



# Every Dirty Word Known to Man

Bobby L. Graham

I was recently filling my gas tank when I heard a loud blaring noise coming from the car ahead of me at the station. I usually pay no attention to the “stuff,” as I have no interest in it; but this time I noticed the presence of all kinds of foul language.

As I listened more intently, not to enjoy but to learn, I probably heard nearly every dirty word that I had ever heard coming from the song. I have lived a sheltered life from this standpoint and my list of such words might be quite short compared to some lists. I know precious little about the modern-music scene,

but I think the song was a rap song, from what I have heard about that kind. The scary part of the situation was that the two young girls in the car were obviously unashamed of the sound their radio/stereo was sending forth, as one of them paraded in her skin-tight clothes and talked to a carload of males who drove up. I suppose this is the modern

scene, more than some of us are willing to admit it.

I am concerned for our country (Prov. 14:34). I wonder about the parents of the girls (Eph. 6:4; 5:3-4). I am afraid for

those young girls. I seriously considered speaking to them about the profanity they were advertising, but they left before I finished. What should I say to people in such a situation? As I think about this matter and discuss it with you, possibly I will cause some others to speak up in similar situations.

I believe we should start with the spiritual nature of the human being (Gen. 1:26; Zech. 12:1). As God has created us in his image and endowed us with a nature like his own, we are primarily accountable to him (Rom. 14:12). To assert our right to do as we like and to answer to none for our choices is to deny the hand of God in our creation and the voice of

*see “Dirty Word” on p. 728*



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## Psalm 4

### Mike Willis

Fifty-three of the Psalms are handed to the chief musician. Notice that the

**Superscription: To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David.** worship had trained musicians. There is no reason for God’s people not to have the best music we are capable of producing. *Neginoth* is a word that probably refers to “stringed instruments.”

There is nothing in the superscription that ties this to any historical occasion in the life of David. Some see it as being paired with Psalm 3 as a “morning” and “evening” psalm based on Psalm 3:5 and Psalm 4:8, but the connection is not very conclusive. The psalm is so generic that it will fit nearly any occasion.



**1 Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.**

God is the God of David’s righteousness. This can be used in two ways: (a) God is the God who granted justification to David; (b) God is the God who provides righteousness (justice) to David.

David asks for God to hear him when he calls. He had reason to expect him to hear based on the past deliverances that have come when he called, such (a) when he cared for his father’s sheep; (b) when he fought Goliath; (c) when he fled from Saul. We are always on good grounds to appeal to God’s righteousness for what we want.

When one is in trouble, he is in “straits.” He feels “shut in.” To be “enlarged” is to have the joy of success and deliverance, when the pressure is removed and one walks in liberty.

God’s hearing (in the sense of “to hear and answer”) is an act of his mercy.

**2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.**

What is David’s glory? (1) Some say David’s God is his glory. He is then asking, “How long will you blaspheme God, who is my glory?” (b) Some say David’s glory is the honor God has conferred upon him as king, prophet,

see “Psalm 4” on p. 729

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## “Be Thou an Example”

Connie W. Adams

One thing which convinces me that the church is a divine institution is the fact that it has survived the sorry example set by so many of its members, and especially some who set themselves forward as preachers of the word. If ever there was a crying need for Paul’s admonition to Timothy to “be thou an example of the believers,” that time is now.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee (1 Tim. 4:12-16).

Timothy’s youth could not be discounted when his teaching was fortified by such character as to make him a worthy example of what every believer ought to be, whether young or old. Note that Paul instructed him to take heed to himself as well as to the doctrine. Faithful servants of God ought to preach the truth and nothing else. But they ought to *live* the truth as well. Failure to do that blunts the force of truth in human hearts and causes the name of God to be blasphemed among unbelievers. It has a devastating effect upon the hearts and lives of weak and tender children of God.

### THE PREACHER AND HIS CONDUCT TOWARD ALL

“Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity” (1 Tim. 5:1-2). The “elder” of verse 1 is not the elder (overseer) of the congregation, but refers to the deference which youth should show toward age. Treat older men as a father. Younger men were to be treated as equals (brethren). Give to older women the respect due mothers. *Please observe the next admonition:* “the younger as sisters, *with all purity.*” Why was that qualifying phrase needed? It was needed for the same reason Paul later wrote Timothy: “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22).

### BAD EXAMPLES OF BELIEVERS

In spite of such clear warnings, not all preachers are good examples of what every believer should be. Consider some bad examples.

**1. Debt evaders set the wrong example.** While churches should be taught to adequately provide for those who devote their lives to the work of the gospel, faithful servants of the Lord must learn to live within their means and to do so graciously, without murmuring. Things bought on credit should be paid for. Desire for “things” should never outweigh sanity and financial ability. How embarrassing it is for a congregation, or its elders, to

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be approached by local businessmen for satisfaction of an unpaid debt after a preacher has moved. Some preachers get carried away with book stores or their catalogs and order books and supplies which they either cannot or will not pay for. Notices are ignored. You tell me. Is that a good example or bad example of the believer?

**2. Immature conduct sets the wrong example.** The work of preachers is sometimes beset with disappointments and frustrations. Pulpit fits and temper tantrums in business meetings are not calculated to inspire confidence and respect. Falling apart under pressure ill befits those who preach that others should “gird up the loins of your mind, be sober” (1 Pet. 1:13). Preachers who are too quick on the trigger to move, rather than see a problem through, often contribute to instability in the work they leave behind. Some have larger egos than the brethren are able to feed. One such preacher was reminded by an exasperated brother that “When we sing ‘How Great Thou Art,’ we are not singing to YOU.”

**3. Gossip peddlers set the wrong example.** Preachers cry against gossip and its attendant evil about as much as any other infraction of divine law, yet many of us are the worst offenders of all. There is a brotherhood grapevine which swings from coast to coast and border to border (and with the Internet, around the globe) which elevates the unsubstantiated rumor to the status of hard, cold fact. Often, fellow preachers are victims of the careless lips of suspicion peddlers who relish the fact that they are definitely “in the know.” It becomes “common knowledge” that certain preachers are ready to move when they have not even thought about it. Brethren have been charged, tried, and convicted in absentia of doctrinal and sometimes moral errors based on false reports spread by suspicious minds and wagging tongues. “Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?”

**4. Envious preachers set the wrong example.** “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will” (Phil. 1:15). So it was when Paul wrote those words, and so it is now. Some are eaten up with envy and jealousy because of the esteem in which some of their fellow-laborers are held. Even as in Paul’s day, they may be spurred on to greater activity, not so much for the love of souls, as for the purpose of cornering a greater portion of the glory out of which they feel cheated. Why should a preacher in a meeting feel a tinge of injury to hear local brethren speak words of praise for the local preacher? Why should the local preacher feel hurt when brethren who hear him every week, say kind things about a visiting speaker? In each case, why not “rejoice with them that rejoice”? It is a blessing that all of us are not alike. Each has his unique way of presenting the truth. All any of us can do is sow the seed or water what has been sown by others. None of us has the power to give the increase. Isn’t it amazing how

much good can be done when we don’t care who gets the credit?

**5. Preachers who are too familiar with the sisters set the wrong example.** It is painful to speak of these things. The cause of Christ has suffered severe damage in the last few years through this very thing. At times the problem approaches epidemic proportions. The scenario is all too familiar. A good brother who is happily married sets out to “counsel” with a sister who is having marital problems. He lets his guard down, violates his own rule to have either his wife present on such occasions or else one of the elders, or an older sister, so as to “provide things honest” in the sight of God and man, and the rest all too frequently becomes history. He feels sorry for her and in trying to help, imposes confidences from his own life. Additional “counseling” sessions are required and before long compassion merges into infatuation which is reciprocated and there it goes. The news gets out and hasty resignations follow, or else he is fired, much to the dismay of the congregation. Even when sincere confessions of wrong are made, the after effects linger to embarrass the church and to haunt the involved preacher and his family, as well as the family of the one who came looking for help. The price is high. My good brethren, *these things must stop!*

The cause of Christ is far too important for any of us to give in to such temptations to the destruction of our own families, the detriment of our own souls, and the retardation of the greatest work in the world. We need less “counselors” and more preachers of the word, who will tell troubled people what the Bible says about the home and family *in a setting* which is above reproach. We do not need to hear confidences and intimate information which our wives cannot hear, or one of the elders, or an elderly sister. If you are a single preacher and one of the elders is not available, or there are none where you preach, then ask one of the older sisters to go with you. You may, or may not, know more about the Bible than she, but she will know a lot more about life than you do and can merge her wisdom with your knowledge to help the troubled.

We cannot expect churches to grow in number or in spirit without faithful and fearless preaching of the word of God. That preaching must be done by men who believe what they are saying enough to practice it in life. Purity of character adds an extra earnestness and confidence which is missing from those who know good and well that they are masquerading behind pulpits to cover serious character flaws. Oh yes, I know that none of us is perfect in the absolute sense, but surely we can do better than a growing number have done in the last several years. “Be thou an example of the believers.”

