

The
Advocate
of Truth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Word Keys That Unlock Truth 3
 Our words this month are "brotherly love".

The Year 2005 3-4
 The beginning of a new secular year will be soon upon us.

A Bible Study On Romans Seven 4-6

The Pickle Jar 6-7

The Bride Of Christ 7-8
 Many people do not know who or what is the bride.

Some Thoughts On Fear 9-10
 Here fear does not mean "to be afraid"

Baptism 11-12
 How should the ordinance of baptism be carried out?

One Fold 12-13
 There is one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

Signs Of The Times 14-15
 Cigarette smoking harms almost every organ of the body.

Questions And Answers 16-17
 How can I live above and overcome worldly standards?

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

The Children's Pages 20-23
Sabbath School Lessons
A Story - "Thin Ice"
Games and Puzzles

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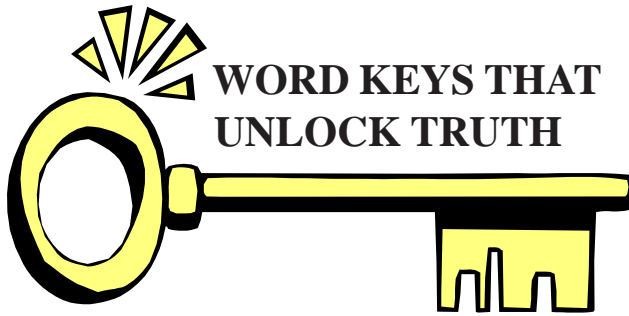
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The Lord's Supper will be held on Thursday evening, after sundown, on March 24, 2005 (Roman time) which is the beginning of March 25th (Bible Time).



BROTHERLY LOVE

In the New Testament church, believers thought of and addressed each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more" (I Thessalonians 4:9-10). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22).

Christian brotherhood comes from our mutual rela-

tionship with the Father and His only Son. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied" (I Peter 1:2).

As we participate in the grace of Christ, we are all made sons and daughters with Him and fellow heirs of the Father's blessings. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). "Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:5-7). See also Romans 8:14-17. Because of this brotherhood, we are taught by the Father to love one another. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11).

"Let brotherly love continue" (Hebrews 13:1).

THE YEAR 2005

BY BOND TENNANT

Happy New Year!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

The beginning of another secular year is always an appropriate time to consider anew those things which are related to our standing before our Lord as His children to whom belong the exceeding great and precious promises of the divine nature. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of our divine nature, having escaped the cor-

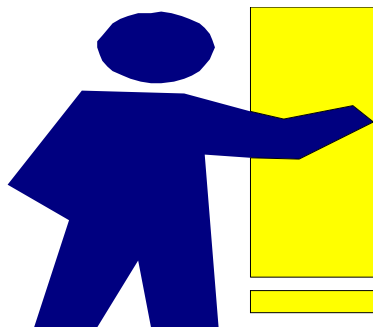
ruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

We are told to abound in the work of our Lord! "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thessalonians 2:12-13). Paul indicates the relationship of our abounding in love toward one another, and toward all to having our hearts established so that we will be steadfast and unmovable.

If we are abounding children of God, we will be following the admonition of Peter. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-8). In verses ten and

eleven, Peter concludes, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Have we measured up to these principles of Christian character during the year that has ended? Are we zealously determined that in 2005 we will be more faithful to our Lord, the Truth, and the brethren, than we have been in 2004?



A Bible Study On ROMANS SEVEN

Romans 7:7-25

Before I can get into the full meaning of the seventh chapter of Romans, I want to call your attention to the definition of the words "sin" and "law." If we can settle these two definitions, it will help us to better comprehend this wonderful chapter. By the word "sin" is meant "the transgression of God's law." "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).

The word "law" means God's commandments which include the Ten Commandments. This is the apostle's own definition in verse seven when he quotes the tenth commandment of God's holy Ten Laws. "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, THOU SHALT NOT COVET." See also Exodus 20:17 and Romans 13:7-10.

Now then, let us go to the heart of the seventh chapter of Romans which very few people understand. One of the main reasons for this is that they did not define the words "sin" and "law" correctly. Everyone that is born is born to die because the death penalty has been placed upon every individual. "For as in Adam all die...," (I Corinthians 15:22). So we are bound to the Ten Commandments as long as we live a sinful life daily. When we decide to come to Christ, we are born again through baptism. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:8). "For if by one

man's offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the fight of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

So when we die to sin and are born again "by the operation of God", we are brought into a new experience with God and His Son, Jesus. See I Peter 3:21 and Colossians 2:12. We are living in the experience of a new life in Christ. We are also challenged by a new loyalty to Christ. We have dropped all other loyalties and surrender completely to Jesus Christ. We are now one or united to the Body of Christ. This union with the Son of God, by faith, (and operation of God) liberates us from sin and self. This is "liberty in Christ." This liberty from sin and death is set so vehemently by the apostle Paul in this chapter.

The enemy will contest every act a faithful believer employs to enjoy this liberty. Perhaps no passage in the word of God is more difficult to expound upon than this one. Some wonder if it refers to the Apostle Paul as a non-Christian or as a saved man. Verses 7 to 13 refer to Paul in his unconverted days; all the verbs are in the past tense. Verses 14 to 25 refer to his experience after conversion.

The apostle is telling us here of two things:

Liberty from Guilt and Sin
(verses 7 to 13)

Liberty from the Grip of Sin

(verses 14:25)

He points out that before he could know liberty from the guilt of sin, the Ten Commandments had a work to do in relation to the matter of sin. The law revealed sin in him. "I had not known sin, but by the law." To those of his readers who might identify the law with sin, because of Paul's previous reference to "dying to the law," he proceeds to show that the guilt of sin is occasioned by revealing power of the law. Sinners need to hear this under claps of Mt. Sinai from where the law was spoken and written by God, to make them feel the wickedness of sin.

