

# Back To Basics

Volume 4

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A Monthly Journal Dedicated To Teaching First Principles

## SPECIAL ISSUE:

## THESE ARE PRECIOUS

*Johnie Edwards*

The word “precious,” as used in the Scriptures, means costly and of great value, as things are held in honor, being dear to us.

1) **THE WORD “PRECIOUS” IS USED MANY TIMES IN THE SCRIPTURES.** If you would start reading in Genesis and read through the entire Bible, you would encounter the word “precious” more than 70 times. Although the Lord only has to say a thing one time to make it meaningful, it’s repetitiveness surely calls our attention to the word.

2) **THE WORD “PRECIOUS” IS OFTEN MISUSED.** Folks can be heard talking about a ‘precious house’ or a ‘precious dress.’ The word of God has reference to things more valuable than these.

3) **THE WORD “PRECIOUS” USED IN A GENERAL SENSE.** The Old Testament refers to a number of things in a general way as being precious.

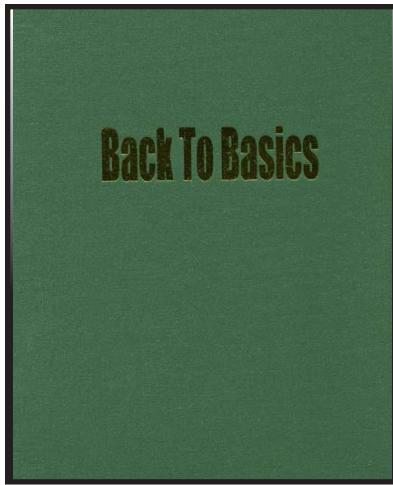
- *Things of heaven (Dt. 33:13).*
- *Fruits of the earth (Dt. 33:14-16).*
- *The souls and lives of men (1 Sam. 16:21).*

- *Jewels (2 Chr. 20:25).*
- *Thoughts of the Lord (Ps. 139:17).*
- *Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (Prov. 3:14-15).*

4) **TEN PRECIOUS THINGS.** This special issue of *Back To Basics* takes a close look at what the Scriptures have to say about ten precious things.

- *The precious word (1 Sam. 3:1).*
- *The precious Christ (1 Pet. 2:4-8).*
- *The precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19).*
- *The precious death (Ps. 116:15).*
- *The precious substance (Prov. 12:27).*
- *The precious seed (Ps. 126:5-6).*
- *The precious unity (Ps. 133:1-3).*
- *The precious trial of faith (1 Pet. 1:7).*
- *The precious faith (2 Pet. 1:1).*
- *The precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4).*

Please take the time to read each of these “precious” articles and make application to your own life.



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# THE PRECIOUS WORD

John Isaac Edwards

**1** Samuel 3:1 records, "...And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." There are many reasons why the word of the Lord is precious and should be precious to you.

**1) PRECIOUS BECAUSE OF WHAT IT HAS DONE.** Have you considered what the word of the Lord has done? "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6). There is awesome power in the Lord's word, "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9). The expression, "God said" is found ten times in Genesis one (vv. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29), showing "...that the worlds were framed by the word of God..." (Heb. 11:3). It is by the word of the Lord that we are here and everything exists.

**2) PRECIOUS BECAUSE OF WHAT IT DOES.** The word of the Lord is not a dead letter, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful..." (Heb. 4:12). The word of the Lord has power to accomplish many things. It gives life (Mt. 4:4), makes clean (Jn. 15:3), sanctifies (Jn. 17:17), builds up and gives an inheritance (Acts 20:32), produces faith (Rom. 10:17), reconciles (2 Cor. 5:19), upholds all things (Heb. 1:3), discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12), begets (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), saves (Jas. 1:21), and brings about growth (1 Pet. 2:2). Surely the word of the Lord is precious because of all that it does.

**3) PRECIOUS BECAUSE OF WHAT IT WILL DO.** It is by the word of the Lord that we will be judged in the last day. Jesus said, "He that

rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48). The word of the Lord will decide our destiny, whether we hear the words "enter into the joy of thy Lord" (Mt. 25:23) or "depart from me" (Mt. 25:41).

Since the word of the Lord is precious, we need to hear it, believe it, obey it, and teach it to others.

<b>Special Issue: These Are Precious</b>	
Johnie Edwards.....	1
<b>The Precious Word</b>	
John Isaac Edwards.....	3
<b>Lessons From An Older Woman</b>	
Melba Edwards.....	4
<b>The Precious Christ</b>	
Donnie V. Rader.....	5
<b>The Precious Blood</b>	
Joe R. Price.....	6
<b>The Precious Death</b>	
David McPherson.....	7
<b>The Precious Substance</b>	
Johnie Edwards.....	8
<b>The Precious Seed</b>	
T. Sean Sullivan.....	9
<b>The Precious Unity</b>	
John Isaac Edwards.....	10
<b>The Precious Trial Of Faith</b>	
Larry R. Ping II.....	11
<b>The Precious Faith</b>	
Craig Thomas.....	12
<b>The Precious Promises</b>	
Bob Dickey.....	13
<b>Kids Activity Page</b>	
Aleisha Edwards.....	14
<b>Index To Volume Four</b> .....	16

## LESSONS FROM AN OLDER WOMAN

Melba Edwards

**G**eneva DeFord, a dear sister of eighty-four years, just passed from this life. She was a faithful member of the Ellettsville church of Christ. This wonderful Christian taught me many things by her great example.

**1) YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN.** A few years ago we had a sign up sheet for women who wanted to learn how to make the communion bread. Geneva's name was on that list. She was about eighty at that time. She learned how to make the bread. She knew how important the Lord's Supper is and that the elements are to be prepared correctly.