**6. Preachers without conviction who can preach it round or flat, who continue to offer the right hand of fellowship** to those who advocate error on such serious

## Influences That Weaken Babes

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It is a fact that there are many influences that weaken babes in Christ. This is one of the reasons that it is very important to keep as much contact as possible with those who have recently obeyed the gospel. They need the strength that comes from associating with fellow believers, and they need the nourishment that is provided when we study God's word in classes. Please consider the following influences that weaken babes in Christ.

**1. Ungodliness in the home.** It is very difficult to live with people who not spiritually minded! Husbands, wives, children, and parents wield more influence than is sometimes imagined. This is why God wants the home to be a bastion for truth, rather than a hot bed of ungodliness. Children often (though not always) leave the Lord's service because of what they see and hear at home. How in the world can they be faithful when they hear gossip and "cussin'" day in and day out? How can they be expected to be faithful in attendance when Mom and Dad choose to stay away from assemblies of worship and study? How can daughters be expected to treat their husbands righteously when they hear Momma "low-rating" Daddy on the telephone to her friends? How can sons know the right way when they see Daddy beating and threatening Momma? Young people who obey the gospel often become unfaithful because they do not have godly parents to imitate (cf. Eph. 6:14; Col. 3:18-21)!

**2. Seeing and hearing more mature members complain.** Of course we ask, are they really the more mature members if they complain (1 Cor. 3:1-3)? If you see some-

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issues as marriage, divorce and remarriage, the boundaries of fellowship, the proper use and application of Romans 14, the days of creation, whether the flood was local or universal, whether there was an actual serpent in the garden, and on conscious punishment for the wicked eternally (for starters), are surely not setting a good example of what believers should be. We need men of virtue (courage) who will stand in the gap whenever the need arises. "Be thou an example."

thing you don't like, do something to correct it rather than murmur, grumble, and complain (1 Cor. 10:10; Jas. 5:9). When babes see "grown folks" murmur, they may believe that's the way it should be, and consequently they may become grumblers. Wouldn't that be tragic? God wants mature believers to be examples for his cause, not deterrents to righteousness: Babes cannot grow and learn how to be more spiritual when they hear those who should be mature members squawk. Murmuring never solved a single problem, never made a person more spiritual, never made a congregation grow, and never pleased God.

**3. Weak kneed, squeamish, apologetic preaching and teaching.** A baby doesn't grow as the result of a continuous diet of milk. There needs to be some meat along the way. Likewise, babes eventually need to be taught the meat of the word (Heb. 5:11-14). They need to know the "easy and difficult" aspects of the word (2 Pet. 3:15-16). Strong preaching and teaching are essentials for the growth of babes in Christ. Please note the difference between harsh preaching and strong preaching. Strong preaching is the fearless and bold presentation of God's word. It sets a good example and stirs people to service. It also shows people that when a person is on the side of the truth, there is nothing to fear, not even fear itself. Never apologize for the truth. Why should a person apologize for the truth when the truth is exactly what God wants taught (Gal. 4:16)?

**4. The allurements of the world.** Babes are especially susceptible to the weakening influences of the world. This is true because they have not developed to the point of knowing how to overcome or avoid the darts of the devil. Satan is a shrewd operator (2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Pet. 5:8). Only the strong will serve the onslaughts of the devil. The channels through which the devil makes his approach are taught in 1 John 2:16. He knows his art very well and he should because he's been at it for a long time! Unless babes in Christ are fortified against the devil's worldly devices, they are sure to sink in the mire of sins and perish. The world offers the "exciting" experimentation with drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, and other ungodly things that, like lions on the plains of Africa, lie in wait for unsuspecting prey.

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## “After Services . . . Fellowship”

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Recently, I received a bulletin announcing the worship services of a church of Christ. It said, “Immediately after services, we will have a period of fellowship.” This was a reference to a meal in their “Fellowship Hall.”

Consider it. Did they not have “fellowship” during their worship services?! Alas, this typifies how the social gospel has usurped spiritual words, changing that which is divine and holy into that which is secular and worldly. As someone said, “When I hear the word, ‘fellowship,’ I can smell the coffee and taste the donuts.” This is true today, but was it true in the New Testament?

“Fellowship,” communion, is a Bible term. Not once was it used to signify a social meal — not once! Have we ceased to “speak where the Bible speaks”? What does it mean to “call Bible things by Bible names” and “do Bible things in Bible ways”? See Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Peter 4:11.

We are called into the “fellowship” of Christ by the gospel (1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Thess. 2:14). “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and *truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ*” (1 John 1:3). It does not say, “We eat together that we may have fellowship.” Brethren say it. The Bible does not. When Paul prayed that “the communion (fellowship) of the Holy Spirit,” might be with the brethren, for what was he praying (2 Cor. 13:14)? If the answer to that question does not involve a social supper, why do brethren today equate fellowship with eating and drinking together?

How can we have “the fellowship of the Spirit”? Let an apostle answer, “*If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7). Could language be plainer? How, then, do brethren say, “When we eat and drink together, we have fellowship one with another”?

When we eat that bread and drink that cup, “is it not

the communion (fellowship) of the blood of Christ?” “Is it not the communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:16, 17)? Yes, it is! Why, then, do brethren speak of “fellowship” as a lunch “after services”? Where is the passage that speaks of our fellowship in this manner? Where? Calling me an “anti” and smiling in contempt will not answer the questions raised. You may feel better, but you and I know that you have not dealt with the fact that Bible fellowship is a spiritual relationship in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13b; Eph. 3:6). It is not plastic forks and styrofoam cups. You know it, and I know it, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

Years ago, if elders had announced they were going to build a formal “dining room” or a cozy “cafeteria,” brethren would have rejected them. However, when they were given a “spiritual” connotation, “Fellowship Halls,” that made them more palatable. “Fellowship Hall” sounds less fleshly, more spiritual. It worked. As Paul said of Israel, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (1 Cor. 10:7).

Since we demand of our religious neighbors that we define baptism according to the Bible, and not by the dictionary, and insist that we baptize as they did in the New Testament, and not as the traditions of men direct, *why* do we not do the same with the term, “fellowship”? However, if we may pervert the term “fellowship,” and make it refer to “refreshments,” why object to those who want to pervert the term “baptism,” and make it mean “sprinkling”? Tell me. Why?

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Subscribe for a Friend

## Sermon on the Mount (19)

Jim McDonald

# “When Thou Prayest”

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**And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward (Matt. 6:5).**

As with alms giving, if one prays to be seen of men, the praise of men is all the reward he will receive. An example of men praying to be seen of men can be seen in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican (Luke 18:9-14). While the parable’s primary aim is a warning to those who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at naught” it illustrates the inordinate desire of the Pharisee to be seen of men (Luke 18:9).

Men are commanded to pray, yet never should one think of prayer simply as a “duty”: it is a privilege. Someone has observed that “in the Bible God speaks to us: in prayer we speak to God.” Prayer is our opportunity to thank God for his blessings, petition him for our needs and to lay before him our fears, heartaches, and sins. Christians may pray to God in confidence for we are told, “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their supplications” to “cast(ing) all your anxieties upon him for he careth for you”(1 Pet. 3:12; 5:7).

Since Gentiles were condemned because they did not give thanks (Rom. 1:21), even those who are not yet God’s children should recognize the hand of the Creator in their lives, be cognizant of his blessings (he maketh his sun to shine on the evil and good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust (Matt. 5:45) and, recognizing his blessings, give him thanks.

The Lord prohibits two things regarding prayer: (1) prayer must never be made to be seen of men and (2) vain repetitions in prayer (Matt. 6:5, 7f). To prevent such wrongs he commands, “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray

to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee” and “Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (Matt. 6:6, 8). Still, we are not to conclude that since he said, “Enter into thine inner chamber and pray” that all public prayer is forbidden. Jesus prayed in the presence of others (John 6:11; 11:41-43; *et al*). The apostles prayed in the presence of others (Acts 20:36; 21:5). In fact we read where many gathered together to pray (Acts 12:12). Public prayer is both proper and right. But entering into one’s inner chamber where none can see or hear removes prayer from being done to be seen of men. There, in your secret place, none sees but God. Is it not he whom you want to see and hear your prayers? Who other than him can fill them?

Nor should we conclude that all repetitions in prayers are prohibited. Gentiles thought they would be heard for much speaking. Jesus showed the fallacy of such reasoning: God knows what we need before we ask him; we do not have to repeat again and again our needs before he hears us speaking. But, is it wrong to repeatedly make requests for the same thing? If so, Jesus did what he forbade us to do. The parables of The Widow and Unjust Judge and the Embarrassed Friend, both show that persistence and repetition in prayer are acceptable to God (Luke 18:1-6; 11:5-9). What is the difference? The key is the word “vain” — empty. When one just makes words with no real meaning, his prayer is useless. On the other hand, when a woman or man has a great burden or need and casts it before the Lord again and again, that person recognizes God is able to fill his need and is imploring God to fill it. Such a prayer is prayed neither to be seen of men nor with empty repetition. Christians may pray in confidence that God will do what he knows is best for his child.

