

*The Advocate
of Truth*





TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Word Keys That Unlock Truth 3
This month our word is "strive".

Forgiven and Forgiving 3-4
"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive others."

The Bible 4-5
The Bible is not an ordinary book written by ordinary men.

Things Aren't Always What They Seem 5
This is a story about two angels.

7 Things You May Or May Not Know About Jeremiah 6-7

The Most Important Thing 7-8
What do you think is the most important thing?

Are You a Casual Christian?8-12
Are you a person who says that you have accepted Jesus, but do not live the life this commitment requires?

Signs Of The Times 13-14
Gay and lesbians, who claim to be Christians, set many denominations into a tailspin.

TV Can Push Life Out Of Focus 14-15
How much time do you spend in front of the TV?

Our Behavior In God's House 15

Questions And Answers 16-17
Why must Children of God know the Scriptures?

The Church Around The World 18-19
This month we look at The Philippines and California.

The Children's Pages 20-23
Sabbath School Lessons
A Story - "Two Of Jesus's Lambs"
Games and Puzzles

The Advocate of Truth is the official organ of The Church of God (7th Day) with headquarters at Salem, West Virginia.

It is published once a month on the fourth Monday of each month by The Advocate of Truth Press, Inc. PO Box 328, Salem, West Virginia 26426. Entered as Second Class Matter on January 22, 1990 (now periodicals) at the Post Office in Salem, West Virginia under the Postal Act of March 3, 1879. The magazine is mailed under the periodicals rate.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Your subscription is free. It is paid for by people who are concerned about the truth.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated. You may request this periodical by sending your mailing address to this address.

POSTMASTER:

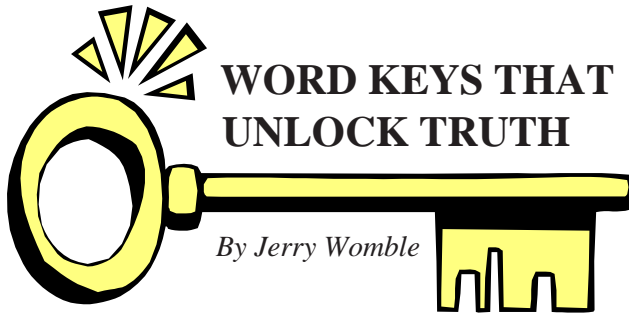
Please send address changes to:

**THE CHURCH OF GOD
PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. Box 328
Salem, WV 26426-0328**

**Telephone: 304-782-1411
Fax: 304-782-2248
E-Mail: cogsevdav@aol.com**

**Del DeLong
Bond Tennant.....Editorial Staff
Gary Mills Managing Editor
Ludina Mills.....Children's Page Editor
Fred Hardman Printer**

**Volume LIII Number 6
December 22, 2003
The Advocate of Truth
USPS 542-940**



WORD KEYS THAT UNLOCK TRUTH

By Jerry Womble

STRIVE

The word strive is used in different situations in the Bible but always has a basic meaning of a struggle.

A good example is in II Timothy 2:5, "And if a man strive for the masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." The word strive here is referring to a contest, and that is our condition; we are trying to win the battle against the Devil who is trying to keep us from the kingdom of God. I notice also that the contestant must

"strive lawfully". Every athletic event has rules to follow, and a person must follow these rules in order to win. If he wins the contest that he is entered in, but breaks the rules, he will be disqualified and not receive the crown. Paul is comparing this situation to striving for the crown of eternal life and says to us that we must "strive lawfully" or follow God's rules if we want to be victorious. In II Corinthians 9 when Paul is talking of striving for the mastery and the incorruptible crown, the word strive there carries a special meaning of having to use extra effort. This is us today. We must be diligent and unwavering in our striving for the mastery.

Finally, in Philippians 1:27 we find that we are to strive together in the gospel; that is, labor together to promote the gospel of Christ. Jesus sent out His disciples in pairs to prepare each town that He was going too favor by coming to that area. Let us labor together to prepare this world for the coming of Jesus.

FORGIVEN AND FORGIVING

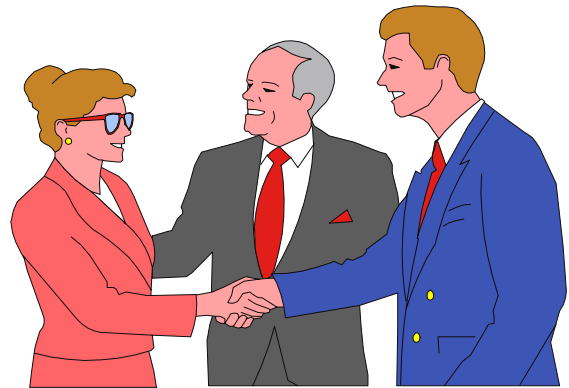
A STUDY LESSON

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

It has been said that to err is human, and to forgive is divine. The spirit of forgiveness is one of the characteristics of God. Forgiveness manifests God's love! To be like God in this respect, we also must exercise the spirit of forgiveness. It must be a forgiveness from the heart, and not expressed merely in words.

Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive one who sinned against him, asking if seven times would be sufficient. The Talmud placed the limit at three. Probably Peter knew this, and reasoned that his suggestion of seven would be very liberal and probably pleasing to Jesus. However, the true spirit of forgiveness can not be measured in this manner.



Jesus's reply to Peter was that he should be willing to forgive seventy times seven. This is just like saying that he should be willing to keep right on forgiving, regardless of the number of times. This is truly the spirit of the Heavenly Father, for do we not go to Him daily asking for His forgiveness of our shortcomings? The Bible speaks of this as going to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need.

Then Jesus gave a parable to illustrate the point. In the parable is a "king" and his "servant." The servant owes the king a huge sum of money. A tremendous sum is used perhaps to illustrate the servant's impossibility of paying the debt, just as it is impossible for us to settle our debt with the Heavenly Father.

At first, the "king" refuses to do anything about the servant's debt, but to demand payment, and this would

entail the selling of all that he had, even to the selling of his family into slavery. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him (the king), saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant, was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." (Matthew 18:29).

This is a moving story, and certainly we can not help being touched with the compassion of the "king" or "Lord" of the parable. How like our Heavenly Father, through the provision of grace He made in Christ Jesus, assures all who go to Him in the spirit of faith, obedience, and worship that they will be forgiven.

But then an unusual circumstance develops in the parable. It seems that the servant who owed the huge sum to this lord, and had his debt forgiven, had a small amount owed to him by one of his fellow servants. He demanded full payment, and failing to receive it had his friend committed to prison.

