

Back To Basics

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"I WOULD NOT THAT YE SHOULD BE IGNORANT"

Johnie Edwards

Paul's desire was that the Lord's people not be ignorant. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant..." (1 Cor. 10:1). To be ignorant is to not know as one is lacking in knowledge on some subject. Yet Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). Paul told Timothy that God "will have all men to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). So, we take a look at some things we must not be ignorant of.

HOW OUR FATHERS WERE BAPTIZED. Paul reminded the Corinthians that they "should not be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud and passed through the sea; And were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea..." (1 Cor. 10:1-12; Ex. 14). To help the Corinthians know that Old Testament happenings were for their "ensamples: and written for their admonition; lest they fall," Paul showed them how their fathers were "overthrown in the wilderness," because "with many of them God was not well pleased" (1 Cor. 10:11-12).

OF PAUL'S DESIRE TO VISIT THE ROMANS. That there might be some "fruit" among the Romans, Paul wanted to visit them. He wrote, "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit

among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13). The word "let" is an old English expression that means "hinder." Paul wanted these brethren to know that he desired to visit them to strengthen them and make some new converts.

CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS. Spiritual gifts belonged to the apostolic age and there were 9 of them. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know about them. "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Cor. 12:1). They are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, and were designed to keep the church pure until "that which is perfect is come" (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

THOSE ASLEEP. Assuring the Thessalonian Christians that God would not forget their dead loved ones, he penned, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope..." (1 Th. 4:13-18).

HOW GOD COUNTS TIME. In 2 Peter 3:1-8, Peter answers those who questioned God's promise of the second coming of Christ as he told them, "be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Read Psalm 90:4.



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."

THE ONE BODY

Introduction

1. Ephesians 4:4
2. This sermon calls our attention to some basic things the Bible teaches about the one body.

Discussion

I. THE BODY IS THE CHURCH

- A. The church is the body (Eph. 1:22-23) and the body is the church (Col. 1:24). Thus, they are one and the same.
- B. Since there's but one body, and the body is the church, there's just one true church.

II. THE BODY IS HEADED BY CHRIST

- A. Ephesians 1:21-23
- B. Colossians 1:18
- C. Thus, the church is subject unto Christ in all things (Eph. 5:23-24).

III. THE BODY IS WHERE MEN ARE RECONCILED UNTO GOD

- A. Ephesians 2:16
- B. Sin separates and alienates us from God.

1. Isaiah 59:1-2

2. Colossians 1:21

C. The making of peace with God is possible in the one body (Col. 1:20-22).

IV. THE BODY CONTAINS THE SAVED

- A. Ephesians 5:23
- B. Acts 2:47

V. THE BODY IS TO BE FREE FROM DIVISION

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:25
- B. One of the great pleas of the Bible is the plea for unity.
 1. John 17:20-21
 2. 1 Corinthians 1:10

VI. THE BODY IS ENTERED BY BAPTISM

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:13
- B. As one is baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27), he enters the body of Christ as the Lord adds him to the church (Acts 2:41, 47).

Conclusion

1. Are you a member of the one body?
2. You are invited.

Back To Basics

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STICK WITH THE TEXT!

John Isaac Edwards

Entirely too much teaching and preaching strays from the text of Scripture and ventures off into the realm of speculation and conjecture.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS ARE OFTEN BAD ABOUT THIS. In some of the materials used in Bible classes, it is not uncommon to find expressions like: “probably somewhere near,” “thought to be,” “most scholars believe,” “perhaps,” “tradition is unanimous in giving,” “could be,” “generally considered to have,” “universally believed to be,” “there is good likelihood that,” “early church history asserts,” “it has been acknowledged from at least the second century,” “this may indicate,” “the assumption is,” “it is thought that,” “tradition says,” and on it goes. Who cares what is thought to be or what most scholars believe? The question is, “what saith the Scripture? (Rom. 4:3).

ATTITUDES AND ADVICE FOR TODAY’S PREACHERS AND TEACHERS. The Scriptures contain some good attitudes and sound advice everyone who endeavors to speak the Lord’s word would do well to adopt and take to heart. “What the Lord saith, that will I speak” (Num. 24:13), “speak what thou knowest” (Job 34:33), “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is. 8:20), “We speak that we do know” (Jn. 3:11), “we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20), “speak forth the words of truth” (Acts 26:25), “speak the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 2:7), “speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:13), “speak the things which become sound doctrine” (Ti. 2:1), and “speak as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

LEARNING. It’s amazing how the more learning some men get, the more uncertain they become in their speaking (there is good likelihood that,

probably somewhere near), while Peter and John, “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13), spoke with confidence and conviction.