The Law has the power to reveal sin in us. Your face could be thoroughly dirty without your being conscious of it, but the moment I confront you with a mirror you would at once be aware of your uncleanness and seek cleansing.

"But who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in His deed" (James 1:25).

The Law not only revealed sin him, but also aroused sin in him - "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead" (Roman 7:8). In I Corinthinians 15:56, the Apostle Paul says, "...the strength of sin is the law." How true this is in experience! The more we are confronted with the law, the more our sinful nature rebels and the greater is the consciousness of guilt. Sin is like a serpent coiled as if dead in our body, but the moment it is aroused we are under the Law. If we do not sin and do not succumb to temptation, we are not under the law but under grace.

Notice also that the Law condemned sin in the apostle. "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died...and by it slew me" (Romans 7:9-11). The apostle Paul here describes how he was convinced of sin when the Spirit of God applied the standard of God's royal, holy, just and good Law. He was a dead man because he was under the condemnation of God. Paul has been showing how God uses His "holy, just, and good Commandments in order that sin might appear" exceeding sinful." Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good . Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment

might became exceeding sinful" (Roman 7:12-13). The effect of God's Law acting on our carnal natures manifest not only the fact of the disease but exceeding malignity of the disease. Is it any wonder that we need liberty from the guilt of sin? That is why we come to Jesus, when we trust Him and keep His words and do what He said, the guilt removed and we have no more consciousness of guilt. (Read Hebrews 10:1-2)

Paul now proceeds to show us that there must be **Liberty From the Grip of Sin By the Perfect Law of Liberty.**

This is God's grand purpose for His own people. Are you enjoying it? God would have us not only to know forgiveness of sin, but freedom from the power of sin. Paul shares with us in these verses what he knew about the power of sin in his life and how it worked. The way it worked in Paul's life is exactly the same way as it works in ourselves. Let us see how deliverance comes.

He speaks, first, of the conflict of sin. Read Romans 7:15-21. What a ding-dong battle it is!

What an up-and-down experience has been his. "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Roman 7:15). The little pronoun "I" occurs no less than thirty-two times, and the sum of all this self-effort against sin is defeat and failure. Paul is speaking here to show other children of God the secret of Divine deliverance. Have you learned it?

The Apostle Paul knew something of the captivity of sin. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin...but I see another law...the law of sin which is in my members" (Roman 7:14:23). Paul says, "I am carnal." The term "carnal is never used to describe an unconverted person, but rather a Christian who is living below the proper standard of Christianity, or in other words, a Christian who still is under the power of the flesh or has still a fleshly inclination. A Biblical example of this type of person is found in I Corinthians 3:1. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

The apostle now moves to the climax of this wonderful chapter and tells us about the conquest of sin. "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but the with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24-25). The word "wretched" mean wrecked through ex-

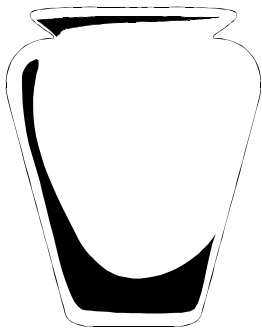
haustion of hard labor. It describes a man who has fought hard to free himself from captivity and has utterly failed. But once all self-life has ceased, and his own notions to help himself have failed, he finally makes a frantic appeal for a Deliverance. Jesus Christ, the Mighty Son of God, who has been standing by, waiting to be asked, steps in and frees the believer from the grip of sin. Jesus frees us from the grip of transgression of God's righteous Law. He takes us out from under the law and saves us by His grace.

The Lord Jesus liberates, not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the grip of sin. To be saved by Christ Jesus means not only pardon for transgressing the Ten Commandment Law but also to live free with power. Not

only forgiveness but "...sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace" (Roman 6:14). "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

The provision of liberty and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ is complete and perfect. Jesus who saves (Matthew 1:21). Christ who indwells (Colossians 1:27), and the Lord who rules (Revelation 19:16). When we look up to the Lord Jesus Christ, we can then say with the Apostle Paul, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

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THE PICKLE JAR

The pickle jar, as far back as I can remember, sat on the floor beside the dresser in my parents' bedroom. When he got ready for bed, Dad would empty his pockets and toss his coins into the jar. As a small boy, I was always fascinated at the sounds the coins made as they were dropped into the jar. They landed with a cheery jingle when the jar was almost empty. Then the tones gradually muted to a dull thud as the jar was filled. I used to squat on the floor in front of the jar and admire the copper and silver circles that glinted like a pirate's treasure when the sun poured through the bedroom window. When the jar was filled, Dad would sit at the kitchen table and roll the coins before taking them to the bank. Taking the coins to the bank was always a big production. Stacked neatly in a small cardboard box, the coins were placed between Dad and me on the seat of his old truck. Each time, as we drove to the bank, Dad would look at me hopefully. "These coins are going to keep you out of the textile mill, son. You're going to do better than me. This old mill town's not going to hold you back." Also every time, as he slid the box of rolled coins across the counter at the bank toward the cashier, he would grin proudly. "These are for

my son's college fund. He'll never work at the mill all his life like me." We would always celebrate each deposit by stopping for an ice cream cone. I always got chocolate. Dad always got vanilla. When the clerk at the ice cream parlor handed Dad his change, he would show me the few coins nestled in his palm. "When we get home, we'll start filling the jar again". He always let me drop the first coins into the empty jar. As they rattled around with a brief, happy jingle, we grinned at each other. "You'll get to college on pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters, he said. "But you'll get there. I'll see to that." Ten years passed, and I finished college and took a job in another town. Once, while visiting my parents I used the phone in their bedroom, and noticed that the pickle jar was gone. It had served it's purpose and had been removed. A lump rose in my throat as I stared at the spot beside the dresser where the jar had always stood. My dad was a man of few words, and never lectured me on the values of determination, perseverance, and faith. The pickle jar had taught me all these virtues far more eloquently than the most flowery of words could have done. When I married, I told my wife, Susan, about the significant part the lowly pickle