Obviously this man who had owed the huge sum, although he had greatly benefited by being forgiven, had failed to gain the real lesson of his experience, for he had not himself learned to exercise the spirit of love and compassion. Had he learned this lesson, he would have been

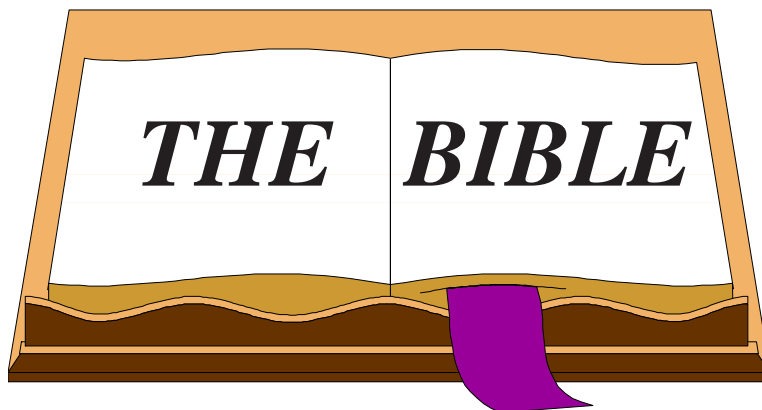
more than happy to extend forgiveness to the man who owed him so little compared to his own debt, which had been forgiven.

The lord of the parable, after hearing of what had happened, summoned his servant before him, and said, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors (jailers), till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Finished with the parable, Jesus then makes the application. He said, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:35). It is this same thought which is contained in our memory verse: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

This is part of our Lord's Prayer. How meaningful that our forgiveness by the Heavenly Father is made dependent upon our forgiveness of those who trespass against us. How many times do we think of this when we are inclined to withhold forgiveness from others.

Contributed



The Bible is not an ordinary book written by ordinary human authors. It does not record the imagination, speculations and philosophies of mere men. It is most certainly not fiction! The Bible is the information our Creator wanted us to have. It is His thoughts written down for our instruction. God Himself supervised the writing of this book. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were

moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1:21).

The Bible tells of the dealings of God with His human creation throughout the ages. It tells of people who actually lived. It tells how God revealed Himself and His knowledge, and how He worked with them, and through them.

Everything about the Bible is real, and in harmony

with the facts of history and science. It tells of events that actually happened. It was written in and about places that actually existed. The Bible involves us because it tells us about our own future. On the pages of the Bible, we see the plan of God. It is a plan not yet complete but which is progressing steadily toward completion.

The Bible is a book of facts . This is important because our future life is a matter of life or death- eternal life, or eternal death. In something so important as our own future existence, we must have facts, evidence and certainty.

How can we know that the Bible is not just another book? How can we be sure that the Bible is a book of facts, and not just another book by human authors? How can we know that its writing was directed by Almighty God who is the Creator of heaven and earth? The Buddhists have their sacred scriptures and give glowing testimonies of what their religion does for them. The Hindus have their sacred vedas, the sacred writings of their holy men. The Moslems have the writings of Mohammed. How can we know that the Bible is not the same as all these other writings, just the words of some more men who had more ideas?

Either the Bible is all true, and can be depended on, or it is all false and should be wholly rejected. It is either the Word of God or it is not. There is no neutral position. We believe the Bible is the written Word of God made available to us through God's instrumentality for our instruction and salvation.

The harmony of its teachings - The Bible is composed of sixty-six books, written over a period of many years. The authors of these books were human as we are, and they came from all walks of life. Some were kings, some fishermen, some herdsmen, statesmen, doctors. They were in three different languages, and on three continents. Yet they all proclaim one message. How could this be unless all were moved by the same supreme God?

Its miraculous preservation - The Bible has had the fiercest of enemies. It has been burned. Its advocates have been persecuted and tortured, to say nothing of its ridicule it has suffered in the hands of intellectuals. Yet it has survived these thousands of years and is available world wide today in nearly every written language on earth.

The Bible is a commentary on itself. We believe it is God's word and His will for us. Let us read it often, and cherish it always.

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead, the angels were given a small space in the cold basement.

As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, "Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable, farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest.

When the sun came up the next morning, the angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field. The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel, "How could you have let this happen? The first man had everything, yet you helped him," she accused. "The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let the cow die." "Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied.

"When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in the hole in the wall. Since the owner was obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it. The cow, on the other hand, had mad cow's disease which would have surely killed the family. Things aren't always what they seem."

Sometimes that is exactly what happens when things don't turn out the way they should. If you have faith, you just need to trust that every outcome is always to your advantage. You just might not know it until some time later.

Adapted from the internet

7

Things You May Or May Not Know About

JEREMIAH

by Warren H. Randall Jr.

1. He was from the tribe of Benjamin.

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin" (Jeremiah 1:1).

2. He was known of God before he was found in his mother's belly.

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5).

NOTE: How can anyone argue for abortion when scripture clearly indicates that the fetus, particularly in this case, was known by God. Woe to those who do not respect life and the God who gave it.

3. Jeremiah was instructed to use a linen girdle as a sign.

"Thus saith the Lord unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water. So I got a girdle according to the word of the Lord, and put it on my loins. And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass after many days, that the Lord said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing. Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 13:1-9).

4. The Lord tells him about prophets that lie.

"Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a

false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall these prophets be consumed" (Jeremiah 14:14-15).

5. The prophet was instructed specifically about Sabbath.

"Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers" (Jeremiah 17:21-22).

6. God tells him that He is a God close at hand, and He sees all.

"Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed" (Jeremiah 23:23-24).

7. How long was the captivity to be during Jeremiah's time?

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works for their own hands" (Jeremiah 25:12-14).

Being Appreciative

When someone does something nice for us, it is only right and proper to express our gratitude and appreciation to them. Often times a sincere "thank you" may be all that is needed to let someone know that you are grateful for their good service or help. Sometimes we have a tendency to take our family and friends for granted, and we may not always express or show our appreciation to our loved ones for their help and support. Having an appreciative spirit is truly a blessing from our Lord, and having a thankful attitude is a blessing to everyone. It is espe-

cially important to be appreciative to our Heavenly Father for all that He has done and continues to do for us. When we pray and thank God for His goodness, it deepens our love and draws us closer to Him. Being able to recognize our blessings and see God's goodness is beneficial to our own well-being.

From the Alvin Sun-Advertiser

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ATTITUDE

A 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably curled and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary. After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready.

As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window. "I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

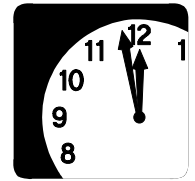
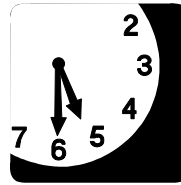
"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room." "That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied. "Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. When I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged. It's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it. "It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice. I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, as long as my eyes open. I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away just for this time in my life."

Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories. Thank you for your part in filling my memory bank. I am still depositing.

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING



A young man learns what's most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College, girls, career, and life itself got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future, and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his Mother told him, "Mr. Belser died last night. The funeral is Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel. He sat quietly remembering his childhood days. "Jack, did you hear me?" "Oh, sorry, Mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him. I'm sorry, but honestly I thought he died years ago," Jack said. "Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over on his side of the fence as he put it," Mom told him. "I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said. "You know, Jack, after your Dad died, Mr. Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said. "He's the one who taught me carpentry," He said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important. Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said. As busy as he was he kept his word. Jack caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr. Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own, and most of his relatives had passed away. The night before he had to return home, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time. Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was

exactly as he remembered. Every step held memories. Every picture, every piece of furniture... Jack stopped suddenly. "What's wrong, Jack?" His Mom asked. "The box is gone," he said. "What box?" Mom asked. "There was a small gold box that he kept locked on top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing he valued most,' Jack said. It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly how Jack remembered it, except for the box. He figured someone from the Belser family had taken it. "Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said. "Better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, Mom." It had been about two weeks since Mr. Belser died. Returning home from work one day, Jack discovered a note in his mailbox. "Signature required on a package. No one at home. Please stop by the main post office within the next three days," the note read. Early the next day Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention. "Mr. Harold Belser" it read. Jack

took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside. "Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filled his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers slowly over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover,. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, Thanks for your time! Harold Belser." "The thing he valued most was my time." Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days.