Surely there is enough in what the text says to occupy our time, without getting off into what the text doesn’t say. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “If you can’t prove it by the text, then you can’t preach it by faith!”

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LESSONS FROM THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE

Melba Edwards

My Dad, Russell McBride, passed from this life January 30, 2008 at the age of 89. I had him for fifty-one years. During his final week and death, I learned many valuable lessons.

DEATH HAPPENS TO US ALL. We know this from Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Many times we think our parents will live forever, even though we know they won’t. Losing a loved one opens our eyes to this passage. Because there is a judgment, we need to be prepared for it. 2 Corinthians 5:10 reads, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

WE NEED TO LEAN UPON THE LORD. 1 Peter 5:7 tells us, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” The Lord helps us through all our troubled times, if we let Him. Many times, in his prayers, Dad quoted, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers...” (1 Pet. 3:12). We need the Lord at all times and the death of a loved one is no exception.

A LOVING WIFE AND MOTHER TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS. Mom was by Dad’s side all through his sickness and his death. Those final few days, Mom would not leave his side. Dad was the leader of the family and he made it easy for us to follow. Mom respected Dad and her love for him was from the beginning to the end. They were married 59 years. A

wife is to love (Ti. 2:4), be in subjection to (Eph. 5:24), and reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33). Even when she needed to be comforted, she comforted me. This was a hard time for me, but a loving mother shined through. Mothers are to love their children (Ti. 2:4). Paul said he was gentle “as a nursing mother cherishes her own children” (1 Th. 2:7).

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF OTHERS SHOWED MUCH. Many times a Christian is on the giving end. When one is on the receiving end, one realizes how important the giving is. All the prayers, cards, flowers, gifts, e-mails, words of comfort, food, phone calls, visits to the funeral and funeral home; each one means so much. When an individual does one of these things, it seems so little when you are doing the giving. But it means so much when you are the one receiving. It reminds me of the song, *Oh The Things We May Do*. Christians are to be a comforting people (1 Th. 4:18; 5:11). During the death of a loved one, we need comfort and support. The love and care of others is of great value.

My Dad was a Christian. He and Mom taught me many valuable truths from God’s word, from which I made faith my own. A special thank you to all of you who made such a difficult time for me easier by all the love that was shown to me and my family.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him... Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Th. 4:14, 18).

In Few Words

CALLING GOD “DADDY”

Frivolously, there are those who refer to God Almighty as “dad” or “daddy!” Catholic influence is greater than we might like to admit. The Roman Pope is called “Papa.” A few years ago, some preachers on the *Herald of Truth* radio/TV broadcast referred to God as “hi dad” in their prayer! It is time for us to get serious about who God is. When Jesus taught early disciples how to pray, He said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Mt. 6:9). Paul assured the Ephesians that there is “One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:6). Since God is not our physical father, it is inappropriate to call him “dad” or “daddy.”

CALLING MEN “FATHER”

The Catholic religion teaches folks that the priest is their spiritual “father.” Did you ever read of any man, other than one’s male parent, being called father? (Eph. 6:1-4; Heb. 13:9). Jesus taught, “And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Mt. 23:9). That Father is God! No man is our spiritual father.

CALLING MEN “RABBI”

Jewish folks call their preacher “Rabbi.” The word “Rabbi” means master. Our Master said, “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren” (Mt. 23:8). We must learn to be content to call Bible things by Bible names, speaking “as the oracles of God” (1 Pet. 4:11).

CALLING MEN “REVEREND”

Most denominational preachers wear the title and want to be called “reverend.” Some want to be called “right reverend.” An inves-

tigation of the Scriptures reveals that the word “reverend” is found only one time in the entire Bible and then it refers to God. The Psalmist declared, “...holy and reverend is his name” (Ps. 111:9). Not even Jesus or His apostles were ever referred to as reverend. The apostles were called by their names: Peter, James, and John. Some preachers seem to want to be exalted above their fellows, but Jesus said, “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Mt. 23:12).

