

Back To Basics

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LEGAL, BUT NOT SCRIPTURAL

Johnie Edwards

There are some things which may be legal, but not Scriptural. Sometimes folks think that if a thing is legal, it must be okay. So, we study.

1) **ALCOHOL.** It may be legal to sell, buy and drink alcohol, but the Scriptures oppose drinking. Solomon wrote, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Prov. 20:1). Drinking and drunkenness is condemned in the Bible. "Drunkards" are among the list of those who shall not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Even drinking parties is sinful when we understand the word "banquetings" of 1 Peter 4:3.

2) **ABORTION.** Abortion is legal, but sinful according to Scripture. We are not allowed to take the life of an unborn child, no more than we can take the life of a child already born! There is no doubt that life begins in the mother's womb. The Psalmist recorded, "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb" (Ps. 139:13-16). Luke 1:41-44 recognizes an unborn as "the babe leaped in her womb." We are often told that the woman's body belongs to her, and she has the right to do with it as she pleases. What about the baby's body?

3) **MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE.** The laws of the land may allow marriage, divorce and remarriage for any or no reason, when the Bible may not allow such. Jesus said, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mt. 19:9). We are often told that anyone put away for any reason may remarry. They may legally, but can they Scripturally? One only has the Scripturally right to remarry when the conditions of Matthew 19:9 are met, regardless of what one might think in his mind!

4) **GAMBLING.** Even though gambling is legal and has become socially acceptable, it is not Scriptural. Gambling is a wager on some chance, with the winner taking gain from others, without respect for principles of right and truth.

5) **SAME-SEX MARRIAGES.** Some states have legalized same-sex marriages, while the Bible condemns such. The Genesis marriage was that of a man and a woman (Gen. 2:18-24). Same-sex marriage is nothing more than homosexuality and is condemned in the Bible (Lev. 18:22-24; Rom. 1:24-28; 1 Cor. 6:9).



THE SOWER'S SEED

Basic Sermon Starters

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH AND WEEPETH, BEARING PRECIOUS SEED, SHALL DOUBTLESS COME AGAIN WITH REJOICING, BRINGING HIS SHEAVES WITH HIM."

QUESTIONS MEN ASKED THE LORD

Introduction

1. As the Lord lived among men, there were many questions men asked the Lord.
2. This lesson looks at some questions men asked the Lord, and answers the Lord gave.

Discussion

I. "HOW OFT SHALL MY BROTHER SIN AGAINST ME, AND I FORGIVE HIM?"

- A. Mt. 18:21
- B. The answer (Mt. 18:22-35).
- C. There is to be no end to our forgiveness.

II. "IS IT LAWFUL FOR A MAN TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE FOR EVERY CAUSE?"

- A. Mt. 19:3
- B. The answer (Mt. 19:4-6).
- C. According to God's plan for male and female, it is not lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause.

III. "BY WHAT AUTHORITY DOEST THOU THESE THINGS?"

- A. Mt. 21:23
- B. The answer (Mt. 21:24-27).
- C. The question recognizes the need for authority.

IV. "WHICH IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT?"

- A. Mt. 22:36
- B. The answer (Mt. 22:36-40; Lk. 10:25-37).
- C. Loving God above all is the greatest thing we can do.

V. "IS IT I?"

- A. Mt. 26:22
- B. The answer (Mt. 26:23-24).
- C. If the church is not growing, if the people are unfriendly, IS IT I?

VI. "WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

- A. Acts 9:6
- B. The answer (Acts 9:6; 22:16).
- C. Will you do what the Lord said?

Conclusion

1. This is the favorite time and place.
2. Come now, as we stand and sing!

Back To Basics

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PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY

John Isaac Edwards

Just prior to his departure, Paul gave a most sober and solemn charge to Timothy, and all future generations of preachers. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 ought to be committed to the memory and practice of all who set out to do the work of an evangelist.

1) **WHAT TO DO.** This charge tells the evangelist what to do - "Preach the word." To *preach* is to *proclaim*, and what is proclaimed is limited to *the word*. To preach the word is to proclaim *the truth* as Jesus said, "thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Anything more than, less than or other than the word is not the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

2) **WHEN TO DO IT.** The charge tells when to preach the word - "in season, out of season." Preaching the word is not like rabbit hunting that goes out of season; it is always the right time to preach the word. When men's ears are open to the truth, the word is "in season;" when men close their ears to the truth, the word is "out of season." Paul said to preach the word "in season, out of season" - when they want to hear it and when they don't.