**2) YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO BRING SOMEONE TO CHRIST.** One of the goals of the Ellettsville church of Christ is for each family to teach one the gospel during the year. Geneva prayed to God that before she died she would bring someone to the Lord. She found Ilene Hammer. Ilene came to several services with Geneva. With an invitation to study more, Ilene opened up her home and we began studying the *Home Bible Study*. After the last lesson, on the following Sunday, Ilene was baptized into Christ. We then began studying *Growing In Grace And Knowledge*. Three other women from the complex where Geneva lived joined in our study on several occasions. I'm reminded of the woman at the well in John 4:29 when she said to the men of the city, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Geneva was not afraid to let others know about Christ.

**3) YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO MEMORIZE THE SCRIPTURES.** At one of the classes, Geneva said she was trying to memorize some verses in the Bible and wanted me to see if she could quote them. She memorized the first five verses of Psalm 103 which read, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

**4) YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES DAILY.** Geneva said occasionally she'd go to bed and realize she hadn't read her Bible that day. She'd get up and read. She knew about the Bereans, in Acts 17:11, who "...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

These are just a few of the things Geneva taught. I wish all who read this knew this great lady. I'm reminded of Anna, a prophetess. "She was of great age...and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lk. 2:36-38).

# THE PRECIOUS CHRIST

Donnie V. Rader

The Christ is called “precious” three times in 1 Peter 2:4-8. The word translated “precious” in these verses is used five times in the New Testament. It means “dear, more honorable,...in reputation” (*Strong’s*). Vine’s says it means “held in honor.” Thus, Christ is said to be dear, held in the highest honor. Let’s look closer at 1 Peter 2:4-8 to find the answer to the following questions.

1) **TO WHOM IS HE PRECIOUS?** *Christ is precious to God (v. 4).* He is given a place of prominence and preeminence. He is considered valuable to one whose values count. While man rejects the Christ, God considers Him precious. *Christ is also precious to those who believe and obey (v. 7).* This verse shows that one who believes is one who obeys. Notice the contrast between “believe” and “disobedient.” This is a matter of top priority! Christ is the most valued to one who believes. This explains why some don’t obey or remain faithful. They don’t hold Christ as precious, esteemed, and valuable! When one’s attendance is not what it should be and their interest is lagging behind, the problem is the value he places upon Christ.

2) **WHY IS HE CONSIDERED PRECIOUS?** *He is living (v. 4).* He has real life as opposed to the lifeless stones in the context. He gives life to those who hear (Jn. 5:25). *He was chosen by God (v. 4).* God chose Him to be the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23). God chose Him to be the savior of the world (Mt. 1:21). God chose Him to be the judge of the world (Jn. 5:22). *Our sacrifices are acceptable through Him (v. 5).* He is our High Priest, through Whom our sacrifices are offered (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14). He is our media-

tor (1Tim. 2:5). *He is the chief cornerstone (vv. 6-7).* The chief cornerstone is the most important stone in a building’s foundation. From it all other stones are measured and laid. It unites two walls (Jews and Gentiles) together (Eph. 2:18-22). It is an honor to be in the same wall with Him (v. 5). What an honor to be a stone laid in the same wall with the Christ, the chief cornerstone. *He shed His blood for us (1:18-19).* Without the shedding of His blood, we could not be saved (Heb. 9:22).

3) **WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE PRECIOUS CHRIST?** We are to continually come (v. 4). This does not refer to one’s initial coming to Christ in obedience, but to a continually coming to the Lord. Marshall translates this “approaching.” Williams translates it “keep on coming to him.” Thayer says it means, “To attach one’s self to Christ, to come to a participation in the benefits procured by him.” This verse is “Indicating a close...and an habitual (present participle) approach and an intimate association” (*Vincent’s Word Studies of the New Testament*). To continually come to Christ is the idea of dedication and devotion. If we consider the Christ as precious, we will have no problem with diligent service.

If we do not hold Christ as precious, He will become a stumbling stone over which we will fall (vv. 7-8).

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# THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

Joe R. Price

**B**lood is the vehicle of life; without it we will die. When God gave mankind animals for food He said, “But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood” (Gen. 9:3-4). God explained, in the Law of Moses, “I have given it (the blood, jrp) to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17:10-11). Without the shedding of blood – the giving of life – there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22). The animal blood shed on Israel’s altar of burnt offering was a shadow of the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Heb. 10:1-4; Jn. 1:29).

The blood of Christ is superior to the blood of bulls and of goats because animal blood can never take away sins (Heb. 10:4). Christ died once for sins, but animals were continually offered for sins under Moses’ law (Heb. 10:11-12). Christ’s blood removes sin, but the blood of animals continually reminded Israel of their sin (Heb. 10:17-18, 3).

The value of the blood of Christ also surpasses that of silver or of gold, for such temporal things will never save sinners: “...knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

**1) THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT IS SINLESS.** “...as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Jesus never committed sin, but “offered Himself without spot to God” (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 9:14). The blood of one sinner cannot save another sinner; only a sinless sacrifice would do. His suffering

and death was “the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18).

**2) THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT SHOWS GOD’S GREAT LOVE FOR US.** “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). Jesus died for His enemies and for His friends (Col. 1:19-22; Jn. 15:13). There is no greater love than God sending “His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 Jn. 4:9-10).

**3) THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE OF WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHES.** The blood of Jesus redeems us from sin. He came “to give His life a ransom” for sinners (Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6). Through His blood, we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:19). By His death and subsequent ascension to heaven, Jesus obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. 9:11-12). His blood cleanses us “from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). His church, purchased and cleansed by His blood, lives to serve God (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 1:15-19).