CALLING MEN “MASTERS”

The religious order of Masonry calls some “master.” In light of this, Matthew 23:10 says, “Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.” Does this sound like we shouldn’t call any man master? When we attach such words to men, we are giving them the place that belongs to deity. Men need to learn to be content on just being men and let God and Christ have their exalted positions!

CALLED BY HUMAN NAMES

There are hundreds of names by which religious folks are called. Yet, the Lord “called” His people “by a new name” (Is. 62:2). “...the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Why be called by a human name when you can be called a Christian? Religious folks wear the names of men who were founders of human churches, like those who wear the name of Martin Luther. Then there are those who are called Methodist to emphasize the doing of things methodically. Some are called Baptist, because they think John was a Baptist. In reality, John was not a Baptist. He was “John the Baptist” (Mt. 11:11). He was called that because he baptized. John was never in the church, due to the fact, that he died before the Lord’s church was established in Acts 2!

Thru-the-Bible

THE PATRIARCHS: JOSEPH #2 JOSEPH INTERPRETS DREAMS AND BECOMES RULER IN EGYPT GENESIS 40-41

SHANE WILLIAMS

Our text of study will be Genesis 40-41, as Joseph goes from the dungeon to the palace.

DREAMS AND INTERPRETATIONS. Being put in prison, Joseph must have felt down about events that were taking place. However, God had set the stage for the next part of His plan. We may not always know when God is working His will in our lives.

Both the baker and the cupbearer had dreams the same night (v. 5). They were both sad as they did not understand their dreams. Joseph asked them to tell him their dreams. The cupbearer relates his dream of a grapevine with three branches. It budded, blossomed, and produced ripe grapes. The cupbearer took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and gave it to him. Joseph told him that within three days the cupbearer would be restored back to his position. Joseph asked that the cupbearer remember him when these things happen and that he show kindness to Joseph.

The baker saw the good news given to the cupbearer and related his dream to Joseph. There were three baskets of white bread on his head. In the top basket, were all sorts of food for Pharaoh and the birds were eating them out of the basket. Joseph told the baker that within three days Pharaoh would hang him on a tree and the birds would eat his flesh.

All of this happened just as Joseph said it would, yet the cupbearer forgot about Joseph. Joseph had reason to believe that through the cup-

bearer he would be able to gain freedom, yet it didn't happen. Still Joseph kept his faith in God.

PHARAOH'S DREAM. Pharaoh had two dreams back-to-back. Seven fat cows came up from the river. Seven skinny cows also came up and stood next to the fat cows. They proceeded to eat the fat cows, yet it didn't show that they had devoured them. The second dream was similar, except it was seven skinny ears of grain that ate seven plump ears.

Pharaoh was desperate to find someone to interpret, yet no one could. Finally the cupbearer told Pharaoh of his experience with Joseph in the prison. Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

RAGS TO RICHES. Joseph is shaved and has his clothes changed before coming before Pharaoh. Joseph gave credit to God when asked about interpreting dreams. He then told Pharaoh the interpretation. There will be seven abundant years of plenty in the land, followed by seven years of severe famine. It will be so bad that the abundant years will be forgotten. Joseph offered advice that a wise man should be set over the land to put back a fifth of the produce in the first seven years, so that the land will not perish during the severe famine. Pharaoh wisely decided that no one would be better suited for this than Joseph!

Joseph literally goes from having nothing to being second in command! Stephen attributes his favor and wisdom before Pharaoh as coming from God (Acts 7:10). It is amazing how God's plan unfolds! It shows us how man may fit into it without even realizing it. God has now made it inevitable that Joseph's family will be coming to Egypt during the famine.

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THE PATRIARCHS: JOSEPH #3

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS GO TO EGYPT

GENESIS 42:1-45:28

DAVID ELDRIDGE

Stephen, before he is martyred, recalls the events leading the patriarchs to Egypt: “Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to the Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people” (Acts 7:11-14). As we consider Joseph’s life, let us examine the history of these events.