3) **HOW TO DO IT.** "...reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" is "how to" instruction. To *reprove* is to blame or censure; to charge with a fault, chide or reprehend; to convince of a fault or make it manifest; to refute or disprove; to excite a sense of guilt. To *rebuke* is to chide, reprove or reprehend for a fault, to check by reproof; to check or restrain; to chasten, punish or afflict for correction; to check or silence; to check or heal; to restrain or calm. To *exhort* is to incite, animate or urge by arguments to a good deed or to any laudable conduct or course of action; to advise, warn or caution; to

incite or stimulate to exertion. *With all longsuffering* is bearing injuries or provocation for a long time; patient; not easily provoked; long endurance; patience of offense. *And doctrine* is instruction and confirmation in the truths of the word.

4) **WHY TO DO IT.** "For the time will come when they will *not endure sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they *heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears; And they shall *turn away their ears from the truth*, and shall be *turned unto fables*" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). There we have the four steps of apostasy. Preach the word - why? Because souls are at stake.

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PRAYING IN JESUS' NAME

Charles Carpenter

“If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it” (Jn. 14:14).

1) **INTRODUCTION.** One of the common phrases heard in our prayers is, “in the name of Christ we pray.” How important is this phrase? Is this phrase one of God’s requirements for acceptable prayer? Does a prayer require the words, “in Jesus’ name,” to be a Scriptural prayer? What does it mean to pray “in the name of Christ”?

2) **BY DEFINITION.** “In the name of Christ” means: relying or resting on the name of Christ; on my account or for my sake; rooted in His name; mindful of Christ and in reliance on the word which invites us to Him. The phrase stands for all that a name implies of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence - everything that a name covers in recognition of authority.

3) **IN THE NAME OF GOD THE FATHER.** It is a great mistake for a Christian to close a prayer with the expression, “in Thy name.” When we hear such a prayer, we realize that probably the one praying is not aware of the significance of his error or perhaps even of the fact that he is making an error. This mistake reflects a failure to understand something very important to Christianity. Prayer is not to be made “in the name of God the Father” but “in the name of Jesus Christ the Son.” The prayer should be addressed to the Father, but through or in the name of the Son.

4) **IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.** Before His death, Jesus taught the disciples to pray in His name. They were instructed to ask for things in the name of Christ (Jn. 14:13; 15:16; 16:23-

24). After His death, disciples were taught to pray in His name. Whatever we do is to be done in the name of Christ (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

5) **WE PRAY IN HIS NAME FOR SEVERAL REASONS.** Christ is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14); our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5); our Intercessor (Rom. 8:34); our Advocate (1 Jn. 2:1). The expression “in the name of Christ” signifies that He is our High Priest, our Mediator, our Intercessor, and our Advocate.

6) **CONCLUSION.** Perhaps the reason that God is so interested in proper recognition of the right “name” is that in such recognition we are acknowledging God and Christ for what they truly are to us and we are giving them due credit for their great work in our behalf. God seeks worshipers and He desires to be recognized for His true place and relation to the worshiper. Jesus is indeed the Savior and it reflects upon our understanding of our duty as Christians whenever we fail to recognize Him. Thus, to pray “in the name of Christ,” means we are praying by His authority; we approach God in prayer by Jesus’ authority. We must make known the fact that we are praying to God through Jesus Christ. We may say “in the name of Christ,” “in the name of our Lord,” “in the name of our Savior,” “through Christ,” “in Jesus name,” etc. For us not to pray in Jesus’ name or for us to address the Father in prayer and close it with “in Thy name,” is actually to fail to recognize Jesus as our Savior and is to fail to appreciate His special work on our behalf.

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THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL INSTITUTION OF CIVILIZATION

George W. Bush

The United States Senate this past week began an important discussion about the meaning of marriage. Senators are considering a constitutional amendment to protect the most fundamental institution of civilization, and to prevent it from being fundamentally redefined.

This difficult debate was forced upon our country by a few activist judges and local officials, who have taken it on themselves to change the meaning of marriage. In Massachusetts, four judges on the state's highest court have ordered the issuance of marriage licenses to applicants of the same gender. In San Francisco, city officials issued thousands of marriage licenses to people of the same gender, contrary to the California family code. Lawsuits in several states, including New Jersey, Florida, Nebraska, and Oregon, are also attempting to overturn the traditional definition of marriage by court order.