"Why?" Janet, his assistant asked. "I need sometime to spend with my son," he said. "Oh, by the way, Janet ... thanks for your time!" "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away."

Have a great day. Oh, and thank you for your time.

-From the internet

ARE YOU A CASUAL CHRISTIAN?

By Carol Buechner



Just what is a Christian? If you look carefully at the word, you will see the root word, and it is Christ. Therefore, a Christian would be someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ. They believe Him to be the Messiah whose appearance was prophesied in the Old Testament and who came to earth as the Son of God in the New Testament. Thus, He is the anointed One sent by God to redeem all those who accept Him as their Savior from their sins giving them the right to eternal life. They are professing their belief in the truth of the teachings of Jesus and demonstrating in their lives the same qualities that Jesus

displayed while living on earth. Such qualities would include love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, humility, etc. In addition, a Christian accepts the Bible as the word of God and follows the principles put forth in it. Christianity is a form of religion. Religion is a system of theology, doctrine, and belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers to be worshiped and obeyed as the creator. It is the expression of such a belief in conduct, ritual, practices, ethical values, standards and persuasions. There are many religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism,

Taoism, Christianity, etc. The important thing that distinguishes the Christian is the belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Redeemer.

The Bible gives insight into the meaning of being a Christian. It states that, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Believers in Christ and followers of Him were called Christians because their behavior, activity, and speech were like Christ. The Apostle Paul is such a wonderful example of being a Christian as he spoke out before Agrippa in such a noble manner that he nearly convinced Agrippa to be converted. Paul speaks, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds" (Acts 26:27-31). Paul's speech and presentation of his belief in Christ were very convincing. Could it be that Agrippa would have been convinced if it were not for his position? Peter states, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (I Peter 4:16). All of the apostles were familiar with suffering for Christ, yet they remained faithful and glorified God continuously. Considering all this information from the Bible, it can be concluded that a Christian is one who becomes a faithful adherent of Christ, and one whose daily life and behavior is just like Christ.

Casual is an interesting word that reveals many ideas when studied closely. The following meanings come forth from examination of the word casual in the dictionary:

(1) Casual is a happening by chance, unplanned, without apparent cause or design, an unpredictable event. (2) It is something done at irregular intervals or occasionally. Irregular is disorderly, uncertain, random. Intervals are periods of time between events. This would be doing something on and off as one feels like doing it. (3) it is being nonchalant which means doing something without warmth or enthusiasm, disinterest, lack of concern, indifferent, lukewarm, detached, incurious, listless. (4) it is superficial which is being concerned with and understanding only that which is easily apparent and

obvious, it is seeing something at first glance with no depth or being shallow. (5) It is being apathetic which is feeling little, unemotional, unconcerned, unmoved, uninterested, detached. (6) It is being haphazard which is happening merely by chance or accident, being unplanned, reckless. (7) It is being cursory which is doing something hastily, performing rapidly with little attention to detail, being careless. (8) It is being dispassionate which is without feeling, emotion or caring or becoming involved.

It is important to put the words casual and Christian together to more fully understand what the characteristics of a casual Christian would be. It would be a person who professes that he has accepted Jesus as his Savior and believe in His teachings. However, he is not consistent with his profession. He may appear to be a Christian in some situations, and not be so in different circumstances. For example, when he is around other Christians, he acts and speaks in a Godly manner. However, when he is out with friends that are not true Christians, he displays ungodly characteristics. He certainly is not acting or speaking as a Christian should. The casual Christian is not faithful to what he claims to be. He lacks interest in growing and becoming a better Christian. Enthusiasm is not displayed and he has a lack of concern for bringing others to know Christ. The casual Christian leaves this to others. His heart is more concerned with the ways of the world.

Another word that could be used for casual is convenient. Convenient means to suit one's comfort, easy to do, adaptable, informal, relaxed, nonchalant, spontaneous, random, haphazard, apathetic, unconcerned, by chance, This type of Christian worships God whenever they feel like doing so and adapts the worship to suit how they feel. They do not feel that it is necessary to worship God on a regular basis. During times of difficulty and trials, it may be convenient to go to God to ask for help.

The Bible speaks of a casual Christian in this manner:

(1) "HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF" (II Timothy 3:5). Analyze what this scripture is saying. A form is a semblance of or an outward deceiving appearance or likeness of or a sketchy outline of Godliness is holiness, piety, devotion to religious duties and practices. Deny is to refuse to acknowledge. Power is the authority or

influence of. The type of person that Timothy is speaking of, has an appearance of being devoted to God and doing what is right, but is not really under the influence of what he claims to be. Such a person has a belief and confession in God and Jesus, but it is not something deeply regarded in their heart. It is superficial.

Further study of II Timothy 3, will further enlighten your understanding of a casual Christian. Seventeen more characteristics are given in verses two through four. Study each one carefully.

(2) “FOR MEN SHALL BE LOVERS OF THEIR OWN SELVES.”- Humans will be more concerned about their own welfare than that of others. Another word for this would be selfish.

(3) “COVETOUS”- To covet is to want something so badly that it becomes an obsession. Your life is centered on obtaining whatever it is that you want. Money is often what one is seeking.

(4) “BOASTERS”- To boast is to talk about oneself excessively in a manner that shows too much pride and exalting oneself

(5) “PROUD”- To be proud is to be arrogant and haughty or full of self-importance and being overbearing. The opposite is being humble.

(6) “BLASPHEMERS”- To blasphemy is to be profane or contemptuous which is speaking or acting in a disrespectful manner concerning sacred or holy things. It is being irreverent and sacrilegious. This is intentionally violating what is consecrated to God or religion. Anything that you say that goes against God’s Word or does not glorify Him is blasphemy.

(7) “DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS”- The root word for disobey is obey. To obey means to carry out instructions, be willing to be guided, submit to direction or control, act in accordance to what is taught, do as told, do one’s bidding, concur, comply, consent, agree, surrender, respond positively, follow, fulfill wishes. When adding the prefix dis- to the word obey you get just the opposite meaning. It means to refuse to obey, rebel, misbehave, defy, ignore, disregard, break the rules, resist,

revolt against, counteract, disagree, evade, ignore, pay no attention to, not heed. Children disregard the instructions of their parents and go against what is right. They could be considered head-strong.

(8) “UNTHANKFUL”- To be unthankful is not feeling thankful or appreciative for favors, benefits, advantages, help. It is not feeling obligated to give thanks. It is showing inconsiderateness, indifference and lack of gratitude.