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## Water Baptism

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**Baptism in water for the remission of sins is vitally important. Although some try to discredit baptism by portraying it as simply “an outward sign of an inward grace,” the word of God teaches that baptism is so much more than that. It is a necessary condition for salvation.**

There is a lot of confusion nowadays about water baptism, especially as it relates to the salvation of alien sinners. What does the word of God teach about water baptism? Is baptism merely an outward sign of an inward grace or is it an essential condition of salvation? Is baptism for the alien sinner or for the kingdom citizen? Does baptism come before or after salvation?

Many try to discredit the importance of baptism by appealing to passages which deal with grace and/or faith. However, that one is saved “by grace through faith” is not at issue here. This writer wholeheartedly agrees that salvation “by grace through faith” is taught in the word of God. The apostle Paul wrote, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8).

What is at issue is whether water baptism is a duty of one who wants to be saved or a responsibility of one who has already been saved. Therefore, we will examine passages that deal specifically with baptism, to see whether they teach that baptism in water is a condition of salvation for the alien sinner.

### **TO BE SAVED (MARK 16:15-16)**

Our Lord Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16). In the above passage, Jesus

identifies the one who “shall be saved” and the one who “shall be damned.” Notice: (1) He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. (2) He that believes not shall be damned.

While only one condition is given for being damned (not believing), two conditions are given for being saved (belief and baptism). These two conditions stand and fall together. If one cannot be saved without believing, then he cannot be saved without being baptized. On the other hand, if one can be saved without being baptized, he can also be saved without believing. If this is not the case, why is it not?

Some argue that if Jesus had meant to make baptism a condition for salvation, he would have said, “He that believes not *and is baptized* not shall be damned.” However, if Jesus had said this, he would have made both belief and baptism essential to damnation. This would result in two classes of people being neither saved nor damned: those who believed but were not baptized and those who did not believe but were baptized. These two groups would not have met both conditions for salvation and would not have met both conditions for damnation. Surely, this would be an impossible situation.

As the statement of Jesus stands, all unbelievers “shall be damned,” but only those believers who are baptized “shall be saved.” The believer who has not been baptized has no promise of salvation from this passage. He that



both believes and is baptized shall be saved (1 Pet. 3:21).

2 + 2 = 4  
Eats + Digests = Lives  
Belief + Baptism = Saved

### **To Be Born Again (John 3:5)**

Our Lord Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

In the above passage, we see that being born again is the same as being born of water and of the Spirit. Thus, the new birth involves both “water” and “the Spirit.”

The one who is born again becomes a new creature, and is said to be in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore, that which puts one into Christ makes him a new creature and is necessary for one to be born again. The word of God clearly teaches that baptism is what puts one into Christ. The apostle Paul wrote, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Thus, “water” is a reference to water baptism. It is what makes one a new creature and is necessary for one to be born again (Rom. 6:1-5).

The Holy Spirit revealed the word of God to us, which specifically commands baptism. Therefore, the alien sinner who has been baptized according to the word of God is born of water and of the Spirit, and is no longer an alien sinner, but a citizen in the kingdom of God. One who has not been baptized in water for the remission of sins has not been born again and remains outside the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5).

### **To Receive Forgiveness of Sins (Acts 2:38)**

The apostle Peter said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

In the above passage, we see that the reason one should be baptized is “for the remission of sins.” That was the purpose for this baptism. Therefore, we must conclude that one’s sins are not remitted, or forgiven, until after baptism.

The Greek word translated “for” (*eis*) means: in order to obtain. It looks ahead to a result. Thus, Peter’s plea for the Jews on Pentecost was that they repent and be baptized *in order to obtain* the remission of sins (Acts 22:16).

### **To Walk in Newness of Life (Rom. 6:3-5)**

The apostle Paul wrote,

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5).

In the above passage, we see that when one is baptized into the Lord’s death, he is raised to walk in newness of life. By being baptized, one has a new quality or state of life. They put off the old and put on the new. This is the new birth (John 3:5).

### **To Put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27)**

The apostle Paul wrote,

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27).

In the above passage, we see how one “puts on Christ.” Is it by mere belief in Jesus? Is it by public confession? Is it by uttering the sinner’s prayer? Is it by accepting the Lord in your heart? Just how does one go about putting

on Christ?

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writer clearly states that baptism is the means by which one puts on Christ. The Greek word translated “put on” (*enduo*) means: to dress or clothe. Thus, the one baptized into Christ has been dressed or clothed in Christ. Until one submits to water baptism, he remains spiritually naked and without Christ. One remains in a lost condition until he puts on Christ in baptism.

### **CONCLUSION**

Baptism in water for the remission of sins is vitally important. Although some try to discredit baptism by portraying it as simply “an outward sign of an inward grace,” the word of God teaches that baptism is so much more than that. It is a necessary condition for salvation. You do not enter that intimate and personal relationship with Christ until baptism (Gal. 3:27).

Just as water saved Noah and his family by washing clean the world of its overwhelming corruption and wickedness, water now saves us too (1 Pet. 3:21). It is in the waters of baptism that we contact the blood of Jesus and have our sins washed away (Acts 22:16). This writer firmly believes that baptism is an essential part of obtaining salvation (Mark 16:16; Tit. 3:5).

Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized (Acts 10:47)?

**Catholic View:** He that does *not* believe and is baptized shall be saved.

**Protestant View:** He that believes and is *not* baptized shall be saved.

**God’s View:** He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

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*From Bible Talk Newsletter, South End*



## “The Weapons of Our Warfare”

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Although we live and walk in the flesh, we are not to be led by fleshly feelings. Fleshly motives are not to move us. Neither are we to use fleshly weapons to accomplish spiritual goals. “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4). The spiritual weapons are the only ones Christians can use. It is a lack of faith in God’s word, or a desire to accomplish something that God does not desire, that leads us to use carnal weapons. Spiritual strongholds can fall to spiritual weapons. In fact, we deny ourselves the help of God when we refuse to use his weapons and resort to carnal ones. Of course, God’s weapons will not help us gain self-centered desires, increase our carnal powers, or establish our position in error. Therefore, to gain these things we must resort to carnal weapons. If we cannot accomplish something in the spiritual realm with God’s word, we do not need it.

We see an example of the use of carnal weapons in Diotrephes. His desire was “to have preeminence among them” (3 John 9). What he wanted could not be gained by the use of God’s weapons so, if he was going to get what he desired, he had no alternative but to resort to carnal weapons which he readily did. First, he spoke against John; then refused to receive the brethren who came from John; forbade brethren to receive them; and lastly, “cast them out of the church” (3 John 10). People did everything his way, or else they were cast out. He was a virtual dictator of the church. His sort have not ceased to be. His position could only be gained by the use of carnal weapons for “the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy” (Jas. 3:17). Guy N. Woods well describes Diotrephes and those like him. “He was an ambitious, unscrupulous, church boss . . . a servant of Satan and an agent of the devil.”

The Corinthians used a different weapon. “Dare any of

you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? . . . Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:1, 7). It is naive to think that differences will not arise among brethren. After all, we are all weak at our best. When any dispute arises it must be settled within the brethren. While Christians are to obey the laws of the land that do not contradict Christ’s law, these earthly laws are not the guide in deciding questions or the means of determining our actions toward brethren. The laws of men do not regulate our thinking or living. The law of God does. It is absurd to think the laws of the unjust would answer the needs of the church. We simply have no reason to involve the laws of men in carrying out God’s will. God has provisions to accomplish all he wants. If what we want takes more, it is not what God wants.

Someone replies, “But what if we are cheated?” Paul says, “Why not rather be defrauded?” Ah, there is the problem! We want to win, one way or another; fair fight or foul. We want vengeance and retribution which God does allow us to carry out. His way is one of gentleness. “He shall not strive, nor cry aloud; neither shall any hear his voice in the streets” (Matt. 12:20). Instead, as Lenski said,

When a fancied or a real wrong has been done them, they think they must demand and secure redress. They at least feel that the brother who supposedly wronged them or who actually did them wrong must be humbled and made to ask their pardon . . . Of course, when Paul asks the Corinthians why they do not rather suffer wrong he in no way excuses those who actually do wrong, nor encourages them to continue their wrongdoing.”