In 1996, Congress overwhelmingly passed the Defense of Marriage Act, and President Clinton signed it into law. That legislation defines marriage, for purposes of federal law, as a union between a man and a woman, and declares that no state is required to accept another state's definition of marriage. Yet an activist court that strikes down traditional marriage would have little problem striking down the Defense of Marriage Act. Overreaching judges could declare that all marriages recognized in Massachusetts or San Francisco be recognized as marriages everywhere else.

When judges insist on imposing their arbitrary will on the people, the only alternative left to the people is an amendment to the Con-

stitution - the only law a court cannot overturn. A constitutional amendment should never be undertaken lightly - yet to defend marriage, our nation has no other choice.

A great deal is at stake in this matter. The union of a man and woman in marriage is the most enduring and important human institution, and the law can teach respect or disrespect for that institution. If our laws teach that marriage is the sacred commitment of a man and a woman, the basis of an orderly society, and the defining promise of a life, that strengthens the institution of marriage. If courts create their own arbitrary definition of marriage as a mere legal contract, and cut marriage off from its cultural, religious and natural roots, then the meaning of marriage is lost, and the institution is weakened. The Massachusetts court, for example, has called marriage "an evolving paradigm." That sends a message to the next generation that marriage has no enduring meaning, and that ages of moral teaching and human experience have nothing to teach us about this institution.

For ages, in every culture, human beings have understood that traditional marriage is critical to the well-being of families. And because families pass along values and shape character, traditional marriage is also critical to the health of society. Our policies should aim to strengthen families, not undermine them. And changing the definition of traditional marriage will undermine the family structure.

On an issue of this great significance, opinions are strong and emotions run deep. All of us have a duty to conduct this discussion with

civility and decency toward one another. All people deserve to have their voices heard. And that is exactly the purpose behind the constitutional amendment process. American democracy, not court orders, should decide the future of marriage in America.

The process has now begun in the Congress. I urge members of the House and Senate

to pass, and send to the states for ratification, an amendment that defines marriage in the United States as a union of a man and woman as husband and wife.

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THEY WERE SOLDIERS

Aaron Erhardt

The first century disciples were in a war. Those who opposed the truth of the gospel were continually attacking the church, trying to destroy its influence. That is why Paul exhorted Timothy to “endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3) and instructed the saints at Ephesus to “put on the whole armor of God” (Eph. 6:11). The disciples understood that as soldiers of Christ they had a duty and obligation to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12).

THE FIGHT CONTINUES TODAY

The fight our first-century brethren encountered continues today. We are still under attack, and need to put forth every effort to defeat the adversary. It is a battle that must be won! How can we prevail?

By defending the gospel (Phil. 1:17). We should never allow those who pervert the gospel to go unchallenged. The truth needs to be protected and preserved at all costs. That is why we are commanded to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3).

By hating every false way (Ps. 119:104). Error should be something we despise. It ought to provoke us into action. At Athens, Paul had his spirit “stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 17:16). This provocation resulted in disputes in the synagogue and in the market daily. He hated every false way!

The war is raging and the truth is under attack, but we can prevail over the enemy by defending the gospel and hating every false way. Can we count on you to fight? Our Commander and Chief, Jesus Christ, has called us to be spiritual soldiers. It is time that we regain our militancy, and once again demand the strong preaching you older folks grew up on. We need to be bold and uncompromising in our work for the Lord!

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THE PROBLEM OF ERROR

Hoyt H. Houchen

The preacher of the gospel is obligated to fulfil a most solemn charge, and that is to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). We often hear it said: “Preachers should just preach the word; and when they do this, they will not have time to condemn the errors of others.” This statement is made by brethren who frequently take it upon themselves to tell preachers how they ought to preach, and their desire along this line is obvious: they want to restrain the preacher from exposing false doctrines. In the first place, those who entertain the attitude just expressed fail to read on into the passage where Paul told Timothy to “preach the word.” There is more embraced in the phrase “preach the word” than many realize. In the same verse Paul goes on to say: “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” Why was Timothy told to so preach? The answer is given in verse 3: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts.” Not only, then, does preaching the word mean exhorting, but it also means reproving and rebuking when it becomes necessary. The idea believed by some brethren that one cannot have the spirit of Christ, exercise kindness, and manifest love when he exposes error (whether it be on the part of a brother in the church or a sectarian individual or institution) is wholly without Scriptural foundation. All will admit, however, that the attitude assumed by a speaker or writer in cases where exposure of sin becomes necessary is an important factor. A pulpit or literary display of arrogances and entertainment characterized by abusive language that reflects upon the intelligence of the evildoer is not contended for and will not be indulged in by one whose disposition of heart is to see the souls of

others saved.