(9) “UNHOLY”- To be unholy is not regarding or having respect for God. It is without piety or devotion to God. It is lacking reverence or not honoring God. It is being unscrupulous or without morals.

(10) “WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION”- Natural means normal or usual. Affection means fondness, tender feelings, endearments, passion, zeal, friendliness, kindness, and devotion. The person without normal affections has perverted feelings and directs these feelings in an abnormal way which would be opposite to being a kind and loving person.

(11) “TRUCEBREAKERS”- A truce is a time of agreement between people to cease or stop arguing, fighting, quarreling, conflicting and not getting along. It is to bring peace and respite from difficulties. To break is fail to do or stop one’s part. It is to come to an end causing a breach or division in friendly relations. It is an interruption. Someone that is a trucebreaker cannot live at peace for very long. They are constantly causing arguments and disagreements to happen.

(12) “FALSE ACCUSERS”- False is being untruthful, deceiving and lying. Accusing is finding fault or blaming someone. This type of person is always looking for something to blame on someone else, especially something that is not even true. This is often done to cover up for one’s own actions.

(13) “INCONTINENT”- This is not having self-restraint, being lustful, carnal and shameless.

(14) “FIERCE”- To be fierce is of a cruel nature, uncontrolled, easily angered, impetuous, acting without consideration for others, lacking peace, disagreeable, rash.

(15) “DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD”- To despise is look down upon someone with strong emotional contempt, seeing them as unworthy. It is to scorn, regard with dislike and indignation that involves meanness and anger. Good means a person that is morally sound or right, virtuous, honest, just, devout, benevolent, trustworthy, respectable, righteous and Godly. Putting the two words together, it means someone that condemns or looks upon a righteous or Godly person with disrespect, anger, and speaks out against or tries to interfere with their way of living.

(16) “TRAITORS”- To be a traitor is to be someone that betrays or breaks their faith or promises, fails to keep their word, is faithless, treacherous and a backslider.

(17) “HEADY”- To be heady is to act without thinking or without caution. It is being rash, reckless, hasty and thoughtless.

(18) “HIGHMINDED”- To be highminded is to have excess pride in oneself and disdain, contempt and scorn for others. It is being proud, conceited and self-centered. This list describes some of the attributes of a person that appears to be a Christian but in actuality, they are not. If you look at the first verse of II Timothy 3. you will see what this is a signal of. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” This kind of casual approach is what was predicted to occur as the time of Christ’s return to earth became eminent.

If you stop and think about it, you will discover there are reasons or excuses that people use for being a casual Christian. Contemplate the following excuses:

[1] “I’M JUST TOO BUSY.” - This kind of person reasons that they just do not have the time they need to go to church, pray, read God’s word or do anything to develop their Christian life. They are so busy with work and taking care of their family that they just cannot do those things. They excuse it by saying that they are a good person, try to do what is right and that God will understand this. But, will God accept such excuses? It is doubtful that He will because He knows that a person can find the time to follow Him if they truly want to be His servant. If a person is too busy for God, changes need to be made in

their life.

[2] “SATURDAY IS THE ONLY DAY I HAVE TO SLEEP IN AND DO WHAT I WANT TO DO.” This kind of person seems to feel that pursuing their own pleasure is more important than pursuing God. After all, they do go to church once in awhile and occasionally read the Bible. Is God an occasional God? Does He want to be your God on a part time basis? The Sabbath excuses go even further into such things as, “I need the weekend for a little vacation time to get away from it all.” “I can not expect my child to give up playing basketball or cheerleading just because the games are held on Friday night.” “I am just too tired to cook on Sabbath so we go out to eat after church.”

[3] “EVERYONE IS DOING IT!” This kind of person wants to do what others are doing, rather than doing what is right, because they do not want to be looked upon as different. Does it really matter what others think of you, or does it matter what God thinks of you?

[4] “MUCH OF WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BIBLE WAS FOR THAT TIME AND IS NOT RELEVANT FOR TODAY.” This kind of person looks at what is expected of a Christian today as being totally different from what was taught in the Bible. They rationalize that times and cultures have changed, and thus behaviors are different now. They want to say that the Ten Commandments were done away with when Jesus died so they can live a different life. If the Commandments were really done away with, there would be no laws to govern behavior and therefore society would be able to do whatever they pleased.

[5] “I JUST CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY TITHE.” This kind of person may have built up so much debt that they do not have the money to give God His ten per cent. They are too interested in spending their money on what they want.

These are just a sampling of the reasons people use for being a casual Christian. You probably are familiar with many, many more such examples. Are there any that you use? Maybe you should make a list of your favorite excuses. It might be interesting to make a list of excuses you hear other people give. These can be reminders to

you.

The ideas that have been presented in this article are evidences of the deterioration of the Christian walk. Since they are signs of the times, changes need to be made in order to not be guilty of casual Christianity. What does the Bible say a Christian should do to be a strong and faithful servant of God? The **FIRST STEP IS TO HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE God**. ~‘Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up’ (James 4:10). To be humble is to get rid of your pride and come before God in a submissive manner. As a part of the humbling process, you must confess your sins and ask forgiveness for them. “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

THE SECOND STEP is found in Proverbs 16:3: “**COMMIT** thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.” You need to commit yourself to being a Christian so God can give you direction. Commit means to give charge, submit for safekeeping, entrust, give over, pledge and promise. This must be done with complete trust, confidence, firm belief, assurance, reliance and faith. In other words, you must decide to put God in charge of your life, submit to His guidance, and stand firm in your belief and faith that He will take care of you and show you the way. You must not let your will rule your life, but be submissive to God’s will.

Now that you have decided to be committed to God, you are ready for the **THIRD STEP**. This is found in Matthew 6:33: “**SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS...**” To seek is to try to find, search for with diligence, to go to, pursue, investigate, delve into. First means before doing anything else, begin with, preceding all others, from the beginning, foremost, first in place and importance. The kingdom means the realm of God, His rule, authority, foundation of power, sovereign or superior domain. Righteousness is right-doing, equity, justification, holy, just, upright, fair, moral, correct in thoughts and actions, honest.

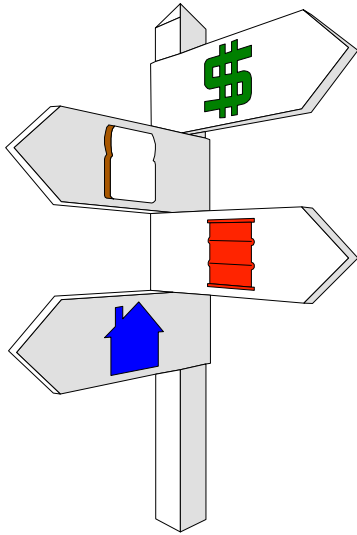
Now is the time to look diligently into what is most important. That vital and most important thing is what it will take for you to live according to the kingdom of God. God’s word will instruct you on how to live the righteous life. Read the **WORD** and allow it to sink into your spirit as a guide you must follow without compromise. Pray for God to give you the knowledge, wisdom and spiritual

understanding that you need.