jar had played in my life as a boy. In my mind, it defined more than anything else, how my dad had loved me. No matter how rough things got at home, Dad continued to doggedly drop his coins into the jar. Even the summer when Dad got laid off from the mill, and Mama had to serve dried beans several times a week, not a single dime was taken from the jar. On the contrary, as Dad looked across the table at me, pouring catsup over my beans to make them more palatable, he became more determined than ever to make a way out for me. "When you finish college, Son," he told me, his eyes glistening, "You'll never have to eat beans again..unless you want to."

Soon after our daughter, Jessica, was born, we spent a day with my parents. After dinner, Mom and Dad sat next to each other on the sofa, taking turns cuddling their first grandchild. Jessica began to whimper softly, and Susan took her from her Dad's arms. "She probably needs to be changed," she said, carrying the baby into my parent' bedroom to diaper her. When Susan came back into the living room, there was a strange mist in her eyes. She handed Jessica back to Dad before taking my hand and

leading me into the room. "Look," she said softly, her eyes directing me to a spot on the floor beside the dresser. To my amazement, there, as if it had never been removed, stood the old pickle jar, the bottom already covered with coins. I walked over to the pickle jar, dug down into my pocket, and pulled out a fistful of cons. With a gamut of emotions choking me, I dropped the coins not the jar. I looked up and saw that Dad, carrying Jessica, had slipped quietly into the room. Our eyes locked, and I knew he was feeling the same emotions I felt. Neither one of us could speak.

This truly touched my heart...I know it has yours as well. Sometimes we're so busy adding up our troubles that we forget to count our blessings. Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture, you can change a person's life, for better or for worse. God puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some way. Look for good in others. The best and most beautiful things cannot be seen or touched - they must be felt with the heart.

Adapted from the internet

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

BY SEPTIMUS JOHN

Much has been said and written about the bride of Christ, and although the scriptures are very clear on who she is, yet it is one of the most misunderstood topics today. Let us go to the scriptures to see what the Bible says on the subject.

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away into the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:9-10).

Here John was called to see the bride of Christ, and what he saw was not a woman, neither any human being,

but the holy Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.

Galatians 4:26 says, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." If we do have a mother, then it is important that we should have a father also. Who does the Bible say is our father? Isaiah 9:6 gives us the answer. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace". Here He is called the everlasting father, while Galatians calls Jerusalem our mother.

Let us see what John 21:5 calls the church. "Then Jesus said unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They

answered him, No."

Here Jesus calls us children, and will he get married to us, his children? Certainly not.

Let us read Ephesians 5:25-27. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. See also II Corinthians 11:2 which says: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ".

These two scriptures show clearly that the church has to be presented to Christ in spotless condition. What then would He be doing with a spotless church, a church that He called His children? The answer is found in Revelation 19:7-8. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The bridegroom is therefore responsible for providing the bride with all her needs, therefore the church has to be presented to Christ spotless, to adorn his bride, the Holy City.

Matthew 22:2-13 has some interesting information to share with us, and it reads as follows: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage

for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants. The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. . . And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servant, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

These verses show clearly that the church will be guests in the marriage, while Revelation 21:9-10 presents the great city, the holy Jerusalem as the bride of Christ.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

SOME THOUGHTS ON FEAR

BY CAROL BUECHNER



Say the word fear. What comes to your mind? Do you see visions of frightening things that cause anxiety,

worry and apprehension? Perhaps you have a feeling of doubt, danger and being scared. It doesn't seem like very

pleasant circumstances. You may call to mind particular happenings that caused you great fear. Examine the word fear in the following Bible verse: "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you" (I Samuel 12:24). Does fear in this verse mean to be afraid of or have unpleasant, apprehensive or anxious thoughts about the Lord? No, it has a completely different meaning.

The meaning for the word FEAR as used in I Samuel is: revere, reverential trust (including hatred of evil), show devotion toward, regard as one worthy of high honor, tender feelings for, profound respect, esteem, admiration of, look upon as holy because of character, adoring, awe, merit in one being honored. The meaning of the word awe adds further meaning: a feeling of respect or wonder inspired by greatness, superiority and grandeur. The word revere enhances the understanding of awe: an attitude of deep respect and love especially for what is sacred. What can be concluded about fearing God? You trust Him without doubt, you are devoted being His servant, you regard Him highly because of how He is-The Almighty God, The creator, The Great I AM. You honor Him and esteem Him. You love Him above all else. You listen to Him and follow His instructions. Add your own conclusions now.

Turning to the Bible, you will see that there are definite benefits to fearing God. The following scriptures should leave no doubt in your mind how important this fear is:

(1) Proverbs 1:7: "The fear of the Lord is **THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE...**"

(2) Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the **BEGINNING OF WISDOM...**"

(3) Proverbs 3:7-8: "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It **SHALL BE HEALTH TO THY NAVEL, AND MARROW TO THY BONES.**"

(4) Proverbs 16:6: "...By the fear of the Lord **MEN DEPART FROM EVIL.**"

(5) Proverbs 10:27: The fear of the Lord **PROLONGETH DAYS:** but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

(6) Proverbs 14:26: "In the fear of the Lord **IS STRONG CONFIDENCE AND HIS CHILDREN SHALL HAVE A PLACE OF REFUGE.**"

(7) Proverbs 14:27: "The fear of the Lord **IS A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, TO DEPART FROM THE SNARES OF DEATH.**"