Isaiah had the problem of dealing with error in his day. Among God’s own people there was the soft, compromising attitude toward sin. Jehovah described these people in the following words: “For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Is. 30:9-10). As we examine the New Testament, we find the problem of error and how it was treated.

1) **JESUS AND ERROR.** Jesus loves the lost, and his entire life exemplified that love; but never did he compromise with error. The true spirit of Christ is displayed in the denunciatory woes pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23, wholly as much as his discourse on love to his disciples in John 15. These two examples are not paradoxical; they are a complete picture of Christ’s attitude - the one toward those who practiced error, the other toward those who were doing His will.

In dealing with error it sometimes becomes necessary to name the person committing it, the purpose being to warn brethren lest their hearts be beguiled by smooth and fair speech” (Rom. 16:18). If it is right to commend good and name the person doing it, it is also right to condemn error and name the person committing it. Jesus said a tree is known by its fruit and false teachers by their works (Mt. 7:15-20). Narcotic agents are able to curb the dope racket when they know who it is that

is selling the dope. Jesus warned His disciples against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt. 16:11-12).

2) **PAUL AND ERROR.** Paul, in his writing to Timothy, names certain ones who made shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). When Timothy finished reading these epistles, he knew that Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus were men guilty of the error he was discussing. Paul named these men in order that young Timothy would beware of their teaching. This purpose is expressed in 2 Timothy 4:14-15, where Paul mentions Alexander again and says: "Of whom do thou also beware."

3) **OUR ATTITUDE.** One of the problems facing the church today is the soft, compromising, sentimental attitude of brethren toward error. Let a preacher condemn it, and he is classed with the Pharisees and charged with all their attitudes of bigotry, selfishness, and dogmatism. It is reported that a brother once remarked that the sin against the Holy Spirit is calling denominational names. The comprehension of this attitude is a misapprehension of love. The attitude and motive of heart on the part of the one who identifies error would

more determine its being right or wrong, not the mere fact that he does it.

Some errors among us are so well regarded that it would be as improper to search the moon with a microscope as it would be to find them. It is observed that some brethren believe that the gospel is so indispensable in foreign fields that premillennialists or their sympathizers must be sent if the work is to be done. The work of preaching the gospel is certainly the work of the church, but it should support the loyal brethren who are already in the fields and see to it that others who are just as loyal are sent. It is not anti-missionary, bigotry, or quarrelsome to expose error when it is done with the attitude of helping to save the soul of the teacher and the ones he has taught.

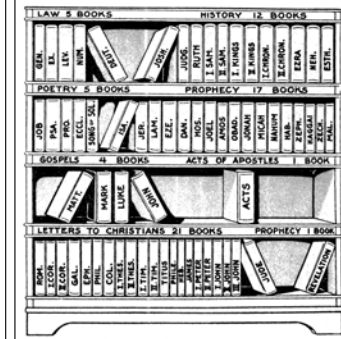
In doing the Lord's work we must be diligent as well as zealous. An exaggeration of the latter sometimes overshadows the former. As Christians we must stand together for what is right, dealing with errors which threaten the church from within and without as Jesus or the apostles would do if they were here. "Contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

"What Saith the Scripture?"



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BROWSING THROUGH GOD'S LIBRARY



by
Joe Corley

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We have, in previous articles, browsed through the Old Testament books of Law, the twelve books of History, the five books of Poetry, and two of the five books of Major Prophets - Isaiah and Jeremiah. A third book in this section, **Lamentations**, is a book written by Jeremiah. It means “weepings.” It gives a gripping and heart rending eye witness account of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and the suffering of the people as they were carried far away from their home into exile.

The prophetic book of **Ezekiel** is a collection of visions and revelations of the prophet by that name. Ezekiel was a young man of 25 when taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar during the second siege of Jerusalem (597 B.C.). He was carried to Babylon and about five years later began his ministry. This was before the complete destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in 586 B.C. He prophesied to the Jewish captives scattered throughout Babylon. He lived in a city called Telabib by the river Chebar. The term “son of man” is applied to him over and over throughout the book perhaps because he, though a righteous man, suffered exile with his people. He “sat where they sat” (Ezek. 3:15).

The first three chapters tell of his call as he saw a vision of the Lord’s glory. He was sent

to a rebellious people and served as a watchman to the house of Israel. The book records several ways in which Ezekiel was used as a living object lesson to the people by certain symbolic and strange acts. These were symbolic of hardships which were to come upon the Jews. The book records many visions which he had. One of the better known visions is the vision of the dry bones coming together to make a great army which symbolized the restoration of Israel (chapter 37). The last eight chapters record his vision of the temple. This symbolized either the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem after the return, or, more likely, the spiritual temple which would be built by Jesus.