Christians are put to shame when disputes arise without adding iniquity by seeking help from the heathen. Quite simply, let us remember that God has given us no enforce-

## Casual Attitudes

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Ezekiel 1:28 records that when Ezekiel saw the “appearance of the likeness of the glory of God” he “fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.” The scene is set in chapter 1 for the response God seeks to have from his people through the message of the prophet. God sends many things on his people in Ezekiel, so that they will know, “I am the Lord God.” The situation had reached a point with his people to where they had ceased to “fall on their face” and revere God. They had lost respect for God through their worldly spirit. Judah had become casual in her approach to him and did not honor him or respect his word or those who spoke it. Over sixty times in Ezekiel we see the phrase, “and they shall know that I am the Lord.” Worship to God during this time had become a casual affair. God will not accept such from these rebellious, half-hearted people. He will not accept it of his spiritual Israel today.

One only need observe the type of attire folks are wear-

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ment powers beyond what is revealed in the New Testament.

Our weapon is clearly identified. It is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). Ours is a powerful weapon which the Spirit uses to “convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). It is a weapon without compare since its purpose is “that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). We can never defeat God’s enemies without using God’s weapon, his word. Let us study so that in all situations we may handle it aright (2 Tim. 2:15). When we feel we must use any other weapon to accomplish God’s purpose, we show our lack of faith in his provision.

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ing to services today to realize that a more casual attitude exists among many saints in their worship to God. Under the Old Law, the priests had certain special garments that were set aside to be worn when standing in the presence of God. The preparation for standing in his presence did not start the night before, it began many days before. The books of Leviticus and Numbers reveal this in detail.

Some brethren today wish to make the worship more “exciting.” Some seem to think that the purpose of worship is to appease the worshiper rather than honor God. God has set in order how he wishes to be worshiped. We are to be thrilled at worshipping him as he has commanded. Casual storytelling that passes for a sermon, clapping, turning the lights down to set the mood, singing cutesy camp songs and making the Lord’s supper into a common meal (as LaGard Smith would have us do), indicates a lack of respect for God and a casual attitude toward serving him. It betrays a carnal spirit that reduces worship services to what pleases men and not what pleases God.

No man can set a dress code for worship, but think about it. Doesn’t God deserve more honor and respect than the local football game? Can anyone else remember a time when folks started preparing their clothes for worship on Friday and Saturday? Dignity in worship was expected and a prepared heart was betrayed by the manner in which one dressed for worship in a dignified and special way. Appropriate attire for worship and thought given to what we wear and what we are engaging in, indicates that we realize who God is and desire to honor him in a special way. He is not ordinary — he is God and we are his servants!

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**Renew Promptly!**

## “An Angel Lived Here”

(Honoring Some Godly Women)

In Proverbs 31:10-31, we have an excellent commentary on the virtuous woman.” She is here seen as a priceless jewel,

one who can be trusted, and a wife who will do good to her husband as long as she lives. She is a willing worker, very active in providing for her family. She is a wise business woman, of great strength, and she is a succor of the poor and needy. Her husband is held in honor because of her. She clothes herself in strength and honor; she is not an idle person. Her husband and children honor her. These verses have been the basis for many studies; and, I suspect, the thesis of an endless list of sermons.

In addition we have many fine examples of godly women in both the Old and New Testaments. There is Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him “lord” (1 Pet. 3:6); and, there was Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, who defied the king of Canaan, and delivered her people (Judg. 4). There was Ruth who, coming from a heathen nation, became a godly woman among God’s people; she was to become the wife of Boaz, the mother of Obed, the grandmother to Jesse, and the great-grandmother to David (Book of Ruth). Then, there was Esther, the niece of Mordecai, who raised her as his own daughter. She graciously obeyed Mordecai, placing her life in jeopardy for her people (Book of Esther).

The New Testament, also, has its godly women. Mary, the mother of Jesus probably heads the list; this virgin found favor with God and all generations were to call her blessed” (Luke 1). Dorcas was the honored seamstress whom Peter raised from the dead (Acts 9). Priscilla was truly the help-mate to her husband, and together they taught Apollos the more perfect way of the Lord (Acts 18). Phebe was the servant of the church in Cenchrea and helper of Paul (Rom. 16). Lois and Eunice were the grandmother and mother to Timothy; they had instilled an unfeigned faith” in him (2 Tim. 1:5). Others could be mentioned, but these are sufficient for our purpose.

In this brief article I wish to take notice of some godly women of today; in fact I wish to speak of a certain group of these women — the wives of gospel preachers, those who stay home while their husbands run all over the coun-

try conducting gospel meetings. I speak of such as Sandy Willis (wife of Mike), Marilyn Hafley (wife of Larry), Donna Gallaway (wife of Micky), Jeanie Hitchen (wife of Alan), Donna Halbbrook (wife of Ron), and Leslie Osborne (wife of Harry). There are, no doubt, many, many others, but these come to mind from personal knowledge. All such women keep the home fires burning, and they make many unnoticed sacrifices. They know that every word of the Lord is pure and he is a shield unto those that put their trust in him (Prov. 30:5). Their tasks cannot be easy. Loneliness is there, but somehow managed or overcome. Perhaps some work outside the home and this helps fill the void. Others may do volunteer work of some sort. Earlier in their marriage they oftentimes served as both mother and father and that is no easy task. Financial hardship, at times, would make their tasks more difficult. It is often difficult to be a good example under such circumstances (Phil. 4:6-7), but they must try. From me such women have nothing less than a deep admiration. Of course, they know that greater and good things are ahead, and that they do not labor for naught.

Permit me to remind you of a story related to the above facts. A gospel preacher was gone from two to six weeks at a time in gospel meetings; he was seldom home more than three or four days at a time. His wife would escort him to the door, kiss him goodbye, then return to her chores of the day. Realizing the sacrifices which she was making, the preacher made a sign and attached it to the front door, hoping his wife would see it. It read, “An Angel Lives Here.” The wife viewed it with a smile, but left it anchored to the door. After a few more trips, and as he was leaving for yet another meeting, he came face to face with his sign. He paused a moment, then took a pen from his briefcase and added an exclamation mark. There the sign stayed. About a year later his wife died, going on to the reward which God has for all godly women. Three days after her funeral, the preacher was leaving for more gospel meetings. At the door the now faded sign caught his attention. After a few moments of silence, he once more took out his marker. He changed only one letter and the sign now read, “An

## Lessons From Christ — Principles of Prayer

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Prayer was a vital part of Jesus' life upon the earth. In fact, the gospels record at least nine separate occasions on which Jesus prayed during his ministry. He prayed in public and in private, in peace and in distress, in life and upon the brink of death. No occasion was too small or great for our Savior to utter a prayer to his Father. Prayer, too, is an important part of the Christian's life.

Through his sinless life, Jesus left mankind a perfect example to follow. The attitudes and actions which he employed in his prayers were exemplary. Such should be employed in the prayers of all those professing to be his disciples. In this article, I will consider three aspects of Jesus' prayers: the regularity with which he prayed, the seclusion in which he often prayed, and the humility in which he prayed. May we ceaselessly evaluate our lives in light of Christ's, ensuring that they're comparable. One who is living according to the pattern that Jesus established can place confidence in his salvation.

### REGULARITY

Paul commanded the Thessalonians to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Jesus obeyed this principle. He prayed as he was raised from the waters of baptism, before he selected his apostles (Luke 6:12, 13), before he went to the cross (Mark 14:36), and while he hung upon the cross (Luke 23:34). We, too, who are weaker and in greater need of prayer than the Son of God, should pray frequently. One who fails to pray regularly breaks God's command and does not abide by Christ's example. Prayer bolsters one's spiritual strength. The strength of the one who prays irregularly, though, will be diminished.

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Angel Lived Here." May the God of glory bless all such women everywhere, as their faithfulness always remains obvious!

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### SECLUSION

Jesus was often pressed by the multitudes to preach, teach, and perform miracles. His disciples constantly sought his guidance. Rulers of the day repeatedly attempted to "catch Him in His words" and ultimately sought to take his life. He had little privacy. Yet, upon the few occasions on which he was alone, Jesus took the opportunity to pray to God in seclusion.

During the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus commanded his disciples to pray in "secret" in order to avoid praying with an arrogant spirit (Matt. 6:5, 6). He practiced what he preached. After feeding 5,000 weary travelers with five loaves and two fishes, He "went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there" (Matt. 14:23). Early in his ministry, Jesus rose early one morning to pray in a "desert place" (Mark 1:35). Before he selected his apostles, Jesus prayed all night on a mountain (Luke 6:12, 13). As Jesus, let us avail ourselves of the opportunities to pray to God in secret.

### HUMILITY

Jesus' life exuded humility. His humility was exemplified in a short prayer that he uttered prior to his trial and crucifixion: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will" (Mark 14:36). With his life at stake, Jesus humbly resigned his will to the Father. Even as he hung upon the cross, Jesus maintained his humble spirit. He prayed for his mockers, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). As Jesus did, are we able to pray for our enemies or place little value upon our own fleshly existence? Do we pray with the same depth of humility as our Lord did? Let us strive to do so.