JACOB SENDS HIS SONS TO EGYPT. Even as was foretold in Pharaoh’s dream, “the famine was severe in all lands” (Gen. 41:57). Jacob and his son’s families were also affected by this famine. Therefore, Jacob tells his sons, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die” (Gen. 42:2). However, Jacob did not send Benjamin, “Lest some calamity befall him” (Gen. 42:4). When Joseph’s ten brothers arrive in Egypt, they bow before Joseph (a fulfillment of Joseph’s dreams, Gen. 37:5-11). Though Joseph recognizes them, they do not realize who he is. Joseph learns that his father is still alive, as is his younger brother Benjamin. Yet, he spoke roughly to his brothers, accused them of being spies, and throws them in prison. On the third day, Joseph tells them that he will keep one of them in prison while the others go back to get Benjamin that they might present him to Joseph. Still not knowing it was Joseph they had spoken to, they return to Ja-

cob without Simeon who is imprisoned in Egypt. Upon hearing the events that occurred, Jacob is very displeased and refuses to send Benjamin to Egypt (Gen. 42:29-38). However, when they run out of the Egyptian grain, Jacob reservedly sends Benjamin to Egypt with them saying, “If I am bereaved, I am bereaved” (Gen. 43:14).

JOSEPH REVEALS HIMSELF. When his brothers return, Joseph has them dine with him. When Joseph sees Benjamin, “his heart yearned for his brother...And he went into his chamber and wept” (Gen. 43:30). After dining with Joseph, his brothers leave for home only to be overtaken by Joseph’s servants and accused this time of being thieves. Joseph had his silver cup placed in Benjamin’s sack with the grain. As a result, he states that Benjamin will stay in Egypt as his servant. Judah pleads for Benjamin as he had pledged himself for Benjamin’s life to his father (Gen. 44:18-34). Joseph cannot take the ruse any longer. He sent his servants out and tells his brothers, “I am Joseph” (Gen. 45:3). They are so taken by this revelation that they cannot even speak. Joseph weeps as he kisses all of them (Gen. 45:14-15).

GOD’S PROVIDENCE. Joseph told his brothers, “God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance...it was not you who sent me here, but God...Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him,...‘come down to me’...You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and...There I will provide for you...” (Gen. 45:7-11). Joseph could see the providence of God in the events of his life that allowed provision for his family. Additionally, the “nation promise” was fulfilled by the children of Israel’s time in Egypt (Acts 7:17). God is always working, providing for His people!

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Thru-the-Bible

THE PATRIARCHS: JOSEPH #4 **ISRAEL MOVES TO EGYPT** **AND IS REUNITED WITH JOSEPH** GENESIS 46

KEITH WELCH

Joseph is now waiting for the arrival of his family in Egypt. Let us ride with Israel and His family in the chariots of Pharaoh, as they journey to Joseph (Gen. 46:1-34).

JOSEPH'S FAMILY GOES TO EGYPT. Leaving Hebron (Gen. 35:27), "Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac" (Gen. 46:1). Our worship today is to be directed unto God. Jesus told Satan, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Mt. 4:10). Still in Beersheba, God speaks to Israel saying, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes" (Gen. 46:3-4). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul said, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). So, with God's full assurance and the nation promise being repeated to Israel, he and his family move from Beersheba to Egypt.

JOSEPH'S FAMILY THAT ENTER. In Genesis 46:8-25, the names of the sons of Israel, with all their children, are given and are grouped under their mothers: Leah, Zilpah, Rachel, and Bilhah. Israel brought all his descendents with him to Egypt. "All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy" (Gen. 46:27). God had promised Israel that He would make him a great nation in Egypt. They are a long way

from becoming a great nation of people. More than two hundred years will pass before the nation promise is fulfilled.

JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY REUNITE. The family reunites at Goshen, the northeastern territory of the Nile Delta in Egypt. Here Joseph presented himself to his father and "fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while" (Gen. 46:29). Israel responded to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive" (Gen. 46:30). All men will experience trials. Men can either be victims or victors. Joseph is a great example of turning a trial into triumph.

JOSEPH INSTRUCTS HIS FAMILY. Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me'" (Gen. 46:31). Joseph informs his family that Pharaoh will ask, "What is your occupation?" He instructs them to say that their occupation is with livestock, which would include the work of a shepherd. We know that "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34). History tells us that some nomadic shepherds came into Egypt and took possession of some land and caused some destruction. This helps us understand the Egyptian's attitude toward shepherds.

This text clearly indicates that God is at work among His creation. There was a reason that Joseph was sold into Egypt, to save people from famine. God's plan for saving man is in its early stages at this point in the Bible story, but continues to unfold.