**4) THE BLOOD OF CHRIST IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU.** Christ “gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:6). If you believe Jesus is the Son of God, you must not delay, but repent, confess your faith in Him, and then “arise and be baptized and wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16). The blood of Jesus washes away your sins when you are “baptized into His death” (Rom. 6:3).

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# THE PRECIOUS DEATH

David McPherson

“**A**nd as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Death is an appointment men must keep. Whether one’s death is precious or not depends upon their manner of life. Long ago the Psalmist declared, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Ps. 116:15). Notice that the “precious death” is the death of the Lord’s saints; those who are godly, pure, holy, etc. For your death to be precious, certain conditions must be met.

**1) THE PRECIOUS DEATH IS FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE LORD.** One can only live in the Lord by becoming dead to sin. “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:11). Dying to sin involves belief (Jn. 8:24), repentance (Lk. 13:3), confession (Rom. 10:10), and baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The one baptism (Eph. 4:5) puts a person into Christ (Gal. 3:27). The contrast between being in Christ versus out of Christ is tremendous. Paul spoke of it saying, “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:11-13). Outside of Christ; without hope; nothing precious about the death of one in that condition. Are you in Christ, living in the Lord? Will your death be precious in His sight?

**2) THE PRECIOUS DEATH IS FOR THOSE WHO DIE IN THE LORD.** “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). Not all the dead are blessed, only those “which die in the Lord.” But how does one die in the Lord? As previously noted, they must first live in the Lord and then remain faithful. An “on again - off again” relationship with the Lord will not cut it. At the time of one’s departure from this life, a faithful standing is required for it to be precious. Just as Jesus encouraged, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Are you doing that? Are you truly loyal and committed to the cause of Christ? Will your death be precious?

Paul, having lived and died in the Lord, left a beautiful example of how to face death. He told Timothy, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). His was a precious life of submission to the Lord’s will to the end. And thus his death was very precious indeed.

May God help each of us to so live that our death will be precious in His sight!

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# THE PRECIOUS SUBSTANCE

Johnie Edwards

**H**ave you ever thought that your substance could be precious? The wise man penned, “The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious” (Prov. 12:27). Substance may be defined as “material possessions; goods; wealth” (*American Heritage College Dictionary*). A good example of a man’s substance can be seen in that Job’s “seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she asses, and a very great household” were called “substance” (Job 1:3).

1) **A DILIGENT MAN.** Not everyone’s substance is precious. The text says, “...the substance of a diligent man is precious” (Prov. 12:27). The context of this text is a comparison of a slothful man and a man of diligence. A person, who by honesty and industry, has acquired his possessions as he has been blessed by the Lord; that man’s substance is precious!

2) **SUBSTANCE MUST BE OBTAINED PROPERLY.** Stolen substance or substance gotten in a wrongful manner would not be precious. Paul told the Ephesians, “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph. 4:28). Ever wonder what your hands are for? “...work with your own hands,” Paul wrote the Thessalonians (1 Th. 4:11). The apostle further uttered, “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies” (2 Th. 3:11). Paul, let me ask you, “what should these folks do?” “Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own

bread” (2 Th. 3:12). Suppose they don’t, Paul? “...neither should he eat” (2 Th. 3:10)!

3) **SUBSTANCE MUST BE USED RIGHTLY.** For our substance to be called precious, we must use it in the right manner. We cannot use our substance for gambling purposes, bribery, drinking strong drink, or as the lost boy, who “...wasted his substance with riotous living” (Lk. 15:12). Some good uses of our substance:

- “Lay by in store” as Paul commanded to be done on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2), in supporting the work of the church.
- “Provide for his own” just as Paul wrote Timothy (1 Tim. 5:8); lest he be “worse than an infidel!”
- “Give to him that needeth” to fulfill our responsibility to others (Eph. 4:28); “...and let not the church be charged” (1 Tim. 5:16).
- “Lay up treasures in heaven” as Jesus taught in the Mountain message (Mt. 6:19-21). It’s been said, what we really have is what we give to others. Earthly treasures rust, may become moth eaten, corrupt, and may be stolen, but they are protected from such when laid up in heaven. For after all, “For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also” (Mt. 6:21). A good passage to memorize and practice is Luke 6:38. Try it.

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# THE PRECIOUS SEED

*T. Sean Sullivan*

**P**salm 126:5-6 reads, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” Sowing “precious seed” in tears, in our context, is an allusion to a farmer with a precious amount of grain to face the burden of preparing the land and planting the seed; from which the abundance of the harvest will grow. His tears may be the burden of the work or the distress over planting all that remains. The preparation and planting are actions of faith based on the promise of reaping joy at harvest. The Scripture’s wisdom is often a paradox. The idea of “sowing in sorrow” and “harvesting happiness” does not seem right. Today, many seek to be constantly entertained, filled with prosperity, centered on self, and distracted from their spiritual needs. Because of mankind’s denial of sorrow’s humility, many are missing out on the promises of the precious seed.

1) **THE PRECIOUS SEED.** Our precious seed for sowing is the word of God (Lk. 8:11). In James 1:17, we are told that the word of God is a “good and perfect gift.” With this word, we have precious things revealed: the identity of God as our Creator (Gen. 1-2; Acts 17:23-27), an eternal God (Rev. 4:8), a God of love (1 Jn. 4:7-8), a giver of providential care (Mt. 6:25-33), a God of truth (Ti. 1:2; Jn. 17:17), and a God of justice (Acts 17:31). The Word also reveals the purpose of mankind in the creation: that we might rule the earth (Gen. 1:26), that we might seek our Creator (Acts 17:27), that we might do His will (Eccl. 12:13), and that we might love Him (Mk. 12:30). These facts are all “precious seed” that must be sown in our hearts.