The **FOURTH STEP** is found in Ecclesiastes 12:13: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” This verse states that you must first have reverence for God and respect Him for who He is then. Then you must keep His Commandments. What are God’s Commandments? Most likely you are familiar with the Ten Commandments that God gave to Israel through Moses. These are the Commandments you are to keep. That is not all. Everything that God tells you to do throughout the whole of the Bible are a part of His commandments. You can not pick and chose the things that you want to do. God has given you the instructions for what you are to do in **HIS WORD**. What can be concluded from this discussion? There is one dependable way to know if you are a Christian. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:4-6). Keep in mind that you are to judge yourself~ not others. You should only be concerned about your own standing and continue helping others to come to the truth without judgement. Either a person is casual and does not really keep the commandments of God or he is committed to God and faithfully keeps **ALL** that God has commanded at **ALL** times. A committed Christian is obvious because, “... By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20). Are you producing fruit for the kingdom of God?

God has a strong message for the Casual Christian. “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16). God will not tolerate a casual or lukewarm approach to following Him. You are wasting your time if you are approaching God in a casual, nonchalant, apathetic, shallow, haphazard, or superficial manner. Now it is time to ask yourself:

ARE YOU A CASUAL CHRISTIAN?
OR
ARE YOU A COMMITTED CHRISTIAN?



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

The following article appeared in the Houston Chronicle

Gay church group looks to the future

**By Tara Dooley
Houston Chronicle Religion Writer**

Gay and lesbian Christians have set many American denominations into a decades-long tailspin as leaders have tried to figure out how to ordain, marry, accept or reject them.

But for members and leaders of the Metropolitan Community Churches - a denomination founded as a spiritual sanctuary for gay Christians - the issue is decided: Gays and lesbians can be ordained, promoted, married and accepted as people of God.

As the denomination gathers in Dallas next week for its biennial General Conference and World jubilee, members will turn their attention to worship, education and planning for a future without its founder and leader, the Rev. Troy Perry. Perry plans to retire in 2005.

"I think one of the undercurrents in this conference will be an appreciation and celebration of his leadership," said the Rev. Dwayne Johnson, pastor of Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church near the Heights.

One day of the meeting, which runs Tuesday-July 6, will be dedicated to business, including the election of a vice moderator who will oversee the transition as Perry leaves his role as leader of the denomination he founded in 1968.

"I want new blood," Perry said about his decision to

step down. "I'll be 65 in two years and I absolutely want our church to move forward and grow."

The assembly also serves as arts gathering, spiritual renewal and worship service for some of the denomination's 46,000 members from 23 countries, Johnson said. Seminars will address topics such as HIV ministry, cross-cultural programs and "Sabbath sexuality." An award will also be given to gay rights activist Barbara Gittins.

The world of gay Christians has been one of the most divisive issues facing American Protestant denominations. The Episcopal church expects a showdown next month over the election of a gay bishop in New Hampshire. The Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson cannot be ordained without approval of the General Convention, and Houston Episcopal bishops have opposed the move.

Recently, the Southern Baptist Convention encouraged its members to help gays and lesbians free themselves "from this destructive life-style." The United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have wrangled with whether to ordain gays and lesbians and perform same-sex unions.

"The very issues that are dividing some of the churches are being decided in society," said Jim Mitulski, the MCC's associate director of leadership at denomination headquarters in West Hollywood, Calif. "Our church has had a catalytic effect on making sure these issues are engaged."

But as the MCC looks to the future, the main issue that continues to divide other American Protestant de-

nominations may become even less of an emphasis for MCC churches.

"I think that our identity has been wrapped up in the issue of homosexuality," Mitulski said. "But it doesn't adequately describe everything we've accomplished."

When Perry founded the church, he often preached about the importance of "coming out" and the need to offer justice and comfort, he said.

But that emphasis has changed in many of the denomination's 300 churches, Johnson said.

"I think the denomination is moving away from a victim mentality - We were banished and had to found our own denomination - to We have something to offer to the ecumenical world."

Certainly the church will continue to tackle topics such as AIDS, sexual identity and progressive Christian theology, church leaders said. But the MCC is also finding more children and heterosexuals in its ranks, leaders said.

In addition, the denomination recently decentralized its structure, creating regions that cross national borders. For example, Houston's two Metropolitan Community Churches share regional leadership with other countries, including Mexico and Nicaragua.

"There are people who want an exciting worship environment that is free of a lot of the legalism and judg-

ment," Johnson said. "We are finding we are a good alternative for people who want that kind of experience."

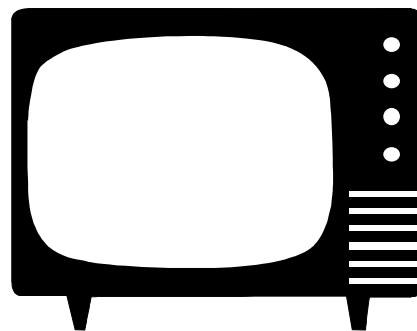
Comment

Homosexuality is an abominable sin. What is homosexuality? It is the act of having sexual relationship with the same gender, a man with another man (gays), or a woman with another woman (lesbians). Homo means same. Let us consider two scriptural references. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense (reward) of their error which was met (due)" Romans 1:26-27). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10).

Society has no right to decide the issues which divide the churches. The Word of God is the authority!

TV Can Push Life Out Of Focus

By Buddy Scott
PASS IT ON



Today I begin with this question: How can an individual use up six and one-half weeks in a year without even realizing it?

Answer: If a person watches TV for three hours per day for 365 days, he or she will have used up 1,095 hours. That sum is more than 45, 24-hour days.

Divide the sum into 40-hour work weeks, and the shock value rises: 1,095 hours is equal to more than 27 work weeks.

Does it dawn on my readers that 27 work weeks is more than half a year of TV viewing? It makes sense

when you take note that three hours of TV viewing is almost equal to half of a work day.

These totals may surprise many, yet something even more astonishing is the loss of what might have been accomplished in those 1,095 hours if they hadn't been siphoned off by TV viewing. If one is watching television programs that are not beneficial to his or her life, to some degree he or she is out of order for the amount of time given to viewing.

Out of order?

Yes, that phrase will do. I think out of order is the

phrase that will grab our attention the most, and I don't think that using it is a stretch.

Have you tried to get a child's attention when he or she is glued to the TV?

Or have you tried to get the attention of a man, woman or teenager who is engrossed in a sports program on TV?

If you have, you know that the mesmerizing effect of TV can be disabling. You might as well display an "out of service" sign on individuals who are that preoccupied with television.

I suppose I experienced one of the most convincing examples of how disabling TVs can be a few years ago when I traveled with my fifth-wheel. Cool afternoons in scenic places had something missing. Sightseers weren't out and about. Tourists were held -up in their RV's watching TV. People who had invested multiplied thousands of dollars to camp out in scenic views were doing what they would have done if they had stayed at home in the cities.

I personally found out how disabling TV viewing can be during the first war with Iraq, the Gulf War.

I became so thoroughly dedicated to the TV that what I could have accomplished in the evenings was sabotaged by my choice to loiter in front of the flickering tube.

