangers of life, and was determined to make the most of his powers and opportunities.

Use these fruits and vegetables found in the Bible for the puzzle below.

- Pomegranates Cucumbers Lentils Barley
Gourds Grapes Melons Onions Beans
Herbs Wheat Corn Figs Rye**



*Whatever your cross,
Whatever your pain,
There will always be sunshine,
After the rain...*

*Perhaps you may stumble,
Perhaps you even fall,
But God's always ready,
To answer your call...*

*He knows every heartache,
Sees every tear,
A word from his lips,
Can calm every fear...*

*Your sorrows may linger,
Throughout the night,
But suddenly vanish,
Dawn's early light...*

*The Saviour is waiting,
Somewhere above,
To give you His grace,
And send you His love...*

*Whatever your cross,
Whatever your pain,
God always sends rainbows...
After the rain...*