If we do not pray to God regularly, in seclusion, and in humility, our spiritual welfare is lacking and our relationship with the Lord is strained. Let us strive to follow the example that Christ laid before us. In prayer and in ~~Christ's life~~ of our Christian life, may we endeavor to be

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Joe R. Price

## A Faithful Saying

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Have you ever stopped to think of the number of “sayings” people use in daily conversation? Notice some of them. “Haste makes waste.” “A stitch in time saves nine.” “Neither a borrower nor a lender be.” “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” I suspect you have already thought of several similar “sayings” which you have heard or used through the years. Would you be surprised if you learned that the Bible also speaks of “sayings”?

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 3:15).

The apostle Paul makes this statement in the broader context of his own life and experience. He affirms that God had chosen him especially for the work of apostleship and preaching which he was doing (v. 12). Furthermore, he affirmed that he was a most unlikely candidate for such a responsibility; he had not been a friend to the cause of the Lord. To the contrary, the apostle said he had been “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” to that cause (v. 13). So, what could possibly be the explanation for his selection by Christ for the great work he was doing?

### THINGS INVOLVED IN HIS SELECTION

**1. Mercy.** Paul said he had obtained mercy from the Lord of glory, which explained his role in the ministry of Christ. The Greek word translated mercy, *eleeo*, is a word meaning “to feel sympathy with the misery of another, and especially sympathy manifested in act . . . to have pity or mercy shown one” (Vine, 61). Obviously, Paul perceived the sympathy and pity God bestowed upon him in redeeming him from the sin in which Paul was involved.

The apostle further explains this mercy and its effects: “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (v. 16). God is said to be “rich in mercy” (Eph. 2:4). Fortunately, this is true, for without his mercy, we would all be hopelessly lost.

**2. Grace.** Next the apostle said God’s grace was abundant to him. In fact, he said it was exceedingly abundant. Without God’s grace, there would have been no forgiveness for Paul, nor would he have been out preaching and promoting the Lord’s kingdom.

To the Ephesians, Paul affirmed salvation by grace through personal faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9). In our context, Paul also associated the “exceeding abundant” grace with “faith.” God bestows his grace and favor upon those who believe in him. Without faith, we can neither please God nor receive grace (Heb. 11:6).

**3. Love.** In explaining what had occurred in his own life, Paul said that God’s love was at work toward him. The great message of the gospel is that God loved mankind, giving his own Son to die to redeem us from our sins (John 3:16). This same truth is affirmed in Romans 5:8. Where would we be without his love?

### NOW, THE “FAITHFUL SAYING”

Paul said there is a “faithful saying” which was commonly known and understood, to wit, “. . . that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (v. 15). The explanation for the life of Christ on the earth, like the explanation for Paul’s personal selection to apostleship, was predicated upon the truth that Christ came to save sinners. To that end, Christ died at Calvary, shedding his blood to wash away our sins. Also to that end, Paul was selected to take this gospel of salvation to a lost and dying world. This “faithful saying” is still the treasure of every believer who is seeking salvation from his sins.

In that same verse Paul said, this “saying” is “worthy of all acceptance.” That is to say, all sinners must accept that salvation from sin is available to us all in Christ Jesus, as a result of the mercy, grace, and love of God who had Jesus die for us. What could men do that is more “worthy” than to accept the marvelous, soul-saving blessings which God bestowed upon them through Christ?

This “saying” is called a “faithful” saying. Why? The



## Avoiding Immorality

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In 1 Corinthians 10:8, Paul said, “Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day” (NASB 95). The KJV and ASV say, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.” The ESV says, “We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.”

While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab and joined themselves to Baal of Peor. The idol “Baal of Peor” or “Baal-Peor” was a local god of the Moabite mountains. Perhaps this is another name for Chemosh. Because Israel participated in the licentious rituals of this pagan cult, 24,000 Israelites were struck by a divine plague and died (Num. 25:1-13).

Later Israel was commanded to strike the Midianites because of their hostility and trickery in the affair of Peor (Num. 25:16-18). In the ensuing battle, Balaam was killed

along with the immoral women of Midian (Num. 31:1-18). The tragedy and travesty of Baal-Peor became an enduring symbol of the judgment that falls upon those who are sexually immoral (Deut. 4:1-4; Ps. 106:28-31; Hosea 9:10; Rev. 2:14-16; 2:19-23).

Christians must abstain from fornication (Acts 15:19-20, 28-29; 21:25; 1 Thess. 4:3-4). With some sins, particularly those that appeal to the flesh, flight is the only effective means of resistance (1 Cor. 6:18-20; 10:14; 2 Tim. 2:19-22). This principle is well illustrated by the contrasting examples of Joseph who fled temptation (Gen. 39:1-12), and David who did not (2 Sam. 11:1-5).

### BY KEEPING THE HEART

To avoid fornication, one must guard the heart and mind (Job 31:1; Prov. 23:7; Matt. 15:18-19; Mark 7:20-23; Matt. 5:27-30). In this regard, we must avoid direct and indirect lust. One can sin by looking directly upon a woman, or by looking upon a graphic representation, i.e., pictures, tele-

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explanation lies in the fact that it is in perfect harmony with the character of God. Name the things which pass through your mind when you think of God. Do you not immediately think of his gift of his only begotten Son, dying for our sins? Do you not think of his Mercy? His Grace? His Love?

While men sometimes will show mercy, grace, and love toward each other, none can ever attain unto these blessed things in the likeness, or to the degree, of Almighty God. These are things we reserve to explain all that God has done for us. Herein lies whatever hope we have for present forgiveness, and for eternal happiness and rest.

Paul, the “chief” sinner, received the salvation of his soul, as a result of these expressions of God’s benevolence

to him. In like manner, you and I must find our salvation in the same place. When Paul was confronted with the truths about Jesus Christ, he renounced his rebellion against him, and embraced him in humble obedience to his commands.

If we are to be saved today, we must do the same. The burning question is: “Have I accepted the offer of salvation from Christ, by my personal obedience to his commands?” We may do many great things in life, but unless we have the salvation that Christ alone gives, our lives are empty and vain. We must not allow this gracious gift of eternal life to pass us by.

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vision, movies, magazines, bill-boards, the Internet, etc. Continual caution and self-control are especially needed in our modern voyeuristic culture.

### BY COVERING THE BODY

To avoid fornication, one must properly cover the body. For men especially, the sight of an improperly/inadequately clothed female produces lust. Jehovah's strict rules concerning priestly modesty stood in stark contrast with the sensuality of pagan idolatry (Exod. 20:25-26; 28:42-43).

Nakedness characterized Canaanite life and religion, but it must not be so among the people of God. From a biblical standpoint, public nakedness is always shameful (Isa. 20:1-5; 47:1-3; Lam. 1:8; Micah 1:11; Rev. 3:18; 16:15). Modesty is, therefore, mandated (1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). Why? Outside of the marriage bed, sensuality and suggestiveness are improper (Heb. 13:4). Sight leads to lust, and lust leads to action (Lev. 18 [multiple refs.]; cf. also Lev. 20:11, 17-21; Ezek. 16:36-37; 22:10-11, 23:17-21; etc.).

### BY CULTIVATING THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

To avoid fornication, one must cultivate a divinely sanctioned marriage relationship (Heb. 13:4). In the Garden of Eden, the Lord said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." After Eve was taken from Adam's side, the man said, "This is

now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:18-24). Sexual intimacy has its proper fulfillment within marriage (Prov. 5:15-23). Because of immorality, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. Furthermore, both should fulfill their duty to the other (1 Cor. 7:1-5).

### CONCLUSION

Young people should wait for marriage, and not awaken passion prematurely (S. of Sol. 2:7; see also 3:5 and 8:4). Note various translations of this verse. Although the Shulamite longed for the Shepherd's embrace, she understood love should not be aroused or awakened until the appropriate time. Even in budding romance, young Christians should demonstrate chaste behavior, avoiding all impurity of thought, word, and action (1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:22; Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 5:21-22).

Regardless of age, Christians should exemplify moral purity. Sexual immorality must not be named among those who are saints (Eph. 5:3). Exploitative behavior is a grievous sin (Hab. 2:15-16). Having been raised with Christ, let us set our affection on things above, and die to all manifestation of evil desire (Col. 3:1-6).

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## Settling Spiritual Matters

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Forget about trying to settle non-revealed things by chocking them off to “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God” (Deut. 29:29). This study is designed to help us settle revealed matters.

### THINGS CANNOT BE SETTLED BY —

Spiritual matters cannot be settled by a number of things. A failure to understand this has led to a lot of spiritual misunderstanding. Please note that matters cannot be settled by:

**1. What I Think.** When it comes to religious issues, what I think does not matter. Naaman teaches us what men think has no bearing on what God thinks. When Naaman was told to “go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. Naaman said, “Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper” (2 Kings 5:10-11). What Naaman thought did not change what God had specified for leprosy-curing. When Naaman finally was convinced, by his servants, to do “according to the saying of the man of God, his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (2 Kings 5:13-14). No spiritual matters are settled by human thinking.