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THE PATRIARCHS: JOSEPH #5
JACOB'S DEATH DRAWS NEAR; HE
BLESSES EPHRAIM & MANASSEH
GENESIS 47-48

JOHN R. GENTRY

After being reunited with Joseph, Genesis 47-48 tells of Jacob's time in Egypt, the severity of the famine, and the blessing Jacob gave to Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons.

JACOB'S FAMILY MOVED TO GOSHEN. Upon their arrival in Egypt, Joseph informed Pharaoh that his family had arrived (Gen. 47:1). Joseph then brought five of his brothers to Pharaoh (v. 2). They informed him of their occupation as shepherds and of the severity of the famine in Canaan (vv. 3-4). They asked permission to dwell in the land of Goshen (v. 4). Pharaoh granted their request and then asked Joseph to place some of his brothers over his flocks (vv. 5-6). Joseph then presented his father, Jacob, to Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh (v. 7). When Pharaoh asked concerning his age, Jacob answered, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life..." (vv. 8-9). He and his family settled in Rameses, the best of the land, and were given daily provisions (vv. 10-12).

JOSEPH SUCCESSFULLY HANDLED THE FAMINE IN EGYPT. "Now there was no food in all the land, for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt...languished because of the famine" (v. 13). After awhile, the people ran out of money to buy food (vv. 14-15). Joseph said he would give them grain in exchange for their livestock (v. 16). This enabled the people to have food for a year until they ran out of livestock (v. 17). The people said they had nothing left to give besides

themselves and their land (vv. 18-19). So Joseph took their land and strategically placed the people throughout Egypt (vv. 20-21). Joseph had acquired all of the money, livestock, land, and people for Pharaoh. He then gave the people seed to sow the land and placed a 20% tax on the harvest that was to be given to Pharaoh (vv. 23-26).

JOSEPH VOWED TO JACOB. Seventeen years passed and Jacob's family grew in number and wealth (vv. 27-28). Nearing his death, Jacob made Joseph swear that he would not bury him in Egypt, but would bury him in the burial place of his fathers in Canaan (vv. 29-30). Joseph swore (v. 31) and was true to his word (Gen. 50:1-14).

JACOB BLESSED EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH. Knowing his father was about to die, Joseph took his two sons to visit Jacob (Gen. 48:1). Jacob recalled God's blessings and promises given in Canaan (vv. 2-4). Jacob told Joseph that his two sons would be considered sons of Jacob (vv. 5-6). Jacob blessed Joseph (vv. 15-16). When Jacob began to bless Ephraim and Manasseh, he crossed his arms to place his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh. This displeased Joseph because Manasseh was the oldest (vv. 8-14, 17-18). However, Jacob had deliberately placed his hands in this way because the tribe of Ephraim would become greater than the tribe of Manasseh. Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh by faith (v. 20; Heb. 11:21).

Genesis 47-48 remind us of the certainty of God's promises. We see the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15 coming true and we see the faith Jacob had in God's promises. May we, as Jacob and Joseph, live by faith, trusting God's promises!

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UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

Art Adams

Addiction affects not only the person with a substance abuse disorder, but also his or her family, friends and brethren. The responses from addicts and those around them range from fear and guilt to anger and deep resentment. It matters not whether it is a spouse dealing with the addiction of his/her mate, a child coping with the addiction of a parent, or parents worrying about their child's substance abuse disorder, it is clear that all family members are impacted and deserve help.

GOD'S TERMINOLOGY FOR ADDICTION. God's terminology for addiction is: stronghold (2 Cor. 10:4); being devoured (1 Pet. 5:8); drunkenness (Gal. 5:19-21); sorcery/witchcraft (Gal. 5:19-21), snare of the devil, and a deceiver (Prov. 20:1). Whichever term we call it, the sources and behaviors of addiction are an insidious evil that ensnare those who wish to play with them. The things we are playing with are not playing with us.

COMPANIONS OF ADDICTION. The companions of addiction are: excess of riot (1 Pet. 4:4); fornication and adultery (Gal. 5:19); lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19-21); deceptions/lying (Rom. 1; Rev 21), degrading one's body (1 Cor. 6:18-20; Rom. 1:21-32) and more. An addict told me, "I didn't start out thinking I'd be here. I had a grape Swisher, a bag, a pipe and a syringe and I went out for a good time—but I didn't come back—I couldn't find the path—I was on the end of the pipe all along thinking—some day—some day it will be different...but not today."