The networks and CNN did an admirable job of providing play-by-plays of the war, and they ran frequent video documentaries featuring the sophisticated weaponry being used. Both the war and weapons monopolized my attention. I was unavailable to anyone in my space.

It wasn't pretty for a while.

My daughter, Shelley, who was in her early teens at the time, said "Dad, I don't know why you watch that all the time. It just upsets you."

Her constructive criticism was the beginning of my break with my debilitating behavior.

What I learned from that experience and what I would like to communicate to you is that it is vital to discipline your TV viewing time.

The TV was made for human, and not humankind for the TV. The TV must take its proper and appropriate place in your life and in your family life - a good guest in your home.

There is a Scripture about the sin of omission that can help motivate us: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (i.e., the sin of omission is the commission of negligence before God) (James 4:17).

OUR BEHAVIOR IN GOD'S HOUSE

We think of the church as the House of God! It is the place where we come to worship Him, and He meets with us there. We pray for His Spirit to be with us in the service and to guide us in worship. In God's House, we must act like God and Jesus are present in person. Would we talk and laugh as we sometimes do if we could see God in the church? Or would it seem more sacred to us?

II Chronicles 5:14 tells us how the priests could not stand to minister because of the presence of God, "So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." We should get a greater blessing out of the worship service if we go into the house of God with reverence. God is there, and He wishes to bless and help us.

God has promised that He will be with only two or three when they are gathered together in His name! He is in their midst to comfort and bless them

Some churches have much reverence in their houses of worship. Children are taught to go in and sit down. Very few people talk, even in a whisper, while they are in the church building. Church of God brethren should be the most holy people.

"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). He did not add them to the building but to the great company that make up His elect. If we have been added to the church, we should show it by daily walking with God. In our every action and word, the world should be able to see Christ shining forth into the light we let shine.

At the trial of Christ, Peter cursed and swore. Later, as recorded in Acts 4:13, the people saw by his talk and actions that he was different man. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Does our conduct, wherever we are, or with whomsoever we are shown that we have been with Jesus? Whether we are in the church building or visiting some how, whether at work or play, it should! We should not be anywhere or doing anything that will not show forth his praise and glory. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).



Questions and Answers

Question: Why must all children of God know the scriptures?

Answer: There is no other book like it. The Bible is the only inspired message in man's possession. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). This text alone carries the salvation message. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (verse 15).

Through the Word of God, people believe and are born again." Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23). Only the Bible tells of eternal life for those that are saints. The Bible makes a clear cut definition of what is a saint. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). The Bible will never lose its forcefulness. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The Father in heaven calls his word, "The sword of the Spirit." Without it, we cannot give intelligent answers to the desperate questions of this age. We must know it to resist temptation." Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). To all of us, God has promised unquali-

fied blessings upon the use of His words. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but I shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

The Bible is incomparable. That the child of God should read it of daily strength is without question, but we are going to go a step further. The Bible should be carefully studied by all members of the body of Christ! Are we not to speak "ALL THE SAME THING" concerning the word of God? There is only one word. How can we lead our brethren effectively if we have not an intimate acquaintance with the source of God's truth?

All children of God should study the Bible because the Bible itself teaches this truth.

Moses established the principle in his last message to Israel. "And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest, up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Spiritual decline and revival in Israel fluctuated with the knowledge and teaching of the word of God.

In the days of Jehoshaphat, Bible teaching brought the fear of the Lord upon all the kingdoms around in Judah. "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of

the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people" (II Chronicles 17:9). Revival followed there, and the people followed the word in Joshua's time. Witness also the awakening under Ezra in Nehemiah 8. When the people heard the word of God, the effect was astounding.

The same principle carries in the New Testament. Mary, a simple villager, sat at the feet of Jesus. The Berean church is a model to all of us today. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Notice how this study of the scriptures by the people themselves issued forth in evangelistic blessing.

The church at Antioch is a prime example of a Bible study movement. Paul and Barnabas carried forward a strong teaching program. "...And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Small wonder that the foreign missionary movement of the church was born in this atmosphere. Upon returning from the first journey, Paul and Barnabas immediately launched out on another course of Bible teaching. "Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others" (Acts 15:35).

The Antioch church shows that Bible study can become the fountain head of the world wide blessing. Thus, the Bible teaches that all children of God must be knowledgeable in the word of God.

All children of God should be filled with knowledge of the Bible because of the demands of our time.

Our age is characterized by breathtaking advances in every field except man's relation to man, and his relation to God. Too many are technical experts and biblical numbskulls. Somehow we have run ahead in the physical and retrogressed in the spiritual. The temporal has outstripped, the eternal. The straight fact of either monocular fission shocks no one as much as the atomic scientist working with it. They are afraid, and in evangelistic styles, are preaching coming destruction. Some are wanting the church to get on its feet, because evil men can now unleash powers beyond imagination.

Our hope lies in God, who alone can control the men who control the atom. In such a frightening way, we are

waking up to the fact that all members of the body of Christ must be trained in the Bible.

This generation faces questions undreamed of thirty years ago. We must have Bible answers. Prosperity and its attendant materialistic case have sapped the life out of the church. God's word can rescue us. The cult and isms are doubling their efforts. The Bible can check them. Education is now widespread, and the level of scholarship has risen sharply in the church public. But how can we challenge high school and college graduates with a naive and untrained approach to the world of God? Or can Bible teachings ever grip the age of secularism.

This does not mean that the Bible has become more difficult, or that it has lost its message. Nor does it imply that it is time for new interpretation. God's word is an eternal message, unchanging in its absolute truths. It does mean though, that we must apply its message to the need of each generation. For this generation that means careful preparation and study. The Bible will ever be ahead of the times if we will not hinder it by our ignorance. If it takes two hours to work an algebra problem, can we interpret a deep portion of the word after ten minutes of reflection? If it takes a day to plow a field, does it take less time to absorb a chapter of scripture?

The word given by Paul to Timothy must be considered by all. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). Peter speaks to these times saying, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15).

Question: What did Jesus mean when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Answer: Jesus is not talking about the Holy Spirit in this verse. The child of God is not lacking the Holy Spirit. It is the spirit of the individual man. This spirit always opposes and resists the Holy Spirit. A man who wants his own way and is self-willed is of very little value in the kingdom of God. However, a person who wishes to be led by the power of God and wishes to keep Christ in him, but be poor in that kind of haughtiness so that the kingdom of God can begin in him. "..., Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).



The Philippines

Below are pictured some listeners to a religious rally held at Kiosk of Polanco, Zamboanga del Norte in Mindanao. Below this are the ministers who presented the rally. From left to right are: Elder Salvador R. Oliverio, Jr; Elder Nathaniel Q. Flores; and Elder Orlando V. Obnimaga.



Salinas, California's Lord's Supper Service



LESSON I

MEMORIAL OF THE PASSOVER

Scripture Reading: Exodus 12:37-47.

Golden Text: Exodus 12:42 (first part).

"It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt."