**2. My Ways.** My ways are human ways and are not designed to settle spiritual matters. Isaiah said it best, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, said the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9). May we never try to force our ways over God’s.

**3. What Seems Right.** A lot of things may seem right and be totally wrong. The wise man said, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). It might seem right that a person could be saved by “faith only.” But James said, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (Jas. 2:24). It might seem like one could be saved without being baptized. But Jesus said, “He

that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Let’s stop trying to settle spiritual matters by what seems right, but let the word of the Lord tell us what’s right.

**4. The Wisdom of Men.** Men can and are often wrong. There is a road sign in Bloomington, Indiana which says, “Fifty thousand physicians cannot be wrong.” Who can believe that? Divine admonition tells us, “. . . that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written” (1 Cor. 4:6). We must rely on that which is written and not the wisdom of men. This is the reason Paul penned, “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5). Worldly wisdom does not know God or his will. The Corinthians were told, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God” (1 Cor. 1:21).

### THINGS CAN BE SETTLED BY —

Every religious matter where God saw fit to reveal his mind can be settled by:

**1. Asking for what saith the Scripture?** Since “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17), we must make our appeal to a “thus saith the Lord,” as we strive to settle spiritual matters. Too many have gotten away from “book, chapter and verse” teaching and preaching in our day. So, when we teach, let’s read, study, and find out what the Scriptures say and teach the word of God.

**2. Speaking as the Oracles of God.** God’s oracles are his utterances which have been “revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:5). This revelation has been written down and “when ye read, ye may understand” (Eph. 3:3-4). It is past time that we get back to “speaking as the oracles of God,” and leave off so much foolishness which is going on in many pulpits today! May we remember, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God”(1 Pet. 4:11).

## Seeing Ahead by Looking Back (9)

H. Osby Weaver

# Cockroach Religion

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*(If the invitation below had been extended by an individual, it would have passed as a clever and attractive approach, but it was tendered by a church of Christ. This message indicates a deeper defect than what might appear on the surface. It is a step in the direction of a social and entertaining project. I responded in like kind, hoping that it might help those involved to see where they were heading. Apparently, I was unsuccessful. Now I am hoping that by looking back we will be able to see what lies ahead if this practice in other realms continues. This occurred in 1958 — HOW.)*

We have ceased to be surprised at anything that some of our liberal brethren do or say. There was a time when we had right and reason to expect better of those who claim to be members of the church of Christ, but in these modern times of independent thought, holding the faith of our Lord is no longer considered a prized possession, in some circles. Instead many are found adopting their own standard

of authority and seem to think that by doing so they have made some improvement. As a result, sounds that lack the old familiar ring of the gospel are heard on every hand. At first, we could hardly believe what was happening. Then when it finally dawned on us, it was a source of deep grief. It made us all want to sit down and cry!

Benumbed by the rapid succession of innovations imposed upon the church, we find ourselves now unable to get unduly excited at the foolishness in which some will engage to promote unscriptural endeavors, but rather, we have come to expect such.

As an evidence of what we mean, below is a portion of a letter sent out on the letterhead of a church of Christ:

to all young people in the area, by way of introduction, i am rust roach and i live in the office of the church building. this is probably the first letter you've ever received from a roach, but everyone else is so busy around here that i have

---

**3. Rightly Dividing Truth.** There must be a wrong way to divide truth or the Holy Spirit would not have said, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Truth, which is "thy word" (John 17:17), is designed to be studied and properly divided. Some open the Bible and try to do what that opening says. If the Bible were to open to Deuteronomy 16, one might find himself on a plane to Jerusalem to keep an Old Testament feast! If not, why not? Basically the Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments and each of these has to be rightly divided or we misunderstand its teaching.

**4. Knowing How the Bible Teaches.** It will never be learned how to settle religious matters unless we know how

the Bible settles them. The word of God settles spiritual issues by a statement of fact, a direct command, approved apostolic example, or necessary inference. Now, notice an example of each of these settling ways. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). A statement of fact. "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sin" (Acts 2:38). A direct command. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church" (Acts 14:23). An apostolic example. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water" (Matt. 3:16). It is necessarily inferred that Jesus went down into the water, in order to come up out of it. May we all learn to be content with the word of God.

---

4121 Woodyard Rd., Bloomington, Indiana 47404

come to the rescue and, by staying up to the wee hours of the morning after everyone else is gone, i am going to write a most important letter to you.

if you are wondering how a roach can type, let me say it's not easy. i have to climb up on the typewriter, jump, and land on the correct key — then crawl back up again and jump up on the next key. please excuse my lack of capital letters as it is impossible for me to land on both the shift key and the letter at the same time.

The letter went on to urge young people to participate in some project that was labeled “area-wide.” Rusty continues: “I just want to sit in my dark closet and listen . . . by staying up late and typing this notice, I know you won't let all my jumping go for nothing.”

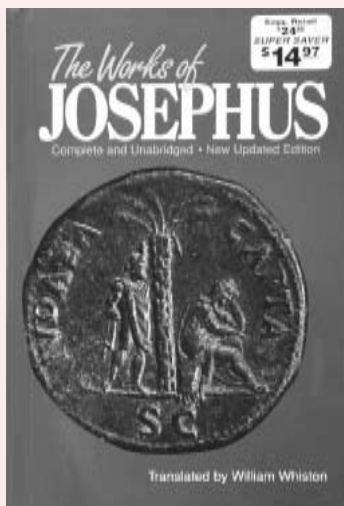
Our first impression is to recommend that this church call Orkin. But on second thought, that would be such a waste of mentality. A mind is a terrible thing to waste, even if it belongs to a roach. Obviously, the roaches in that area, at least “rusty” are far more advanced scholastically than most illiterate old roaches. With churches today promoting youth revivals, youth encampments, young-people's area-wide and statewide conventions, ball clubs, entertaining societies, etc., etc., *ad infinitum*, it seems to us that here is a neglected area . . . that of educating cockroaches. All of the promotional schemes employed today which require the building of everything from gymnasiums to banquet halls are supposedly justified on the basis of its being a good work. Now which of these churches that are on the march that engage in such unscriptural practices will be the first to step forward and “assume” the work of

“sponsoring” a school for ignorant and under-privileged cockroaches? Surely none would deny that turning roaches into stenographers would be a good work, unless it was one of the young ladies who has a job as a stenographer. It might not be too good for the business and office morale to replace a pretty young lady with a roach, but just think of the opulent source of income, hiring out these roaches to type! There would be no competition to worry about, for when an eldership “assumed the oversight” of all the roaches in a given area, it would become their exclusive work and no one else would have the right to infringe upon their diocese. If enough churches could be induced to send contributions to the “sponsoring church,” perhaps this spirit of cooperation might rub off on the roaches, and then we would begin to see capital letters in their typing. You see, one roach could sit on the shift key while the other jumped down on the letter key. Surely everyone would concede that this is “cooperation.”

Just think what a boon this would be to those who have been trying unsuccessfully to exterminate the pesky creatures. Unmolested freedom of the house could be given them with full assurance that all would be well, for surely a “Christian” cockroach would not harm anything. Then you could address them as “brother” and just think what this would do for the evolutionist. I guess this could be termed “cockroach religion”!

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## Waiting For the Rapture?

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A few years ago a religious group predicted a certain day on which they had calculated that “The Rapture” would occur. To their disappointment and embarrassment the day passed with no fulfillment of their prediction. Though these men and women most certainly believed in what they had predicted, it was their misunderstanding of Scripture that led to their failure. In fact, that same misunderstanding will lead many in the religious world to the same disappointment!

### WHAT IS “THE RAPTURE”?

The careful Bible student will ask this question because of the fact that the word is never used in Scripture. The phrase “The Rapture” refers to a doctrine taught in the world which is tied into various false doctrines regarding an earthly millennial (1000 year) reign. Many teach that prior to a period of intense tribulation Christ will return only for the church. At which time the righteous dead will be resurrected and together with the living saints be “raptured” (caught up) with Christ to await the end of the “Tribulation.” At that time Christ will return with all the saints to reign on the earth 1000 years, at the end of which will be the final resurrection and judgement.

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Undeniably the Bible teaches a type of rapture (being “caught up”) with the Lord. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 the Apostle Paul responds to concerns the brethren had about saints that had died. He reassures them that those alive won’t “precede those who are asleep” (v. 15). Instead “the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (vv. 16, 17).