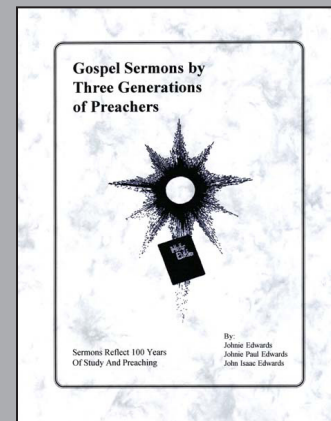
THE POWER OF ADDICTION. When addictive things come near us through acquaintances, friends or family, they only have the power we are willing to give them. The time to escape any involvement is at the first encounter. If there is even the slight-

est delay, the addictive thing continues weaving its intrusive entrance into our life. Once we allow it in, that addictive thing claims more and more power over our life, until our life is all about the addiction and less and less about the good person we used to be. The Proverb writer described this when he said, "do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper" (Prov. 23:29-33).

In this series, we will be exploring forms of addiction including alcohol, drug abuse, gambling, sexual addictions, tobacco. Stay tuned. Jesus is more powerful than the mightiest addiction!

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"UNTIL AN OPPORTUNE TIME"

Marc W. Gibson

In Luke's account of Satan's temptations of Jesus (Lk. 4:1-13), the concluding words are as follows: "Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time" (v. 13). Those last four words are ominous and sobering. Let's consider carefully what we can learn from this statement that will help us in our own struggles against Satan and his temptations.

SATAN IS THE SOURCE OF ALL EVIL TEMPTATION. Temptations to do evil are of the devil, not God. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone" (Jas. 1:13). Satan seeks to deceive and entice us so that we will become entrapped in sin (1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Tim. 2:26; Eph. 6:11). We must clearly identify our true adversary (1 Pet. 5:8), and prepare our minds and lives to overcome him.

JESUS FACED MORE TEMPTATIONS FROM SATAN. Satan's departure from Jesus was temporary. Jesus would endure many more temptations from Satan. For example, after the account of the wilderness temptations, Luke records the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-30). When those of Jesus' hometown turned against Him with wrath and intended to throw Him over a cliff, Jesus did not react with His own wrath and revenge. He overcame the temptation to exhibit evil attitudes and actions. Many other occasions in Jesus' life provided temptations to wrath, impatience, pride, compromise, or giving in to fear. What we see is Jesus who "was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). What a perfect example and great help Jesus is for us!

SATAN SEEKS OPPORTUNITIES. We also learn that Satan never gives up seeking opportunities to

tempt us to sin. He is portrayed as a hungry lion "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). He may retreat after an unsuccessful temptation (as he did with Jesus), but only "for a season" (Lk. 4:13). He will return with his quiver full of fiery darts to cast at us (Eph. 6:16). We are warned to stand against the "wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). This speaks of his crafty, cunning, deceitful way of lying in wait for our souls. Satan has evil men doing his destructive work of preaching false doctrines, promoting immorality, and causing division. Ignorance and rebellion bring many to his side.

WE MUST NOT PROVIDE SATAN AN OPPORTUNITY. Under no circumstance can we let down our guard when it comes to Satan and his temptations. As we have seen, he constantly seeks an opportunity to entice us to sin. This is why the apostle Paul warns, "...do not give the devil an opportunity" (Eph. 4:27). Instead, we should be sober and watchful for Satan's attack, ready to "resist him, steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8-9). We should learn from those who did provide Satan an opportunity, like Judas who opened his heart to Satan and betrayed Jesus for money (Jn. 13:2, 27), and Ananias who gave Satan an opportunity to fill his heart with the temptation to lie (Acts 5:1-3).

We are to pray that the Father "not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (Mt. 6:13). Christians filled with God's word will find that "way of escape" to overcome Satan's temptations (1 Cor. 10:13).

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THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR

Joe R. Price

In Romans 12:1, the inspired apostle Paul challenged the Roman Christians with a strong exhortation to present their bodies as living sacrifices to God. He based his plea on the mercy of God they had received. He explained that the nature of their sacrifice was to be living, holy, acceptable, and reasonable: “we love because He first loved us” (1 Jn. 4:19). To sacrifice themselves to God, they must “not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). This pleases God and accomplishes His will for His people. What Paul said to the Romans applies to us, too.