2) **PREPARING THE LAND.** The word of God will not grow in a heart that is not prepared; so in humility and tears we make ready our hearts to receive God’s instruction. The tears may be caused by many factors: recognition of our destitution without God, the guilt of our sins, the pain of needed change, or the realization of all three. It is only when we present ourselves broken before God that He will begin to build us up (1 Pet. 5:6).

3) **PLANTING THE SEED.** Returning our thoughts to James 1:17, consider the continued context: We find the necessity of gathering the seed (the perfect word of God) but also we are instructed to plant that seed. In verses 21-25, we find the promise of our souls saved and our righteous works blessed. We plant the seed by giving ourselves completely to the word of God (1 Tim. 4:15-16).

4) **REAPING JOY.** The great day of harvest will come — a day in which our fruits will be proven as they reap our reward (2 Cor. 5:10). The Judgment will be a day of terror for those who have entertained their life away. For those who have sown the precious seed, the harvest will be full of rejoicing.

Have you prepared the soil? Have you planted the precious seed? Are you ready for the harvest day?

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# THE PRECIOUS UNITY

John Isaac Edwards

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Ps. 133:1-3).

1) **THE LORD PRAYED FOR UNITY.** Jesus petitioned the Father, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (Jn. 17:21). Disagreement and dissension as well as feuding and fighting impede the work of evangelism and make a mockery of the Lord’s prayer.

2) **AS A BODY, THE LORD’S CHURCH DEMANDS UNITY.** “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12). Paul’s comparison of the church to the physical body helps us see that there must be unity among the Lord’s people. Members of the Lord’s body are to be “tempered together” (1 Cor. 12:24), with “no schism in the body” (1 Cor. 12:25).

3) **DIVISION IS CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE.** Every church needs a good 1 Corinthians 1:10 beseeching, from time to time, “that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” *Variance* (strife, discord, contention), *emulations* (envious and contentious rivalry), *strife* (self-seeking am-

bitions), *seditions* (dissension), *heresies* (party-making spirit) and division in every form, are among “the works of the flesh” and “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21). Those who cause divisions are to be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17-18). God hates sowers of discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19).

4) **SOME REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET IN ORDER FOR UNITY TO BE OBTAINED.** Unity is no accident. It is the result of brethren “walking by the same rule (Phil. 3:16), “speaking as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11), “doing all in the name of the Lord” (Col. 3:17), “not thinking of men above that which is written” (1 Cor. 4:6), and “following after things which make for peace” (Rom. 14:19). Unity cannot exist where these requirements are not met!

5) **UNITY WILL CAUSE THE LORD’S CHURCH TO GROW.** The number of the disciples multiplied, in the first century, as brethren were of one heart and of one soul (Acts 4:32; 6:7). Churches where elders act without the approval of each other, where needless controversy is allowed to circulate, where brethren bite and devour one another, where false teaching is tolerated, where individuals bind where God has not bound and make issues of things which ought not be are churches that do not grow! If such is going on where you are a member, you need to put a stop to it immediately. Unity, based upon divine truth (Jn. 17:17), is far too precious to allow anyone to disturb or disrupt it.

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

# THE PRECIOUS TRIAL OF FAITH

Larry R. Ping II

**P**eter penned, “That the trial of your faith” is “much more precious than of gold that perisheth” (1 Pet. 1:7). There is no doubting this divinely inspired statement. But what is not completely revealed in this verse is why the trial of faith is precious and what the trial brings. To that end, we offer this article.

1) **IT BRINGS PATIENCE.** James submitted, “that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (Jas. 1:3). The idea here is endurance, the ability to last through the difficult times of the Christian’s life. This is the same “patience” written about in 2 Peter 1:6. Each time our personal faith is tried and tested, and we successfully bear up, our endurance (patience) increases. As our age increases, the hope is that our patience will as well. Remember the words of Jesus Christ when He said, “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Lk. 21:19). Wouldn’t you say that patience and endurance are important?

2) **IT BRINGS OTHERS TO GOD.** Remember the three young men of the fiery furnace in Daniel 3? Their faith was threatened with the ultimate sacrifice, a furnace made seven times hotter (v. 19). Their faith allowed them to say, “we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (v. 18). After all was said and done, and the three young men exited unscathed, it was apparent their successful trial of faith had an impact. The king said, “there is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (v. 29). When your faith is tried, who will you affect and how?

3) **IT BRINGS A HOME IN HEAVEN.** Abraham desired “a better country” and a city “whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10, 16). He

ensured that he could get there by exercising his faith under the severest of trials. The Hebrew author penned that Abraham, “when he was tried, offered up Isaac” (Heb. 11:17). Would your faith allow you to undertake such a task requested by God? Abraham has been passed on for centuries, but that has not stopped God from declaring Himself as the “God of Abraham” (Mt. 22:32). If you are looking for that Heavenly city, it will come partly as a result of your faith persevering through difficult trials.

4) **IT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD.** Ultimately, the trial of our faith is precious because it brings God “praise and honour and glory” (1 Pet. 1:7). After all, this is the greatest reason for our existence. When others see us last through those challenging times effectively, they wonder why. Then they come to find out that it is our undying faith in our Father and Creator, and the light shines on God. May it ever be!

Always consider the trying of your faith a precious thing. Never give up and never give in, just keep on obeying God and remaining faithful to Him!