(8) Proverbs 15:16: "**BETTER IS LITTLE** (living in peace) (these words added for meaning) with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

(9) Proverbs 19:23: "The fear of the Lord **TENDETH TO LIFE: AND HE THAT HATH IT SHALL ABIDE SATISFIED; HE SHALL NOT BE VISITED WITH EVIL.**"

(10) Proverbs 22:4: "By humility and the fear of the Lord **ARE RICHES, AND HONOUR, AND LIFE.**"

(11) Psalm 19:9: "The fear of the Lord **IS CLEAN, ENDURING FOR EVER...**"

(12) Psalm 145:19: "**HE WILL FULFIL THE DESIRE OF THEM THAT FEAR HIM: HE ALSO WILL HEAR THEIR CRY, AND WILL SAVE THEM.**"

(13) Ecclesiastes 8:12-13: "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it **SHALL BE WELL WITH THEM THAT FEAR GOD**, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God."

(14) Psalm 25:14: "The **SECRET Of the LORD** is with them that fear him; and **HE WILL SHOW THEM HIS COVENANT.**"

Looking back over these scriptural passages, you can see the many advantages of fearing God. They include: knowledge, wisdom, health, protection from evil, prolonged days, confidence and refuge for you and your family, life instead of death, peace, satisfaction, riches, honor, endurance, desires met, things will go well for you and you will have safety. This is only a small sampling of the benefits of fearing God. As you read His word, add to this list.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses is instructing the Israelites on how they are to live. Examination of a passage from chapter six, will help you to better understand how to fear the Lord and what you need to do. "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach

you, that ye might do them in the land wither ye go to posses it: **THAT THOU (1) MIGHTEST FEAR THE LORD THY GOD, (2) TO KEEP ALL HIS STATUTES AND HIS COMMANDMENTS,** which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, **ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE;** that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee. .And thou **(3) SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT. (4) AND THESE WORDS, WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, SHALL BE IN THINE HEART: (5) AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, (6) AND SHALT TALK OF 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 (7) SHALT BIND THEM FOR A SIGN UPON THINE HAND, AND (8) SHALT WRITE THEM UPON THE POSTS OF THY HOUSE, AND ON THY GATES"** (verses 1-3, 5-9). This passage could be a formula to help you live your life the way God wants you to. Starting with the fear of God, you keep all of his commandments and laws that are written in the Bible, love Him completely, teach God's word to your family, take the Word of God everywhere you go, have the Word bound in your hands to keep you properly occupied, memorize God's word and have them written about your environment for reminders to keep them. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses repeats these instructions many times. In Deuteronomy 10:12-13 he summarizes, "And now, Israel (child of God-added by author), what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" There is no doubt that these instructions are to be followed if you want to please God. Read the book of Deuteronomy, and make note of the many times Moses

repeats these vital words.

Are there examples in the Bible of men that feared God? Again, the scriptures will give you the answer. "And he (the angel of the Lord) said (to Abraham,) Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12). "And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God" (Genesis 42:18). "Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and had set upon the doors, and the porters and the singers, and the Levities were appointed, That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many" (Nehemiah 7:1-2). "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). "So also Christ glorified not himself...Who in the day of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (Hebrews 5:5,7). Yes, there are many examples of men that feared God. It is an important factor in the lives of God's servants. As you continue to study the scriptures, you will find many more examples of those who feared God.

The question now is: Do you fear God? Do your actions and your words reflect that you revere God and that you are devoted to Him? Do you trust Him with all your heart? Are you in awe of His Holiness? Do you truly realize that God is the great Creator and deserves your worship and praise? Are you willing to do His will and not your own? Do you LOVE HIM above everything else?

"LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER: FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE DUTY OF MAN."

Ecclesiastes 12:13



BAPTISM

What is baptism, and who should be baptized? Before our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He gave the Great Commission to His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Lord Jesus Christ): Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).

It was the Lord's desire that, as His servants went throughout the world with the Gospel, they should baptize those who received the message. Baptism is an ordinance instituted by the Lord Himself. This raises two questions. First, how is the ordinance of baptism carried out? Second, what is the meaning of baptism?

In order to find a true answer to the first, we turn to Acts 8:26-39. There we find a servant of the Queen of Ethiopia riding along in his chariot, and reading the book of Isaiah, chapter 53 in the Old Testament. This man was a sincere seeker for the truth, and so God instructed His servant, Philip, to speak with him. Philip told him how the Lord Jesus had died so that sinners might be saved. The traveler believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then asked Philip if he could be baptized. In as much as the man had truly believed on Christ, Philip agreed to baptize him. The chariot was therefore halted near a body of water. Let us notice verses 38 and 39 carefully: "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Now what is the true significance of this ceremony which was carried out so simply along that western highway many years ago, and which continues to be performed to this very day?

1. First of all, it is an act of obedience to the ex-

pressed will of the Lord Jesus which we have seen in Matthew 28:19. Its purpose is not to put away the filth of the flesh, but rather to give the child of God a good conscience toward God, knowing that he has obeyed the Lord's will. "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). Only to see who have heard and believed should be baptized. "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

2. Secondly, it is a symbol or picture of a spiritual truth. Since Christ died as a substitute for the believer, it is equally true that the believer died with the Lord Jesus. In other words, when Christ died, I died. When He was buried, I was buried. When He arose, I arose. The child of God has died to sin, to the world and to self. He has died to all that He was by nature, and from now on God no longer sees him in his sins, but sees him in Christ, risen from the dead, and possessing the resurrection life of Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I Live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Thus when a child of God is baptized, he is making a public confession that he has taken his place with Christ in death and burial, and that henceforth he shall seek to show to all that he possesses the life of Christ. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:1-2). The truly baptized person is the one who has not

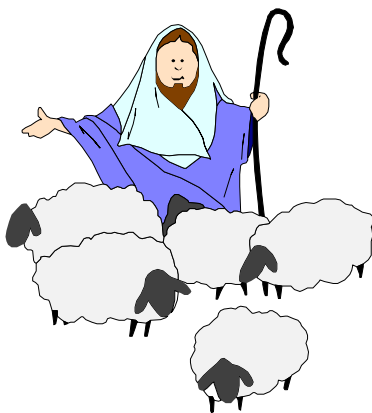
only been baptized in literal water, but whose life shows that the flesh, or old nature, has been put in the place of death. Baptism must be a matter of the heart, as well as an outward profession.