Christians use the blessings and gifts God has graciously put into our hands, being always guided by humility and faith (Rom. 12:3-8). There is a place of value and service in the body of Christ for every Christian to sacrifice and serve (Rom. 12:4-5; Mt. 25:34-40).

Romans 12:9 begins specific instructions of the Christian's behavior toward fellow Christians and toward the lost.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR IS GENUINE (ROM. 12:9-11). Love is to be without hypocrisy; it does not wear a disguise. Whether it is love for what is good (“cling to what is good”), love for brethren (“be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love”) or love for God (“fervent in spirit, serving the Lord”), love is diligent and sincere. “By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 Jn. 3:16).

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR IS CONSTANT AND CARING (ROM. 12:12-14). We are to act consistently with the need and context of the moment, whether it is “rejoicing in hope” or being “patient in tribulation” (v. 12). In fact, we rejoice and are patient simultaneously, since our hope of eternal

life anchors us through the storms of life (Heb. 6:18-20; Rom. 5:2-5). Steadfast prayer and hospitality are among the ways we are to be a blessing to friend and foe alike: “bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.”

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR IS SYMPATHETIC (ROM. 12:15-16). The Christian is joyful when someone else has reason to rejoice. When sadness grips a soul, he shares the sorrow (v. 15). He is “of the same mind” with his brethren. He is not conceited or arrogant (traits that prevent compassion and sympathetic responses toward others)—his mind is not set on “high things” that exalt himself above others (v. 16). He considers others better than himself and looks out for their interests before his own (Phil. 2:3-4).

THE CHRISTIAN'S BEHAVIOR IS PEACEFUL (ROM. 12:17-21). The person who is vengeful and vindictive is not living like Jesus. He set us an example of not returning evil for evil (1 Pet. 2:18-23). Like Jesus, we must value good things and live honorably and peacefully before others (vv. 17-18). The Lord has all authority and will avenge evil. So, Christians leave that work to the Almighty, while overcoming evil with good (vv. 19-21).

Why do Christians behave in these ways? We are living sacrifices unto God, that's why (Rom. 12:1-2).

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PORNOGRAPHY

Craig Thomas

Pornography (porn) is “Sexually explicit pictures, writing, or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal.” In times past, porn was rare and found only on the “seamy” side of town. Today, porn is everywhere! Twelve percent (4.2 million) of websites offer porn (*Statistics from TopTen Reviews, Inc.*). There are over 420 million porn pages on the Internet and over 68 million search engine requests per day for porn (25% of total requests!). Every second, over 28,000 people are viewing porn online. Every 39 minutes, a new porn video is created in the U.S. Over 13,500 porn videos were released in 2005, a 138% increase since 1995! In the U.S., porn websites generate \$2.84 billion in annual revenue. Other pornographic material (e.g., movie rentals, magazines, phone sex, etc.) increase the size of this “industry” to over \$13 billion in the U.S. and over \$97 billion worldwide. Worldwide porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix, and EarthLink! U.S. porn revenue is larger than the combined revenues of all professional sports (football, baseball, basketball) and nearly double the combined revenues of the major television networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS). Porn is not going away!

BUT, IT’S NOT A PROBLEM AT MY HOUSE.

Perhaps, but it is a major problem in American society and you and your family are in much more danger than you may know! Did you know: 80% of 15-17 year olds have “multiple hard-core exposures”? 90% of 8-16 year olds have viewed porn online (most while doing homework!)? 40 million American adults regularly visit porn websites? 20% of men admit to accessing porn at work? 10% of Americans admit to an Internet sexual addiction? 17% of all women struggle with a porn addiction? 9.4 million women access adult websites each month and 13% of them admit to doing so at their workplace? Sadly, 47% of “Christians” say porn is

a problem in their home. Do you know what your children are viewing on the Internet? Your husband? Your wife? You and your household may not have a problem, but “let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

PORN IS MORE ADDICTIVE THAN “CRACK COCAINE”! That’s what experts said who testified before the U.S. Senate (*wirednews.com*). One expert said, “Pornography addicts have a more difficult time recovering from their addiction than cocaine addicts, since coke users can get the drug out of their system, but pornographic images stay in the brain forever.” Other testimony revealed the sexual arousal caused by porn is more powerful than addictive drugs since it causes the release of “naturally occurring opioids” and “does what heroin can’t do.” Another said porn addiction can lead to “compulsive and destructive behaviors centered on pornography” more powerful than gambling or shopping addictions. One senator called the hearing “the most disturbing one I’ve ever seen.”