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## Send To The Philippines

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# THE PRECIOUS FAITH

*Craig Thomas*

**2** Peter 1:1 reads, “Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.” Here Peter describes the faith of Christians as a “precious faith.” Webster defines things precious as having “great value or high price,” “highly esteemed or cherished,” or something that is “highly refined.” I submit to you that each of these definitions apply to our “like precious faith.”

1) **GREAT VALUE OR HIGH PRICE.** To understand that our “like precious faith” is of “great value or high price,” we only need look at its object, its cost, and its result. The objects of our faith are God and His Son (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 3:22). It is through the “precious faith” that we “believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). And, it is through the “precious faith” that we, as did the Ethiopian eunuch, “believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37) and “that believing” we “may have life in His name” (Jn. 20:31). Mankind counts many things precious: jewels, works of art, antiques, etc. And, we measure the value of those precious things by their cost. That being true, then surely nothing is of greater value than our “precious faith” because it was only made possible at the greatest of all costs! Our “precious faith” cost Jesus, as Lincoln eloquently stated, “the last full measure of devotion”; for He “died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3); He “his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree”; and He “purchased” us “with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). No other cost could possibly have satisfied God’s wrath (Rom. 3:25) while simultaneously demonstrating the unfathomable depths of His love for us! (Rom. 5:8) Truly, man’s most valuable possession (Mt. 16:26) was secured with God’s most treasured asset... “His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16)! But, Oh! The results of our

“precious faith” are so very extraordinary! Consider, we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 3:28); we are “sanctified by faith” (Acts 26:18); we receive the “righteousness of God...through faith in Christ” (Rom. 3); we are made “sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:26); and Christ dwells in our hearts “through faith” (Eph. 3:17). And, then ultimately can anything be more “precious” than “receiving the end of [our] faith-the salvation of [your] souls” (1 Pet. 1:9)?

2) **HIGHLY ESTEEMED OR CHERISHED.** I own a three foot by two foot panoramic photograph of the start of the very first Indianapolis 500 Mile Race in 1911. I cherish that photograph and highly esteem it through the extreme care I give it. But that photograph’s value in comparison to the “precious faith” is nothing! The “precious faith’s” value emanates from its object, its cost, and its result. You see, our “precious faith” could have no greater object than God and His Son; it could have no greater cost than “His only begotten Son”; and it could have no greater result than “the salvation of [our] souls”. For all of those reasons it is worthy of our highest esteem and should be cherished with every resolve of our being!

3) **HIGHLY REFINED.** Would you buy a diamond or gold ring that had not been tested for purity? Surely not! Likewise, our “precious faith” is of little value until it has been thoroughly tested and purified by the trials and tribulations of life (1 Pet. 1:6-9). Instead of dreading such, let us rather “count [them] all joy...knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (Jas. 1:2-3). For only then will we be “found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:7).

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Sandusky, MI 48471*

# THE PRECIOUS PROMISES

*Bob Dickey*

In 2 Peter 1:4, we are told that the Lord has “given to us exceeding great and precious promises.” A promise from God is something we rely on with absolute certainty. These great promises are timeless treasures for every Christian.

## 1) NOTE HOW PETER DESCRIBES THEM.

They are precious promises. Peter uses this word several times in the two epistles: precious faith (1 Pet. 1:7; 2 Pet. 1:1), blood (1 Pet. 1:9), stone (1 Pet. 2:4-6), Lord (1 Pet. 2:7), as well as precious promises (2 Pet. 1:4).

2) NOTE THAT HE USES SOME ADDITIONAL ADJECTIVES IN DESCRIBING THESE PROMISES. Not only are they precious, he says they are not just great, but exceedingly great. Peter really piles up the adjectives to impress our minds with how wonderful these promises really are!

3) NOTE THAT THE TEXT OF 2 PETER 1:3-4 SHOWS US A WONDERFUL PICTURE. We might call this picture “The Bank of Heaven.” We can learn here “what we have in” (viewed from the divine side): “exceeding great and precious promises,” next see “what we can draw out” (viewed from the human side): “all things that pertain to life and godliness,” and then “what we must do with what we draw out”: “that we might be partakers of the divine nature.”

4) THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT HELP US TO DETERMINE THE GREATNESS OR WORTH OF PROMISES. First, there is the value of the thing promised. Immediately we see in the text that these promises are precious beyond description and realization. These wonderful blessings of the Lord include such things as escaping the corruption of the world (v. 4), becoming partakers of the divine

nature (v. 4), making our calling and election sure (v. 10), as well as having an entrance supplied into the eternal kingdom (v. 11). Second, there is the character of the one who promised. We are assured that these promises are granted by Him who cannot fail. Peter has described Him by words that show “the righteousness of our God and Savior,” and speaks of “his own glory and virtue” (vv. 1 & 2). The promises of men are always weak and subject to the whims of the one making them; they often fail, are faulty, or cannot be kept. But the promises of God are as sure and certain as His own righteous character. Third, there is the conditions attached to those promises. We trust God’s promises because we know He requires on our part what any loving child of His could fulfill. He has granted these precious things to us, but He lets us know that we must do our part to have the true blessing of them all. He tells us that He expects “diligence” on our part. He calls upon us to “supply or add” certain virtues as we grow. He lets us know that if we “do these things” (v. 10) we not only will not stumble but we will certainly have the reward.

5) SO GREAT AND SO MANY ARE GOD’S PROMISES. We could never mention them all here, but consider some we should never forget. There is salvation from our past sins, access to cleansing forgiveness for our present sins, answers to our prayers, help in times of temptation, the assurance that all works out for good, rest from labors, and eternal life. What exceeding great and precious promises!