How does this differ from the false doctrine of “The Rapture”? First, notice the occasion: “The coming of the Lord” (v. 15). Hebrews 9:27-28 makes it very clear that resurrection will be followed by “judgment,” and the Lord’s second coming by “salvation.” The “rapture”

doctrine claims judgment follows resurrection by over 1000 years for the saints and immediately for the wicked. Further notice the declaration that “the dead in Christ will rise first” (v. 16). The Bible makes it clear that though the saints may be first in succession, the occasion for the resurrection of the just and unjust will be the same. John 5:28, 29 speak of it as “the hour . . . in which all who are in their graves will hear His voice.” The passage then refers to both the righteous and the unrighteous. Even in 1 Thessalonians the very next chapter (keeping in the same context) speaks of this occasion as the “Day of the Lord” (v. 2) which comes “as a thief in the night” (v. 2), from which “they shall not escape” (v. 3). If this just concerns the righteous, why would they need to escape?

Proponents of this doctrine often appeal to two passages to support this concept: Matthew 24:40, 41 and Revelation 20:5. The first occurs in the midst of Jesus discussion with his disciples about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Reference is made to those “taken” and those “left.”

Though it may be that in parts of this passage Jesus points ahead to the final judgment, it is clear that most of this passage deals with the destruction of Jerusalem. Notice the promise: “This generation will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled” (Matt. 24:34). The reference to those “taken” and “left” refers to those led away captive as can be seen in Luke’s account of this same teaching (21:24).

The second (perhaps a little more difficult) speaks of a “first resurrection” in which souls beheaded for their testimony lived and reigned with Christ (Rev. 20:4-6). First, one should note that there is no reference to a bodily resurrection here. I believe this speaks of a spiritual resurrection similar to Ephesians 2:4-6, Colossians 3:1 and even Romans 6:4. Second, we must realize that Christ now reigns! He has all authority (Matt. 28:18), his kingdom presently exists (Col. 1:13), and it is not earthly (John 18:36). Thus it is not unreasonable to conclude that the passage in Revelation refers to dead saints spiritually reigning with Christ until the end of the age.

# The Chastening of the Lord

(Hebrews 12:5-11)

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In the second to last chapter of the book of Hebrews, the text appears which gives us the subject for this article. There are different understandings as to what the nature of this chastening is. Some would say it speaks of afflictions or trials that come upon the Christian from without. Barclay speaks of its being “hardship sent from God” (XIII:175). It is hoped that this study might be helpful in explaining both the kind of chastening under consideration and in making some helpful applications.

## WHAT IS THIS CHASTENING? (v. 5)

**1. Its definition:** a. “1. bring up, instruct, train, educate. . . . 2. practice discipline — a. correct, give guidance to someone. . . . b. discipline with punishment” (Arndt and Gingrich, 604); b. “used of the whole training and education of children. It speaks also of whatever in adults cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions. It speak also of instruction which aims at the increase of virtue” (Wuest, *Hebrews in the N.T.* II:217).

**2. In its immediate context.** Please notice with what “chastening” is connected (italicized words) in the following verses: “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art *rebuked* of him” (v. 5). “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which *corrected* us” (v. 9). This connection is helpful in understanding the meaning of chastening herein. This is especially so in light of our next point.

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The false doctrine of “The Rapture” is dangerous because it relies upon a misconception of the nature of the church and Christ’s kingdom. The church and the kingdom are the same and exist now!

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**3. Its usage in the New Testament.** The word rendered “chastening” in Hebrews 12:5 also appears in the following verses (italicized): “Bring them up in the *nurture* and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4); “is profitable for doctrine, for *instruction* in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

In its verb form it is rendered as follows: “And Moses *was learned* in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). “In meekness *instructing* those that oppose themselves” (2 Tim. 2:25).

These appearances of our word agree with both the word’s definition and the words it is connected with in Hebrews 12:5-11 (first two points).

**4. This text’s place in the epistle to the Hebrews.** Up to this point in his letter the writer has had to say some serious and sometimes pretty stiff things to his readers (2:3; 3:8; 4:1; 5:11-12; 6:11-12; 10:6-27, 35). In harmony with what we have written under points 1-3, the writer sees a real possibility that his readers might react negatively to *what he has said in his letter thus far*. He has been trying to “instruct,” “train,” and “correct” them (please note these words in the definitions, “1.” above). After all he has written, he realizes that there is danger they might “despise . . . the chastening of the Lord” or “faint when . . . rebuked of him” (12:5).

In light of the facts presented above, the chastening of the Lord in this text is the training or instructing that the Lord does through his word. It may come to us through our personal study, or by way of Christians who speak or write to us (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2:25). Chastening includes punishment, but physical punishment is not necessarily spoken of in Hebrews 12:5-11. The writer has been chastening his readers through his words.

## SOME LESSONS FROM THIS TEXT

**1. Christians need chastening!** Why did the recipients of the Hebrew letter need it? It was because of their weakened spiritual condition (2:1-3; 3:7-8; 5:11-12; 10:24-25; 12:12-13). We need chastening if we fall into a state similar to theirs. We also need it if we are to be ready when the

Lord comes (2 Pet. 3:14,18). Like the Hebrews, there is a danger that we might despise those who would discipline us. We must be careful not to despise the chastening of the Lord and not “faint” when we receive admonition.

2. Churches need to practice discipline. This is a form of “the chastening of the Lord.” Such discipline may simply call for “instruction” or “admonition” (definitions, above; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14). If these methods finally fail, stronger efforts to teach are in order. It may be necessary to “deliver” the erring “unto Satan” that they “may learn” (1 Tim. 1:19-20). 1 Corinthians 5:5, 11, 13 show us that “deliver unto Satan” speaks of the members of a church withdrawing from an unrepentant Christian (cp. 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15). Some erring brethren will “despise” such discipline. However, they cannot be the gauge of our conduct.

3. Children need discipline. The writer of Hebrews took for granted that his readers had received such (Heb. 12:7). His readers came from Jewish backgrounds and the Bible tells us what guided Jewish parents in raising their children (Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6, 15; 13:24; 19:18). Christians can learn from this in bringing their children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Rom. 15:4; Eph. 6:4). The word “nurture” is the same word rendered “chastening” in Hebrews 12:5. One thing involved in such nurture is the parent’s teaching of their children to reverence their words (Heb. 12:9). Why were the readers of the Hebrew epistle expected to “be in subjection unto the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:7)? Because they had “reverenced” their earthly fathers! It follows as night follows day that we cannot expect our children to reverence God’s word if we cannot teach them to reverence our word. Children need discipline.

## CONCLUSION

Chastening is a responsibility given to Christians and it should not be neglected. It yields “the peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:11). If recipients of the letter to the Hebrews went to heaven, one reason for it was because someone cared enough about them to instruct and correct them. Let not this lesson be lost on us.

“Let all that you do  
be done in love” (1

## “Dirty Words?” continued from front page

God in the Scriptures. To disregard our likeness to the Lord is to undermine our dignity, worth, and potential for good; to deny the voice of God speaking to our good is to leave ourselves alone on the sea of life, without chart or compass or guiding star when we reject his. It is no wonder that so many become aimless, resorting to drugs, promiscuous sex, fame, or some other source to fill the void that only God can fill (Eccl. 3:11).

I think also we should stress that the formation of habits — both good and bad — results from the repeated thoughts and acts that we allow a place in our minds. Habits then form character. I remember the following short poem:

“Sow a thought, and you reap an act;  
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.”  
(Quoted by Samuel Smiles in *Life and Labor*, 1887)

In many cases we have failed to instill in our young people, the relationship of what they think about and practice to the entirety of life. No one can expect to live a life dominated by good when he has chosen the bad of this world for his thoughts, speech, and behavior.

Personal responsibility and accountability to others are other lessons that I believe we must somehow get across to young people. The recognition of this depends on the understanding of our spiritual nature, as stressed earlier, and our need for each other. Influence and example must become concerns of all responsible people; what we do affects others. Teaching is the sole foundation for such a concern. We have it on the best authority that evil companionships have a corrupting influence on all, even on the best of us (1 Cor. 15:33). It is also true that the influence of a child of God can serve as salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). Are you using your speech to edify others (Col. 4:6)?

I am satisfied also that we must imbed in the thinking of our youth that a misspent life is not easily recalled or amended. I do not suggest that repentance is impossible or that sin is inevitable in its rule over us, for neither idea is correct (Acts 17:30; Rom. 6:12). Some turned to God from idols, and what a turn that was, given the associated vices of idolatry (1 Thess. 1:9). It is more the difficulty of breaking bad habits and rooting out the evil that has become second-nature to us that I here emphasize. Patterns of speech and conduct can be changed, but to change them requires major and prolonged effort, beginning with a change of one’s environment (friends). It is far better for a young person to determine to avoid the life of indecency that is becoming altogether too common among those too young to understand the bitter fruit of sin. It is undeniably



true, however, that when we grow our roots in the field of sin, the fruit that we harvest cannot be expected in some other field (Gal. 6:7-8).

Each of us can use whatever influence he has for good in helping to salvage one or more such young person. Though that one might not have become a Christian, in such a case it is still possible to save a soul from death and to cover multitude of sins (Jas. 5:19-20). I am afraid for our young people, as I said before; but with all of us working on this problem, the situation will not be as scary.