1. When the children of Israel left Egypt, into what land did they go? How many were there on this journey? Exodus 12:37.
2. Did they also have flocks and cattle? Exodus 12:38.
3. Had they prepared food to take with them? Exodus 12:39.
4. For how many years had they sojourned in the land of Egypt? Exodus 12:40-41.
5. What night was to be much observed by the children of Israel and why? Exodus 12:42.
6. What did the Lord call the Passover in Exodus 12:43.
7. Was a bone of the lamb to be broken? Exodus 12:46.
8. Was the whole congregation of Israel to keep the Lord's Passover? Exodus 12:47.

LESSON II

THE PASSOVER TO BE OBSERVED YEARLY

Scripture Reading: Exodus 13:1-10; 17-22.

Golden Text: Exodus 13:10.

"Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year."

1. What did the Lord say were to be His? Exodus 13:1-2.
2. What did Moses tell the people they must remember?

Exodus 13:3.

3. In what month did they come out of Egypt? Exodus 13:4.
4. Where would the Lord bring the Children of Israel, and were they to keep the Passover at the appointed time? Exodus 13:5.
5. What were they to eat for seven days before the Passover? Exodus 13:6-7.
6. What was it to be unto them, and how often were they to keep this ordinance? Exodus 13:9-10.
7. Why did God not lead his people through the land of the Philistines? Through what way did He lead them? Exodus 13:17-18.
8. Where did they first camp? Exodus 13:20.
9. What followed them by day and night? Exodus 13:21-22.

LESSON III

THE LORD LEADS ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: Exodus 14:1-14.

Golden Text: Exodus 14:14.

"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

1. Where did the Lord tell Moses to have the children of Israel camp? Exodus 14:2.
2. What did Pharaoh say about them? Was Pharaoh's heart again hardened and why? Exodus 14:3-4.
3. Did Pharaoh follow the children of Israel? How many chariots and captains did he take with him? Exodus 14:5-8.

- 4. Where did the Egyptians find the Israelites? Exodus 14:9.
- 5. Were the children of Israel afraid? Did they seek the Lord? Exodus 14:10.
- 6. What did they say unto Moses in Exodus 14:11-12.
- 7. What did Moses promise the people that the Lord would do for them? Exodus 14:13-14.

LESSON IV

ISRAELITES PASS THROUGH THE RED SEA

Scripture Reading: Exodus 14:15-31.

Golden Text: Exodus 14:22 (first part).

"And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground:..."

- 1. What did the Lord say to Moses and tell him to do in Exodus 14:15,18?
 - 2. Where did the angel of the Lord move, and what did it cause to happen? Exodus 14:19-20.
- NOTE: This cloud kept the Egyptians from attacking the children of Israel during the night. The Egyptians saw darkness and the Israelites saw light.
- 3. What did the Lord cause to happen when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea? Exodus 14:21.
 - 4. Did the children of Israel go through on dry ground? Who followed them? Exodus 14:22-23.

- 5. What did the Lord cause to trouble the Egyptians? Exodus 14:24-25.
- 6. When Moses again stretched forth his hand, what happened to the water? Exodus 14:26-27.
- 7. Did any of the Egyptians survive? Exodus 14:28.

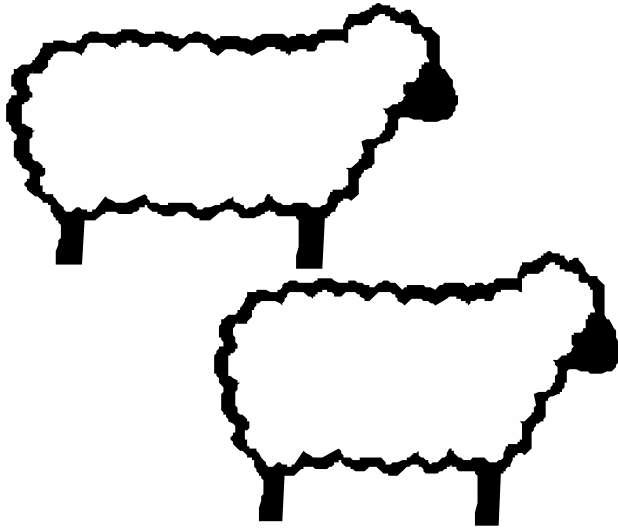
8. The Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians. Did this cause the Israelites to fear and believe the Lord and his servant, Moses? Exodus 14:29-31.

Answer to Bible Friends!

- 1. David-Jonathan
- 2. Andrew-Matthew
- 3. Pharaoh-Joseph
- 4. Daniel-Darius
- 5. Abraham-Lot
- 6. Joshua-Caleb
- 7. Ham-Japheth
- 8. Barnabas-Silas
- 9. Mordecai-Ahasuerus
- 10. Leah-Rachel
- 11. Elijah-Elisha
- 12. Levi-Reuben
- 13. Samuel-Eli
- 14. Elisabeth-Mary
- 15. Thomas-Philip
- 16. Timothy-Paul
- 17. Job-Eliphaz
- 18. Solomon-Hiram
- 19. Bartholomew-John
- 20. James-Peter
- 21. Naomi-Orpah
- 22. Benjamin-Jacob
- 23. Lois-Eunice
- 24. Moses-Aaron

A WHISPER SONG

I want to send a whisper song
 Across the waters blue,
 and say to all the children there,
 "Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!"
 If they should not quite understand
 They'll wonder if it's true;
 But I will keep on whispering still,
 "Jesus loves you! Jesus loves you!"
 "If you want your friends and family to know what God
 is like, let them see what He can make you like."



TWO OF JESUS' LAMBS

Mrs. Brown thought Johnny and Margie were far too young to understand the sermon they heard at church one night. The minister had preached on how two lambs were saved, and how they had helped others to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. Of course, the lambs were a little boy and girl, just like Johnny and Margie.

Johnny and Margie were so unusually quiet as they rode home in the back seat of the car that night from church that Mrs. Brown noticed it, and wondered if they were thinking about the message they had heard.

As soon as they reached home, the children went to their rooms and quietly got ready for bed. Later as usual, Mrs. Brown went to their beds to say goodnight but found both children fast asleep. As she bent over Margie to kiss her goodnight, she noticed a note pinned to Margie's pillow. Looking closely Mrs. Brown read the words, "I wish I was a little lamb too, because I want to be saved," written in Margie's childish handwriting.

"My precious child!" murmured Mrs. Brown, as she stood by Margie's bed, wondering whether to waken her right then or wait until the morning, to show her that the Lord Jesus was her Saviour. Mrs. Brown decided it would be best to wait until the morning, for she was sure the Lord knew all about it, and His all seeing eye had seen the note, even before she had discovered it on Margie's pillow.

In the morning, as soon as Mrs. Brown heard the sound of childish voices, she called Margie to her room.

"Margie, dear, I read the note you had pinned to your pillow last night, and it made me so happy to know that my little girl wants to be saved and to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mrs. Brown then opened her Bible to a verse that Margie could easily read, John 3:16. Aloud, Margie read: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Now what is meant by the world?" asked her mother, to which Margie replied, "Everybody."

"And does everybody include you, Margie?" questioned Mrs.. Brown.

"Yes, it does," agreed Margie.