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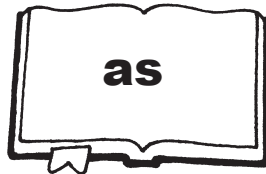
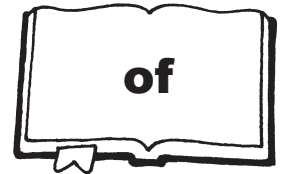
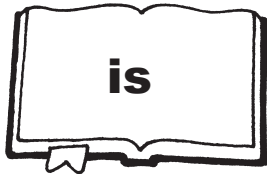
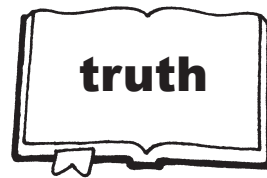
# Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards

## The Bible

The Bible is the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The following Bible words are not in order. Look in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 to help you write the words in order on the lines below.



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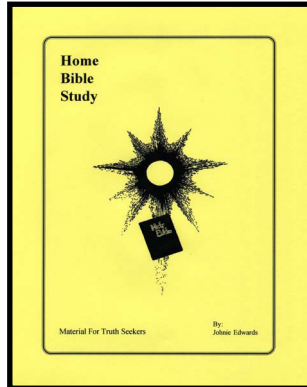
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“Suffer the little children to come unto me,  
and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14).

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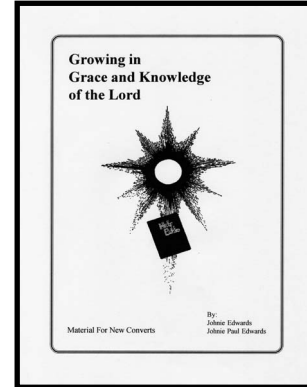
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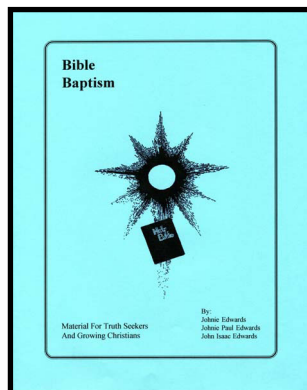
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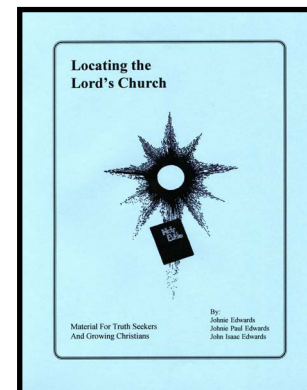
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## INDEX: BY AUTHOR

<p><b>Adams, Bobby</b> Bags Of Distractions.....76</p> <p><b>Adams, Connie W.</b> The Need For Unity Among Brethren.....6 Leading Public Prayer.....21 Mental Divorce.....125</p> <p><b>Adams, Paul</b> Kids Activity Page.....10 Kids Activity Page.....22 Kids Activity Page.....34 Kids Activity Page.....46 Kids Activity Page.....58 Kids Activity Page.....70</p> <p><b>Corley, Joe</b> Why We Believe.....77 Why We Believe.....101 Why We Believe.....133</p> <p><b>Dickey, Bob</b> The Precious Promises.....157</p> <p><b>Duvall, Daniel</b> Being An Example At School.....95</p> <p><b>Edwards, Aleisha</b> Kids Activity Page.....82 Kids Activity Page.....94 Kids Activity Page.....110 Kids Activity Page.....126 Kids Activity Page.....142 Kids Activity Page.....158</p> <p><b>Edwards, Debbie</b> Teaching Tips.....140</p> <p><b>Edwards, John Isaac</b> U.S. Carries Out 1,000th Execution.....3 The Model Prayer.....15 Faith Of The Lutheran Church.....27 The Music Passages.....38 Hand Clapping &amp; Vocal Percussion.....39 History Of Mechanical Music In Worship.....42 The Establishment Of The Lord's House.....51 The Soul Winning Chapter.....63 Why Are We Not Winning More Souls?.....66 The Lord's Supper, New Testament Style!.....75 Proverbs For School.....87 Is Everything Worship?.....99 What Standard Shall We Use?.....115 A Talebearer Versus A Faithful Spirit.....131</p>	<p>The Precious Word.....147 The Precious Unity.....154</p> <p><b>Edwards, Johnie</b> He Being Dead Yet Speaketh.....1 Special Issue: Acceptable Prayer.....13 Conditions Of Acceptable Prayer.....18 And He Added No More.....25 Special Issue: Mechanical Music In Worship.....37 Answering Additional Arguments.....44 Settling The Mechanical Music Issue.....45 Special Issue: Soul Winning.....61 Repentance Before Faith.....73 Special Issue: Back To School.....85 Is Drinking A Sin?.....97 Special Issue: Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage..113 Kind Of Minds Needed.....129 Special Issue: These Are Precious.....145 The Precious Substance.....152</p> <p><b>Edwards, Johnie Paul</b> Christ On David's Throne.....7 Praying Positions.....14 The Importance Of Baptism.....26 Fellowshipping Error.....50</p> <p><b>Edwards, Melba</b> Instruction To Young Mothers.....4 Women Who Prayed.....16 Things The Bible Calls Sweet.....28 When Family Has Been Withdrawn From.....52 Women Can Be Soul Winners.....64 Basic Commands For Wives.....100 Preparing For Marriage.....116 Another Milestone.....132 Lessons From An Older Woman.....148</p> <p><b>Eldridge, David</b> Our Worship Unto The Lord.....29 School Supplies.....88 Does The Marriage Law Apply To Non-Christians?..122 For Of Such Is The Kingdom Of God.....143</p> <p><b>Foster, Matt</b> Another Testament Of Jesus Christ?.....138</p> <p><b>Gibson, Marc W.</b> The One Truth.....30 Modern Attacks On The Bible And Christianity....78</p> <p><b>Gwin, Greg</b> Defining Bible Terms.....117</p>
---	---