Pornography is poisoning minds and ruining lives throughout our nation. Christians must “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18)! Interestingly, the word “fornication” is from the Greek word “porneia,” which is the root of our English word “pornography.” That fact alone should be warning enough for the followers of Christ! Porn has one purpose: to lead us to commit fornication, whether it be the overt act or through self gratification. In the process, relationships will be damaged and broken, lives and homes will be shattered, and souls will be lost! Let us awaken to this insidious and ubiquitous danger and warn our brethren and children of its immense power and destructiveness!

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Kids Activity Page

Aleisha Edwards



Miracles of Jesus

Jesus performed many miracles while He was here on earth. The purpose of Jesus' miracles was to cause people to "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God..." (Jn. 20:31).

Jesus turned water to _____ (Jn. 2:1-11).	STORM
Jesus healed the 10 men of _____ (Lk. 17:12-19).	FED
Jesus made the _____ to see (Jn. 9:1-7).	LEPROSY
Jesus made the _____ to walk (Lk. 5:18-25).	LAME
Jesus made the _____ to hear (Mk. 7:32-35).	DEAF
Jesus brought the _____ to life (Mk. 5:41-42).	WINE
Jesus walked on _____ (Mt. 14:25).	BLIND
Jesus _____ about 5,000 men (Mk. 6:34-44).	DEAF
Jesus cast out _____ (Mt. 8:16).	WATER
Jesus stilled a _____ (Mk. 4:39).	DEMONS

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

HAPPINESS

Ryan Thomas

It's fair to say all people desire happiness in life. The Constitution states every man has the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Notice happiness is not guaranteed, just it's pursuit. That's because happiness comes from what we do. How do we find happiness? Over the centuries, men have sought happiness in many places. Let's examine some and consider what brings true happiness and contentment.

MONEY? Our society is bent on pursuing material wealth. Is that wrong? After all, the more money you have the more stuff you can buy. Stuff makes you happier, right? It's a given that a certain amount of money is necessary for survival. And Christians are commanded to work (1 Th. 4:11) and provide for their family (1 Tim. 5:8). Those failing to do so are worse than an unbeliever! Joy is derived knowing one has faithfully discharged this duty. But, some work long hours to afford luxuries far exceeding true needs to set themselves above their peers. Remember, pursuing wealth just to accumulate "stuff" is vanity and doesn't bring happiness. Let us be content with what we have and be thankful (Heb. 13:5), never forgetting Paul's admonition in 1 Timothy 6:9-10.

RELATIONSHIPS? As we get older, the desire to find a mate becomes important to nearly everyone. Seeing Adam alone in the garden, God concluded, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). At some point, it's expected that every man leave father and mother and be joined to his wife (Mt. 19:4-5). But, some feel that until they find their special person they can't be completely happy. While we strongly desire that companionship, we should not feel unable to be happy. In fact, there are advantages to being single. Paul lived his entire life in that state and accomplished great things in the gospel. Being single allowed him to do many

things not possible had he been married. We must remember, as long as we have the Lord in our lives we'll never be alone (Jn. 16:32).

POPULARITY AND FAME? Even though some don't admit it, all desire to be well liked and admired. The Bible teaches us repeatedly to set a good example to others (Mt. 5:16). By so doing, we bring honor and glory to the Father. Being well known in society is not a sin, however, it places even greater responsibility on us to live soberly and set a good example for others. Sadly, most don't take this responsibility seriously. They simply wish to bring honor to themselves and live devoted to satisfying their own desires. What a sad state of affairs! Being popular isn't the answer.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL? Alcohol has caused more problems than any other abused substance. Countless lives have been ruined and families destroyed by its intoxicating effects. In the end, people using drugs and alcohol find misery instead of happiness. Such things have a certain appeal, but we can't allow ourselves to be deceived and succumb to them. We must strive to always "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good" and "abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Th. 5:21-22).

When you're feeling depressed and confused, analyze your thinking. If you're constantly thinking about yourself and about how you could be happier, you need to consider what you can do for others instead of yourself. The greatest joy is derived from helping and doing good for others (Acts 20:35). Don't merely pay homage to this by mental assent, get busy and put it into action! Happiness will surely follow.

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