"Then just read the verse again, and put your own name in that place," said Mother.

And Margie read, "For God so loved Margie that He gave His only begotten Son."

"Isn't it wonderful, my dear children, that God loved you so much that He sent His only Son into the world to die for you and for your sins?" asked Mrs. Brown. Then she asked Margie the direct question, "Do you believe that Jesus died for you?"

"Yes, I do," answered Margie.

"Then according to God's own word, you shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Well, Mother, is there nothing for me to do then but just believe, and I shall be saved? That seems so very easy," said Margie.

"Yes, Margie, there is something," said Mother. "The Bible says: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is your whole duty.' To fear God means to love Him enough that you do not want to disobey Him, or His word."

Johnny was then called to his mother's side, and the precious verses that pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ were then read to him; and like Margie, he too, accepted the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

"Let us thank Him for this wonderful gift," said Mother. So, Johnny and Margie prayed; "Father, we thank Thee for the Lord Jesus who loved us and died for us. Please forgive us for our sins."

What a happy day that was in the Brown home!

BIBLE FRIENDS!

Can you pick out the two friends, or relatives, in each set? This means that the third person was not acquainted with either of the others. Draw lines beneath the name of each pair of friends. How many can you complete within the three minute time limit?

1. DAVID...JUDAH...JONATHAN
2. ANDREW...MATTHEW...FELIX
3. JONAH...PHARAOH...JOSEPH
4. DANIEL...DARIUS...HAMAN
5. ABRAHAM...NEHEMISH...LOT
6. ABEL...JOSHUA...CALEB
7. BELSHAZZAR...HAM...JAPHETH
8. BARNABAS...SILAS...CAESAR
9. MORDECAI...ESAU...AHASUERUS
10. LEAH...DEBORAH...RACHEL
11. SHEW...ELIJAH...ELISHA
12. LEVI...REUBEN...AHAB
13. NOAH...SAMUEL...ELI
14. ELISABETH...RHODA...MARY
15. THOMAS...PHILIP...PUBLIUS
16. TIMOTHY...BARABBAS...PAUL
17. JOB...ISSACHAR...ELIPHAZ
18. SOLOMON...HIRAM...ADAM
19. BARTHOLOMEW...AGRIPPA...JOHN
20. FESTUS...JAMES...PETER
21. NAOMI...ORPAH...HAGAR
22. BENJAMIN...GOLIATH...JACOB
23. SAPPHIA...LOIS...EUNICE
24. MOSES...ISAIAH...AARON

THE LITTLE BIRDS

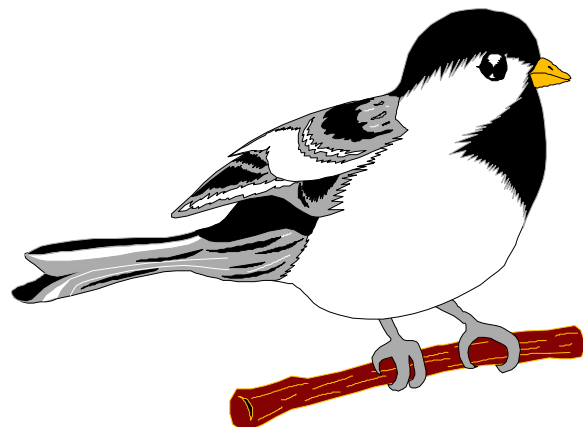
by Vivian G. Ross

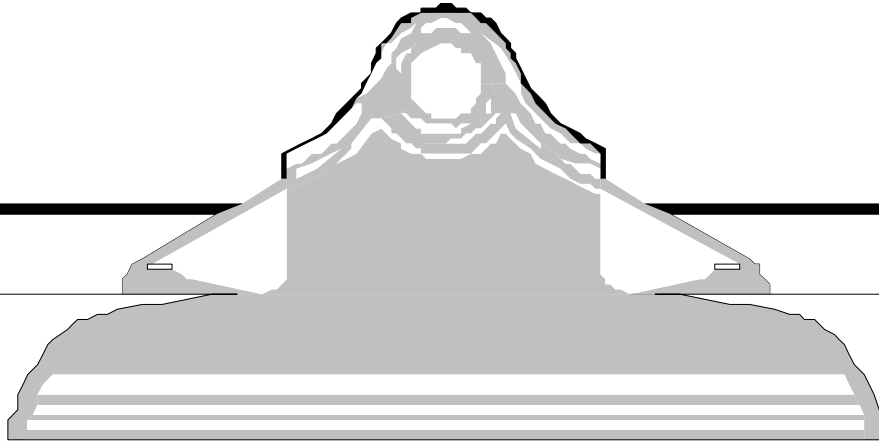
Some birds who spent the summer
 Flying round my house,
 Have gone away this winter
 To the warm and sunny South.
 It seems they got together
 and flew away from here,
 They won't be coming back again
 Till spring comes back, I fear.
 But I will put some crumbs out
 For those who did not go,
 and they will not be hungry
 Even in the snow.

TRUE AND FALSE?

I doubt if you can do these without looking up the references, and some of the answers may surprise you. On the dotted line, write either True or False.

1. The city of Philadelphia is mentioned in the Bible. Revelation 1:11 _____
2. This is our modern city in Pennsylvania. _____
3. In the Jewish church, a lame man could not be a priest. Leviticus 21:18 _____
4. Jesus could not write. John 8:6-8. _____
5. The three men in the fiery furnace wore hats. Daniel 3:21 _____
6. A carbuncle is a red stone. Exodus 28:17 _____
7. St. Paul told women to keep still in church. I Corinthians 14:34-35 _____
8. Jacob had twelve sons and no daughters. Genesis 30:21 _____
9. Noah took only two of each kind of animal into the ark. Genesis 7:2-3 _____
10. Huz and Buz were twin sisters. Genesis 22:21 _____
11. Noah was a woman of the old Testament. Numbers 26:33 _____
12. The Bible says that money is the root of all evil. I Timothy 6:10 _____
13. The Bible says there were three Wise Men. Read Matthew 2:1-12 carefully _____
14. Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding. John 2:1-11 _____
15. Moses married an Ethiopian woman. Numbers 12:1 _____





WAITING FOR YOU

By Angela Smith

Sometimes I long to see your face,
To feel the touch of your embrace.
The way your hand would hold on to mine.
To see your smile and know everything's fine.
The way you'd praise God and worship Him too.
The way I'd see Jesus in everything you do.

I see everyone around me, just giving their love away,
Not even realizing what price they will pay.
But God has convicted my heart and my life,
To wait till the day when I would become your wife.
To date no others, only you.
Not to date until God tells me to.

I refuse to give my love away, without a righteous cause.
But day by day I'm tempted, so I must pray and pause.

I'm praying for you always and long for the day we meet,
When God will send you along to sweep me off my feet.
I can't believe you were made for me, and I was made for you.
And, because I will love you so much, this is what I'll do.

I won't give my love to other guys, because to you it belongs.
Or listen when the world says I should date,
Through magazines and songs.

I'm praying for you always, and I'm writing letters too!
And even though you don't know it yet,
I am waiting here for you.