In the early days of the church, when a believer was baptized, he was often persecuted and murdered in a short time. Yet whenever others were saved, they too stepped forward to fill up the ranks of the martyrs by being baptized. Today, in some countries, baptism is the signal for

the beginning of terrible persecution. In these countries, a believer will be tolerated as long as he confesses Christ only with his lips. But whenever he publicly confesses Christ in baptism, the enemies of Christ take up their battle against him.

Each one who is truly baptized will enjoy the same experience the Ethiopian eunuch did. It is written of him that he went on his way rejoicing.

Contributed



ONE FOLD

BY SEPTIMUS JOHN

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." That's the quotation from I Corinthians 12:13 which clearly indicate to us that, we being led by the same Spirit, should speak the same thing. I John 4:1 asks us to try other spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Ephesians 1:22-23 states that God hath put all things under Jesus' feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Therefore the persecution that Saul unleashed upon the church in Acts 9:1-5 was claimed by Jesus to be upon himself. "And Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Then Listen to Paul's statement in I Corinthians 1:12-13. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul: and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

It is evident that a divided body will surely die, so in order that the body of Christ, the church, should continue to exist, it has to remain as one.

Let us look at John 15:1-6 in support of the above statement. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them in the fire, and they are burned."

Any church that is not connected to the true vine, the body which Jesus purchased with His blood, Acts 20:28, will soon surely perish. Ephesians 4:4-5 says "There is

one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. The one faith spoken of here is the same one that Jude 3 is asking us to contend for, which was once delivered to the saints.

Matthew 13:45-46 reads as follows. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking godly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." It is very clear that Jesus purchased only one church, the Church of God: Acts 20:28, when he died on Calvary's tree. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

I Peter 1:18-19 says; "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Only one church is correct, my friend.

Let us turn to Isaiah 65:15 on our journey to find the Bible name for the church." And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." Isaiah 62:2 says: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." Therefore in John 17:11, Jesus named the church himself when he said: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Ephesians 3:14-15 reads like this: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

It is well known through the scriptures that the Church of God is the Bible name for the church, and because of this many denominations are holding the name. Isaiah 4:1 says: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."

The name Church of God is correct, but to identify the body of Christ among so many churches of God, one needs to look for the foundation upon which the city is

built. Ephesians 2:19-20 says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets...." (I Corinthians 12:28). How many apostles are there? Luke 6:12-13; "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."

How many prophets are there? Luke 10:1. "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come." We are called upon to build upon the foundation of the twelve and seventy with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. Matthew 7:24-27 asks us to build our house upon a rock: Not on sinking sand.

Revelation 12:1 tells us that a woman was seen clothed with the sun, and moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The twelve stars here represents the twelve apostles whom the Lord expects to meet in his church at his return.

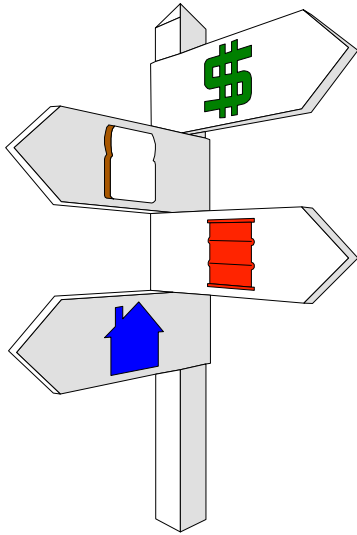
Let us now quote John 10:16. "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

In Revelation 18:4 Jesus says: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The call is now, to come out from false doctrine, or you will suffer with her when the Lord returns.

Jesus told Peter that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church (Matthew 16:18). Therefore the church will go and has gone through all persecutions and it will be ready to welcome her Lord at His return.

Paul speaking in I Corinthians 3:11 says: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ".

May God bless you as you seek to obtain and maintain a place in the Church, the body of Christ.



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.

Report on smoking: 'It's even worse' Toxins linked to series of illnesses

**by Marc Kaufman
Washington Post**

WASHINGTON - Cigarette smoking significantly harms almost every major organ of the body and has been directly linked to even more illnesses, including leukemia, cataracts, pneumonia and cancers of the kidney, cervix, pancreas and stomach.

Yet 45 million Americans still smoke and the rate at which they are quitting has slowed significantly in recent years.

Forty years after the first groundbreaking surgeon general's report on smoking, which said that cigarettes caused lung cancer and chronic bronchitis, Surgeon General Richard Carmona on Thursday gave his assessment of the state of scientific knowledge about cigarette smoking. His conclusions were stark.

"We've known for decades that smoking is bad for your health, but this report shows that it's even worse," he said. "The toxins from cigarette smoke go to everywhere the blood flows."

The report, which cites 1,600 scientific studies into the effects of tobacco, described findings that associate cigarette smoking with colorectal, liver and prostate cancer, as well as erectile dysfunction.

Carmona said that research has shown that low tar

and low nicotine cigarettes do little or nothing to minimize the harm of tobacco. "The science is clear," he said, "The only way to avoid the health hazards of smoking is to quit completely or to never start smoking."