The book of **Daniel**, like Ezekiel, was written during the exile. Daniel was taken captive during the first siege of Jerusalem in 606 B.C. The book of Daniel falls into two divisions. The first six chapters are largely historical while the last six are prophetic, belonging to the apocalyptic style of prophecy similar to the book of Revelation. We read of various experiences of Daniel and his three Hebrew friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Due to Daniel’s wisdom and “excellent spirit,” and the fact that God was with him, he was promoted to high positions in the Babylonian and Persian kingdoms. It tells how Daniel found favor with King Nebuchadnezzar by interpreting his dreams and how he deciphered the handwriting on the wall in King Belshazzar’s palace which summoned the end of the Babylonian kingdom. He later was miraculously delivered from a den of lions into which he was thrown due to a plot set up by jealous co-rulers. Many visions and revelations are recorded regarding the return of the Jews from captivity, the coming of the Messianic kingdom and various trials of the Jews during the period between the testaments.

In our next article, we will browse through the section of God’s library called, “Minor Prophets.”

Kid's Activity Page

Paul Adams

Memory Verse: "For every tree is known by its own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes" (Luke 6:44).

The Fruit Of The Spirit



Fill in the 9 blanks below with the fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23.
Then, find the words in the puzzle above.

**"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).**

CHRISTIANS OR CAMPBELLITES?

Craig Thomas

It has been charged by our critics that members of Christ's church are simply a denomination started by Alexander Campbell sometime in the 1800's. The term "Campbellite" is sometimes used to defame and denigrate members of the one true church of the Bible. Let us therefore take a moment to once and for all "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15) in regard to this matter. Consider some reasons why Alexander Campbell could not have started the church of Christ.

1) **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST EXISTED BEFORE ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.** Romans 16:16 says, "the churches of Christ salute you." We find the church of Christ beginning in Acts chapter two. There the Lord, not Campbell, "added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Alexander Campbell was born September 12, 1788 about 1,750 years after the first people were converted and became members of Christ's church in Acts 2. To falsely claim that Alexander Campbell founded the church of Christ, at best, betrays one's ignorance.

2) **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT BELONG TO ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.** Christ Himself said, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). Not only did Jesus promise to build His church, He also "purchased [it] with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus Himself fulfilled the promise He made in Matthew 16:18 and He is the one who shed His own blood. Alexander Campbell did neither; therefore, we must conclude that the church of Christ never has, nor never will, belong to Alexander Campbell.

3) **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST DOES NOT WEAR THE NAME OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.** Through divine inspiration Paul said that to wear the names of men is "carnal;" it is sinful (1 Cor. 3:3-6). Members of Christ's true church wear only His name! For "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12; 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16; Rom. 16:16). To wear Alexander Campbell's name, or the name of any man, is contrary to God's word and is a sin...pure and simple!

4) **WHY IS THIS CHARGE MADE?** It is made because critics of the one true church speak "great swelling words" against "the right ways of the Lord" wanting that way to be belittled, ridiculed, and evil spoken of (1 Pet. 2:1-2). Just as the false prophet Elymas sought "to turn the deputy from the faith" (Acts 13:8), these critics have no intention of converting anyone to the truth but seek to obscure truth with the cloudy and smoky veil of prejudice and deceit. Let no man spoil you! (Col. 2:8).

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"How Readest Thou?"

Test Your Bible Knowledge

Why did God command the Jews to keep the Sabbath day?

To remind them of their servitude in Egypt and their deliverance therefrom (Dt. 5:15).

Answer:

Soul Winning Tool Kit



It is common to hear brethren express concern for lack of growth. Do you ever wonder why so many churches are not growing? Could it be that we are just not putting the seed, which is the word of God (Lk. 8:11), in the soil? Too many are content to leave the seed in the barn (Hag. 2:19).

Johnie and John Isaac Edwards have put together a *Soul Winning Tool Kit*, designed to help in the conversion of lost souls. The wise man said, "He that winneth souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30). The *Soul Winning Tool Kit* contains: Soul winning lesson book (eight lesson series for personal workers), Home Bible Study, Correspondence Course, Making Your Life Right With God, Is The Church Of Christ A Denomination?, The Blessings Of God, Answering Religious Error, Wood & Ruler.

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