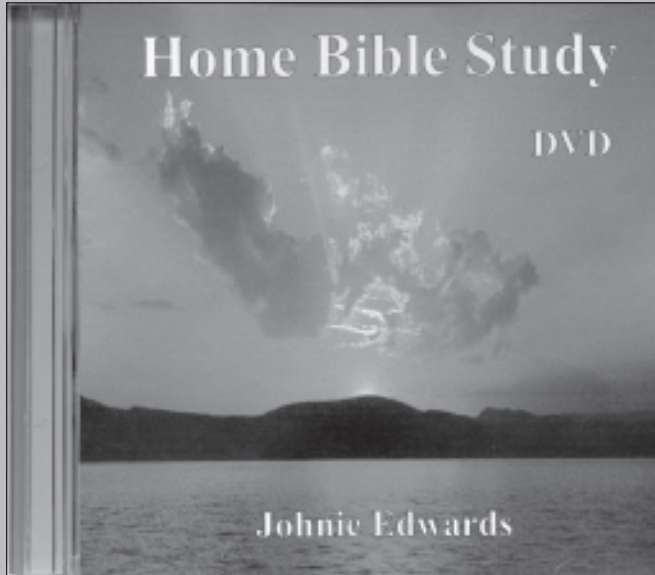
<b>Hafley, Morris</b> The Lord's Prayer.....	20	<b>Ping, Leland</b> Facing Drugs And Alcohol At School.....	92
<b>Halbrook, David</b> Interview With Head Of The Episcopal Church USA .....	104	<b>Price, Joe R.</b> The Precious Blood.....	150
<b>Hahn, James</b> That Form Of Doctrine.....	32	<b>Puckett, Franklin T.</b> "Faith Only" Texts In Context.....	102
<b>Harris, Raymond E.</b> Divorce For Every Cause.....	120	"Faith Only" Texts In Context #2.....	134
<b>Himmel, Frank</b> Can The Guilty Party Remarry?.....	124	<b>Rader, Dathan V.</b> Making Friends At School.....	90
<b>Kay, Kevin</b> Is All Of Life Worship?.....	106	<b>Rader, Donnie V.</b> The Rich Young Ruler.....	5
<b>Leber, Jason T.</b> Unity Of The Spirit Or Unity In Diversity?.....	141	Elements Of Acceptable Prayer.....	17
<b>Martin, Allan E.</b> Creation Versus Evolution #2.....	9	The "Psallo" Argument.....	40
<b>Mauldin, Leon</b> Must Adulterers Separate?.....	123	The Blood Of Christ.....	49
<b>McPherson, David</b> Who Turned On The Wipers?.....	53	Soul Winning Prospects.....	69
First Century Soul Winners.....	65	Let's Not Forget The Redemptive System!.....	83
The Precious Death.....	151	Practical Lessons From Genesis.....	105
<b>Monts, Steve</b> Not Everyone's Doing It!.....	86	Marriage And The Bond.....	121
<b>Morrison Jr., David C.</b> Our Clothing And Our Message At School.....	89	Practical Lessons From Genesis #2.....	137
<b>O'Neal, Tom</b> Why Should I Be A Soul Winner?.....	68	The Precious Christ.....	149
<b>Osborne, Harry</b> Dressing For Worship.....	108	<b>Richardson, Dan</b> Except Ye Repent.....	55
<b>Osborne, Ryan</b> Showing Respect At School.....	93	<b>Sullivan, T. Sean</b> Being A Christian.....	8
<b>Peterson, Carl</b> Biblical Applications Of Infinity.....	136	Three Tools Of Success.....	57
<b>Ping II, Larry R.</b> Bible Endurance.....	59	The Precious Seed.....	153
The Precious Trial Of Faith.....	155	<b>Tebault, Tom</b> Salvation According To The Bible.....	56
		<b>Thomas, Craig V.</b> Casting The First Stone.....	33
		Chariots Of Fire.....	81
		Things To Avoid At School.....	91
		The Precious Faith.....	156
		<b>Waldron, Bob</b> Matthew 19:9.....	119
		<b>Webb, Mike</b> Who Can Marry?.....	118
		<b>Williams, Shane</b> No Excuse.....	54
		<b>Wood, Brian</b> Like A Tree.....	107