Despite the report's strong words about the known consequences of cigarette smoking, which is estimated to cause 440,000 premature deaths annually, Carmona was reluctant to discuss some of the congressional and international initiatives under way to reduce smoking.

He declined to offer an opinion about pending legislation that would give the Food and Drug Administration regulatory authority over tobacco, about state initiatives to ban indoor smoking and about whether the administration plans to send the international treaty on tobacco control to the Senate for ratification.

This reluctance was in sharp contrast to his congressional testimony last year, when he said he would "support banning or abolishing tobacco products. I see no need for many tobacco products in society."

Carmona's hesitancy Thursday to discuss policy issues led Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, to say, "Neither Congress's nor the administration's action on tobacco are consistent with serious findings of the surgeon general's report. Much more needs to be done."

M. Cass Wheler, chief executive of the American Heart Association, said the report should inspire more aggressive tobacco control measures. "At the state level," she said. "We should continue doing what has been demonstrated over and over to be effective: Raise the price of tobacco through excise taxes, ban smoking in all workplaces and other public places and use money from the

Master Settlement Agreement (with tobacco companies) to fund comprehensive prevention programs."

Although aggressive antismoking programs have reported success in states including California and Massachusetts, the overall national smoking rate appears to be stable.

A report for the Centers for Disease Control and prevention released Thursday said that the 22.5 percent of U.S. adults described themselves as smokers in 2002, down slightly from 22.8 in 2001.

Comment

We have featured articles in this column on smoking before. Let us remember that our bodies are the temples of God. God will destroy those who destroy His temple with impure habits!

Studies:

Alcohol, drugs may kill fetal brain cells

**by Tina Hesman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

SEATTLE - Prenatal exposure to alcohol, club drugs and environmental toxins, such as lead, may kill fetal brain cells and cause mental health problems, including schizophrenia, late in life, researchers say.

The research results were presented Friday at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"We've known for 30 years that alcohol can have deleterious effects on the developing fetal nervous system. And for 30 years we've been trying to understand why," said Dr. John Olney, a neuroscientist at Washington university in St. Louis.

In humans, the brain goes through a growth spurt, which starts toward the end of the second trimester of pregnancy and continues through the first three years of life.

During the growth support, new brain cells are added, connections form and dissolve between the brain cells, and some unnecessary cells are killed off.

Olney's research with infant mice indicates that brain cells called neurons are particularly vulnerable to committing suicide suffering the brain's growth support. Alco-

hol and drugs, such as anesthesia or anti-convulsants, interfere with neuter and transmitters including glutamate, child excites brain cells, and GBA, a brain chemical that inhibits neuron activity, Olney said. When those brain chemicals can't do their jobs, developing neurons shut down and die.

Olney and his colleagues have discovered that low levels of alcohol can accelerate brain cell suicide to two to four times the normal rate. A blood alcohol level of 0.07 - just below the legal intoxication limit - sustained for half an hour to an hour is enough to cause the brain damage. That blood alcohol level is about the equivalent of two cocktails, Olney said. The damage first appears in an area involved in controlling movement called the audate nucleus, and in the cerebral cortex, the brain's "central intelligence agency," within four hours of alcohol exposure, Olney said.

A study of 415 patients who had been diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome or fetal alcohol effects indicates that early brain damage can cause problems late in life.

Over 90 percent of the children, adolescence and deluges in the study have mental health problems, said Ann Strissgtuh of the University of Washington. The problems range from attention deficit disorder in 60 percent of the children and adolescents, depression in 40 percent to 50 percent of the teenagers and adults, and psychotic behavior in about 30 percent of the adults. About 25 percent of adults with fetal alcohol problems had attempted suicide. And only 11 of the 90 adults in the study were able to live and work independently, Strissgtuth said.

Comment

The intake of alcohol does damage to the temple of God which is our bodies.

The Positive Count

Count your blessings instead of your crosses,
Count your gains instead of your losses,
Count your joys instead of your woes,
Count your friends instead of your foes,
Count your courage instead of your fears,
Count your laughs instead of your tears,
Count your full years instead of your lean,
Count the good things instead of the mean.



Questions and Answers

Question: How can I live above and overcome worldly standards?

Answer: The Holy Scriptures contain the most powerful words ever given to mankind! When we learn of the fulfillment of the Bible prophecies, we begin to understand the immeasurable love of God towards His people and also His wrath upon all who reject His will in their lives.

When the child of God reads and seeks for the Lord through His word, he comes to understand that what he is searching for is only found by "living above" the worldly standards so prevalent around us. It is this desire to live above which will cause the believer to come to grips with the emotions described in three words. These three words are responsibility, inability and possibility.

RESPONSIBILITY

Through Bible reading, the child of God will come face to face with the will of God which is revealed from beginning to end in the Bible. The Ten Commandments are found expressed in the entirety from Genesis to Revelation. The various examples of disobedience, or transgression of God's commandments, have been recorded to reveal unto the reader in a most understandable manner the end result of transgression. Even among secular nations around us we find where certain points of God's Royal law are endorsed among the people for orderly living. As we read in the New Testament, we learn of the life of Jesus Christ and how perfect He lived in word and

deed. Throughout His life, Jesus kept the Commandments, and by His life He magnified them. All of the deeds that Jesus did which we find recorded in the New Testament writings are "the testimony of Jesus Christ." Read Revelation 12:17. We find in this verse the requirement of a Saint; namely the Commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Herein, the child of God recognizes a "responsibility" towards God and his fellowman. As we read how Jesus conducted Himself, and the admonition to do likewise, in the Apostolic Letters, we understand our responsibility is living in the same manner if we are to have eternal life. Jesus's disciples recognized their responsibility. A good example is found in the record of Peter. Peter said to Jesus, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I." These words Peter spoke after Jesus foretold of His approaching crucifixion in Mark 14:27-29. We know how Peter even used the sword when they came to take Jesus in the garden. See John 18:10-11. After Jesus admonished Peter, we find him only watching as a bystander and even denying his association with the Lord. Thus, we see Peter as one who felt his responsibility, but was unable to perform that responsibility. Peter was devoted but defeated. This brings us to the second word which is "inability."