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### “Psalm 4” continued from page 2

poet, etc. In this sense, the wicked would be taking away the glory God had conferred on him.

The word “vanity” means “vain words” and is paralleled with “lies.” The wicked were using lying words to destroy David. They were “vain” because they would not accomplish their purpose because they were “lies.” To attack those whom God defends is vain. Paul wrote,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:35-39).

Every assault which the wicked makes against God’s people will fail to overthrow righteousness.

Men do not have the right to destroy the reputations of godly men with lies. Their efforts to destroy will also be vain words. Let us not revile our slanderers in return, but warn them and call them to repentance. Our duty is done when we see to it that evil reports respecting ourselves are false, or, if true, if we heartily repent of the matter of them.

**3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.**

God has set apart him who is godly for himself: (a) He

called or elected him to salvation through the gospel; (b) He established him in whatever position he holds by his providence. Think of this with reference to David: He was chosen to be king by divine appointment (1 Sam. 16:1-13, esp. v. 7). The word “godly” (*chesid*) means: “the kind, merciful, pious, godly.” It refers to a saint.

The thought that God has set apart those who are righteous for himself is a beautiful thought (cf. 2 Tim. 2:19; Rev. 7:2-3 — they are sealed and protected).

He has promised to hear the prayers of the righteous. All of prayer presupposes that God can and does hear the prayers of man.

**4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.**

The LXX translates this verse, “Be ye angry and sin not.” This is the exact phrase that Paul stated in Eph. 4:26, The word *ragaz* means “to stir or move about, to remove. . . to be moved or excited. . . to be agitated, from anger (Prov. 29:9), grief (2 Sam. 19:1), fear (Isa. 32:10), joy (Jer. 33:9).”

Not all anger is sinful. Christ was angry without sin (Mark 3:5). Sinful anger has these traits: (a) it may be without a cause (Matt. 5:22); (b) it is out of proportion to the offense (Prov. 27:4); (c) it is rash (Prov. 15:18; 16:32; Jas. 1:19); (d) it is long continued (Eph. 4:26); (e) when it vents itself in sinful ways.

The verse instructs those who are angry at David, one of God’s righteous ones, to control their anger by keeping their mouths shut. They should resort to a private place (their own bed) and contemplate (a) what God wishes to be done and (b) the futility of attacking his saints (cf. Haman’s assault of Mordecai).

Do you “commune with your own heart upon your bed” when you are angry? Have you learned to “be still”?

**5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.**

The wicked are exhorted to repent and offer the sacrifices of righteousness. External sacrifices are inadequate and insufficient. The sacrifices of righteousness involve: (a) the right things; (b) offered the right way; (c) with the right disposition of mind.

The wicked are exhorted to trust in the Lord, instead of in themselves or their ability overthrow David.

**6 There be many that say, Who will show us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.**

Many ask, "What good does it do to serve the Lord?" In response, David asks God to shower his blessings upon the righteous to show others the benefit of serving him.

Think of the good things that God gives to those who serve him: (a) forgiveness; (b) the hope of salvation; (c) a good relationship with his mate; (d) a family relationship that is stable; (e) prosperity that is stable. Truly, God has blessed us by lifting up his countenance upon us!

**7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.**

In addition to whatever physical blessings David had enjoyed, God's presence was a blessing superior to any of them. "The greater number of men greedily seek after present pleasures and advantages; but I maintain that perfect felicity is only to be found in the favor of God."

"Let all beware of deluding themselves with a reliance on the future of this life as likely to afford more enjoyment than their experience of the past would lead them to expect, v. 6. Bickersteth: The young expect to find it when grown up and their own masters. Parents, when their children are settled and provided for. The merchant, when wealth is acquired, and independence secured. The laborer, when his day's or week's toil is ended. The ambitious, in gaining power and reputation. The covetous, in gaining money to supply all his wants. The lover of pleasure in earthly enjoyment. The sick, in health. The student, in gaining knowledge. The self-righteous, Rom. x.2,3."

**8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for**

**thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.**

Because he rested in the protection of God, David could lie down in peace and sleep. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. 33:26-29).

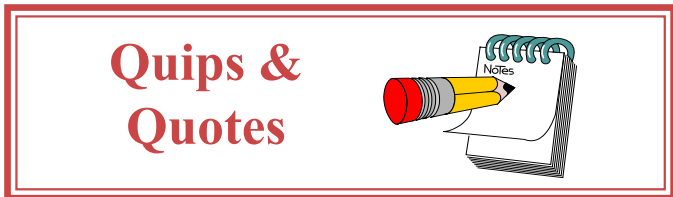
Bill Gaither wrote the song "Why Should I Worry or Fret?" It says,

"I believe, I believe, I believe,  
So why should I worry or fret?  
He holds the future in the palm of his hand;  
He's never failed me yet.  
I know I'm a part of his almighty plan,  
So why should I worry or fret?"

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**Help Needed**

Ralph, Joiner, veteran gospel praecher and my son-in-law, had a massive heart attack October 5, 2003. He was airlifted from Logansport, Louisiana to the emergency room at LSU Hospital, Shreveport, Louisiana, but doctors were unable to save him. Memorial services were conducted at Logansport October 8. Jerry Gannon, an elder at the Standley Road church where Ralph preached, and Birtie Butcher, an elder at the Southport Indianapolis church where Ralph preached a few years ago, conducted a beautiful service.

Ralph was a diabetic for years and had other health problems. He died without insurance. Jean, his widow, is on Social Security disability and unable to work. The Standley church paid for the memorial services and are helping Jean make the transition from there to Lufkin, Texas. The brethren there have been

wonderful.

Jean will move into a house that we are providing for her about the middle of December and we will supplement her income.

Ralph and Jean have made monthly payments to doctors and hospitals for years and years. They have the doctors paid but still owe a hospital at Oxford, Mississippi about \$10,700. This bill originally (for doctors and hospital) was about \$30,000. Since Ralph's death, Jean has received a bill from the airlift service for \$6,130 and another from LSU Hospital for \$1,755. When we add these to the Oxford, Mississippi balance, the total is \$18,585.

If you desire to help Jean pay on this, it will be deeply appreciated. Jean's address is 109 Standley Church Rd., Logansport, LA 71049, (318) 697-1278. After December 15 her address will be: 1306 Scott, Lufkin, TX 75904. Dean Bullock, Lufkin, TX.

### A Battle For a Church's Soul

"The Episcopal Church — the church of the Founding Fathers and 11 U.S. presidents, the one with a sanctuary standing tall on thousands of Main Streets — may be heading for a theological civil war.

"Today, a conservative wing of the denomination gathers in Dallas to repudiate the national leadership, Episcopal Church USA, and brand many of the clergy and lay leaders as apostates — people who have abandoned their faith.

"The dissenting group, the American Anglican Council (AAC), was outraged when two-thirds of the bishops and delegations to the church's tri-annual national meeting voted in August to affirm an openly gay bishop and to accept that some parishes may bless same-sex unions.

"If the AAC splits the church, it may be the most critical such schism since the Baptists divided North and South over slavery. It sounds an alarm to Lutherans, Methodists and other mainline denominations that are facing the same tense questions of sexuality and faith.

"The Episcopal Church is to liberal Protestantism what California is to the rest of the country: Things happen there that they know will happen in the rest of the churches," says an-

thropologist Susan Harding, a professor at the University of California-Santa Cruz.

"It could cost the Episcopal Church USA the financial and evangelical might of hundreds of the wealthiest churches in the world and prompt bitter and costly battles pew by pew, property by property, pension by pension across the country.

"The Associated Press calculated that the denomination receives \$2.14 billion in annual offerings from 7,364 U.S. congregations. Its assets and properties are worth incalculable billions. Already, the AAC claims hundreds of parishes are holding back their national pledges.

"And it would have worldwide ramifications, shaking the soul of the 77-million-member global Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church USA is the American branch of the Anglican Church.

"The Episcopal Church USA's actions are 'thoroughly unbiblical, unconstitutional and totally unacceptable,' and they jeopardize the national church's ability to remain within the Anglican family, says AAC president the Rev. David Anderson" (USA Today [October 7, 2003], 6D).

## A Glorified Y

John Isaac Edwards

As I sat down to read the morning paper, a writing concerning The Washington County,

Indiana YMCA caught my attention. The short article listed some of the new activities planned at the local Y, including, Swimming, Tae Kwon Doe, Soccer, Fun Tumbling, and Mid-day Bible Study.

As I read the activities planned and promoted by churches today, even among "churches of Christ," it is obvious that a lot of churches bear a closer resemblance to the YMCA than they do to the church of the New Testament! It's a sad state of affairs when one can hear more Bible at the health club than from the pulpit. Some churches are nothing more than a glorified Y!

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