## INDEX: BY TOPIC

<b>Baptism</b>	
The Importance Of Baptism.....	26
That Form Of Doctrine.....	32
<b>Bible</b>	
Modern Attacks On The Bible And Christianity.....	78
<b>Capital Punishment</b>	
U.S. Carries Out 1,000th Execution.....	3
<b>Children</b>	
Kids Activity Page.....	10
Kids Activity Page.....	22
Kids Activity Page.....	34
Kids Activity Page.....	46
Kids Activity Page.....	58
Kids Activity Page.....	70
Kids Activity Page.....	82
Kids Activity Page.....	94
Kids Activity Page.....	110
Kids Activity Page.....	126
Kids Activity Page.....	142
For Of Such Is The Kingdom Of God.....	143
Kids Activity Page.....	158
<b>Christ</b>	
The Blood Of Christ.....	49
<b>Christian</b>	
Being A Christian.....	8
No Excuse.....	54
Three Tools Of Success.....	57
Bible Endurance.....	59
Like A Tree.....	107
Kind Of Minds Needed.....	129
A Talebearer Versus A Faithful Spirit.....	131
Another Milestone.....	132
Lessons From An Older Woman.....	148
<b>Church</b>	
Establishment Of The Lord's House.....	51
<b>Continual Cleansing</b>	
Who Turned On The Wipers?.....	53
<b>Death</b>	
He Being Dead Yet Speaketh.....	1
<b>Discipline</b>	
When Family Has Been Withdrawn From.....	52
<b>Doctrine</b>	
And He Added No More.....	25
Things The Bible Calls Sweet.....	28
Biblical Applications Of Infinity.....	136
<b>Drinking</b>	
Is Drinking A Sin?.....	97
<b>Easter</b>	
Questions & Answers.....	47
<b>Episcopal Church</b>	
Interview With Head Of The Episcopal Church USA .....	104
<b>Eternal Life</b>	
Questions & Answers.....	111
<b>Evidences</b>	
Why We Believe.....	77
Why We Believe.....	101
Why We Believe.....	133
<b>Evolution</b>	
Creation Versus Evolution #2.....	9
<b>Faith</b>	
"Faith Only" Texts In Context.....	102
"Faith Only" Texts In Context #2.....	134
<b>Fellowship</b>	
Fellowshipping Error.....	50
<b>Genesis</b>	
Practical Lessons From Genesis.....	105
Practical Lessons From Genesis #2.....	137
<b>Instrumental Music</b>	
Special Issue: Mechanical Music In Worship.....	37
The Music Passages.....	38
Hand Clapping & Vocal Percussion.....	39
The "Psallo" Argument.....	40
History Of Mechanical Music In Worship.....	42
Answering Additional Arguments.....	44
Settling The Mechanical Music Issue.....	45
<b>Kingdom</b>	
Christ On David's Throne.....	7
<b>Lord's Supper</b>	
Questions & Answers.....	11
The Lord's Supper, New Testament Style!.....	75

<b>Lutheran Church</b>	
Faith Of The Lutheran Church.....	27
<b>Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage</b>	
Special Issue: Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage..	113
What Standard Shall We Use?.....	115
Preparing For Marriage.....	116
Defining Bible Terms.....	117
Who Can Marry?.....	118
Matthew 19:9.....	119
Divorce For Every Cause.....	120
Marriage And The Bond.....	121
Does The Marriage Law Apply To Non-Christians?..	122
Must Adulterers Separate?.....	123
Can The Guilty Party Remarry?.....	124
Mental Divorce.....	125
Bible Questions & Answers.....	127
<b>Mormon Church</b>	
Another Testament Of Jesus Christ?.....	138
<b>Mothers</b>	
Instruction To Young Mothers.....	4
<b>Old Testament</b>	
Chariots Of Fire.....	81
<b>Original Sin</b>	
Bible Questions & Answers.....	35
<b>Parenting</b>	
Bags Of Distractions.....	76
<b>Personal Evangelism</b>	
Special Issue: Soul Winning.....	61
The Soul Winning Chapter.....	63
Women Can Be Soul Winners.....	64
First Century Soul Winners.....	65
Why Are We Not Winning More Souls?.....	66
Why Should I Be A Soul Winner?.....	68
Soul Winning Prospects.....	69
<b>Prayer</b>	
Special Issue: Acceptable Prayer.....	13
Praying Positions.....	14
The Model Prayer.....	15
Women Who Prayed.....	16
Elements Of Acceptable Prayer.....	17
Conditions Of Acceptable Prayer.....	18
The Lord's Prayer.....	20
Leading Public Prayer.....	21
Questions & Answers.....	23
<b>Precious</b>	
Special Issue: These Are Precious.....	145
The Precious Word.....	147
The Precious Christ.....	149
The Precious Blood.....	150
The Precious Death.....	151
The Precious Substance.....	152
The Precious Seed.....	153
The Precious Unity.....	154
The Precious Trial Of Faith.....	155
The Precious Faith.....	156
The Precious Promises.....	157
<b>Preaching</b>	
Let's Not Forget The Redemptive System!.....	83
<b>Repentance</b>	
Except Ye Repent.....	55
<b>Salvation</b>	
Salvation According To The Bible.....	56
Repentance Before Faith.....	73
<b>Sermons</b>	
Some Things To Be Found In Christians.....	2
Living Below In This Old Sinful World.....	74
They That Were Ready.....	98
God's Law Concerning Marriage, Divorce, And Remarriage.....	114
Biblical Examples Of Bountiful Giving.....	130
<b>Teachers &amp; Teaching</b>	
Teaching Tips.....	140
<b>Teachings Of Christ</b>	
The Rich Young Ruler.....	5
Casting The First Stone.....	33
<b>Unity</b>	
The Need For Unity Among Brethren.....	6
The One Truth.....	30
Unity Of The Spirit Or Unity In Diversity?.....	141
<b>Wives</b>	
Bible Commands For Wives.....	100
<b>Worship</b>	
Our Worship Unto The Lord.....	29
Is Everything Worship?.....	99
Is All Of Life Worship?.....	106
Dressing For Worship.....	108
<b>Youth</b>	
Special Issue: Back To School.....	85
Not Everyone's Doing It!.....	86
Proverbs For School.....	87
School Supplies.....	88
Our Clothing And Our Message At School.....	89
Making Friends At School.....	90
Things To Avoid At School.....	91
Facing Drugs And Alcohol At School.....	92
Showing Respect At School.....	93
Being An Example At School.....	95

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