INABILITY

When the believer comes to Christ through His word and recognizes his responsibility to do God's will, he will also realize his "inability" to completely perform that will

of God. This "inability" is due to the lack of the Holy Spirit of God within him. Jesus stated this truth when He said, "for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). The one who would attempt to follow Jesus' footsteps without the indwelling Christ is facing an impossibility. Through baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the laying on of hands by the elders, this "inability" becomes a "possibility". We now have the next word for consideration in the word of God.

POSSIBILITY

All the "Possibilities" in the word of God begin with the Lord Jesus Christ. "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" (John 3:16). The Apostle Paul wrote, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippian 4:13). Paul knew well that there are no limitations when it comes to performing the will of God and labouring in the "vineyard" with "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Again, we see the example of Peter who was among those filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Because of the indwelling Spirit within the apostle Peter, his sermon that day was so powerful that about three thousand souls were baptized and added to the church. Peter went on and did many wonderful things to further the gospel message. When it became necessary, he even gave up his life for the Lord Jesus. Thus, we understand how strong Peter became through the indwelling Christ.

INABILITY TODAY

Do God's people feel inabilities today? Are there times in our lives when we tend to place limitations on our lives in the things we do for the Lord? We do know that these feelings are very real within us even after baptism, and if allowed, they will become a great hindrance in the work of the Gospel! The Apostle Paul was most aware of these feelings when he wrote, "...we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (II Corinthians 7:5). These feelings are experienced by every child of God. These things are a part of the "old man" which Paul mentions in Romans 6:6. James wrote of these things when he said, "From whence comes wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1). These things must be crucified in our lives that we may attain the higher things of Jesus Christ.

One of greatest hindrances in the Body of Christ to-

day is a "can't-do" attitude. At the top of the "can't-do" list is the thought that we cannot keep the Commandments of God. When that very thought is expressed, it will tone-down or destroy everything the word of God attends for. It represents a negative attitude when only a positive approach should be manifested. These negative feelings should be quickly put away from our hearts and minds. Paul says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14). In verse 12 Paul further writes, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." It is necessary for the child of God to "live above" the inabilities suggested by the old man from within. The prescription for "living above" is a very simple one. It is the spending of more time in God's word and prayer. Herein lies the only manner in which every child of God may draw himself closer to God and receive the necessary strength and ability to do the will of God in his life.

There is an example of becoming stronger and closer which is found in the construction of a suspension bridge. The problem was to get the first cable across the gorge. This was accomplished by first getting a kite into the air on a day with favorable wind and allowing the kite to reach the other side. After the kite string was secured on the other side, a cord was then brought across on the string. After the cord was secure, a rope followed by the cable was brought across the gorge. Thus, the tie was made, strengthened and a secure place was built for the suspension bridge. It is in this same manner that the child of God increases in spiritual strength and spirit, thus securing a closer walk with the Lord. Christ within us could be representative of that cable which keeps the bridge usable. By availing ourselves unto God through more prayer and reading of His word, we will find Christ dwelling within us in great measure, and our ties with the Lord will be very strong. Our ties may be as strong as the cable or as weak as the kite string. The decision is ours to make. When considering this, we need to remember the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 25:1-13.

Let us follow the words of Paul as he admonishes us to "...reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).



The Philippines

This photograph was taken in Camanjan, Dumaguette City, Negros Oriental at the time of last year's Lord's Supper service.



Salem, West Virginia

These photographs were taken at the Publishing House during one of our council meetings.



LESSON I

SAMUEL RECOGNIZED AS A PROPHET

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 3:1-21.

Golden Text: I Samuel 3:10.

"And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned how the sons of Eli, the priest, were very wicked. The Lord told Eli that his sons would die and that He would raise up a faithful priest that would do according to His way. We shall study now how Samuel became a prophet of the Lord.

1. When Samuel lay down to sleep who called Samuel? I Samuel 3:3-4.
2. What did Samuel do, and who did he think had called to him? I Samuel 3:5.
3. Who called to Samuel a second time, and did Samuel know yet who was calling him? I Samuel 3:6-7.
4. Did the Lord call Samuel the third time? I Samuel 3:8.
5. What did Eli advise Samuel to do after the Lord called the third time? I Samuel 3:9.
6. Samuel answered the Lord the next time he called. What did the Lord tell Samuel? I Samuel 3:10-14.
7. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him. When Eli called Samuel to find out what the Lord had said, did Samuel tell him? I Samuel 3:16-18.
8. Did all Israel know that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord? I Samuel 3:19-20.

LESSON II

THE ARK CAPTURED BY THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 4:1-22.

Golden Text: I Samuel 4:11.

"And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain."

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson how the Lord called Samuel and appeared to him through visions. Samuel is now prophet and priest for Israel.

1. Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. How many were slain in this battle? I Samuel 4:1-2.
2. What did the leaders of Israel think would save them out of the hand of the enemy? I Samuel 4:3.
3. Did they bring the ark of the covenant into the camp? I Samuel 4:5.
4. When the Philistines heard their shouting, were they afraid and what did they do? I Samuel 4:6-9.
5. Did the Philistines again fight Israel, and what happened to the ark of the covenant? I Samuel 4:10-11.
6. How old was Eli at this time? I Samuel 4:15.
7. When a messenger told Eli that his two sons had been killed and that the ark had been captured, what happened to Eli? I Samuel 4:17-18.
8. What happened to Phinehas' wife in I Samuel 4:19-20?
9. What was the name of her son, and what did this name mean? I Samuel 4:21-22.

LESSON III

THE ARK OF GOD: A CURSE TO THE PHILISTINES

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 5:1-12.

Golden Text: I Samuel 5:6 (first part).

"But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod..."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned the Philistines captured the ark of God. We shall study now how God punished them for taking His ark.

1. Where did the Philistines take the ark after they captured it? I Samuel 5:1.
2. Into whose house did they take it, and who did it set by? I Samuel 5:2.

NOTE: Dagon was a God of the Philistines.

3. What did Dagon do before the ark of the Lord, and what happened to him? I Samuel 5:3-4.
4. How did the Lord punish the men of Ashdod? I Samuel 5:6.
5. When the men of Ashdod saw what was happening to them, what did they do with the ark? I Samuel 5:7-8.
6. What did God do then to the city of Gath? I Samuel 5:9.
7. Where did they take the ark then to try to escape punishment from God? I Samuel 5:10.
8. Did God bring destruction upon the city of Ekron? I Sameul 5:11-12.

LESSON IV

THE PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK

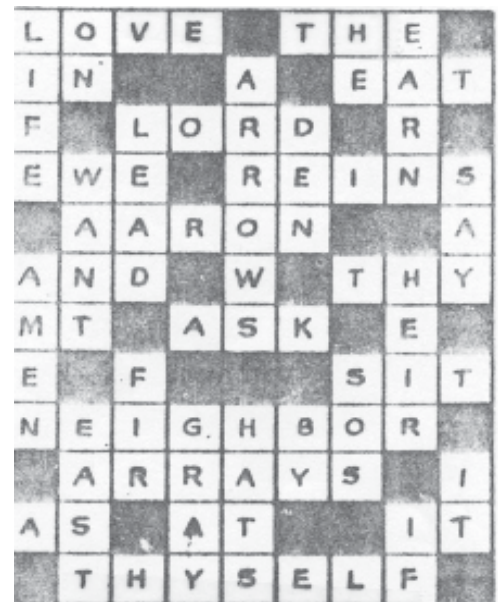
Scripture Reading: I Samuel 6:1-21.

Golden Text: I Samuel 6:8.

"And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof ; and send it away, that it may go."

NOTE: We learned in our last lesson how God smote the Philistines for taking the ark. Now let us study about the return of the ark and how those who were curious were smitten by God.

1. How long was the ark of the Lord in the hands of the Philistines? I Samuel 6:1.
2. The Philistines called for the priests to ask what they should do with the ark of the Lord. What did the priests tell them to do? I Samuel 6:2-3.
3. What was the trespass offering to consist of? I Samuel 6:4-5.
4. What were they to make to place the ark on? I Samuel 6:7-8.
5. What is said about the ark's trip to Bethshemesh? I Samuel 6:9.
6. What did the people at Bethshemesh do with the ark? I Samuel 6:15.
7. Did the Lord punish the men of Bethshemesh? I Samuel 6:19-20.





THIN ICE

As Larry trudged up Beacon Hill, he met Evan Hughes, the big boy who lived next door. Larry wanted to be exactly like Evan when he grew up. Evan was tall, with a friendly grin. He played on the football team, and he never teased the younger boys.

"That is a fine looking pair of new skates you have got there," said Evan as he stopped for a moment. "I thought you were not going to get any until your birthday."

"My others were so small that I could not get them on, so Dad said I could have my new ones now," replied Larry happily.

"Just so long as you do not try them out on Miller's Pond," said Evan as he turned to go. "Everyone has been warned about skating there. The ice is too thin."

"Um-m-" muttered Larry under his breath, and he kept on climbing Beacon Hill.

He waited until Evan was out of sight, and then he turned into the path that led to the pond. He had been going to skate there, and it certainly wouldn't do any harm

just to take a look at the ice.

Miller's Pond looked perfect for skating. Larry walked around the edge, and thought, I am sure it is perfectly safe, even though he saw a sign that said, "No skating. Thin ice."

Larry sat down in the snow and started putting on his skates. There would be no harm in skating just around the edges. Then he would go home.

As he skated swiftly, Larry felt more sure of himself. He tried to skate backwards, and before he knew it, he found himself right in the middle of the pond.

He had not meant to skate out so far, and he started skating back. Under his feet the ice went "Crack!" And before he could see himself, he plunged into the icy water: He tried to hold himself up with ice but it broke under his weight.

"Help! help!" he screamed, and his heart gave a bound as he heard a voice reply, "Hold on, I am coming, Larry. Try to keep still." It was Evan Hughes, putting one foot carefully after the other as he crawled across the icy pond. Larry's teeth were chattering, but he kept as still as he could. Evan laid down on the ice and began crawling toward him, his arm outstretched.

Larry's heart pounded as Evan came near and nearer. At last he was able to clasp Evan's hand, and very, very slowly, Evan pulled him out of the chilly water.

He was safe! Larry could hardly believe it. How foolish he had been to skate on Miller's Pond. He knew it was wrong, but he had gone ahead anyway. Standing shivering in his wet clothes, he looked at Evan and thought if Evan had not saved me, I would never have been able to save myself. He might even have drowned, and it would have been all my fault.

"Thank you, Evan," he gasped. "I am sorry I did it. How did you know where I was?"

Evan smiled

"Even though you said you were not going to the pond, I could not be sure, so I thought I would just check up on you. Let us run home before you catch cold." As they sped home. Larry remembered someone else who had given His life to save others - Jesus, and he was glad his friend Evan had not to suffer for Larry's wrongdoing also.

-By Janet Craig James

PUZZLE

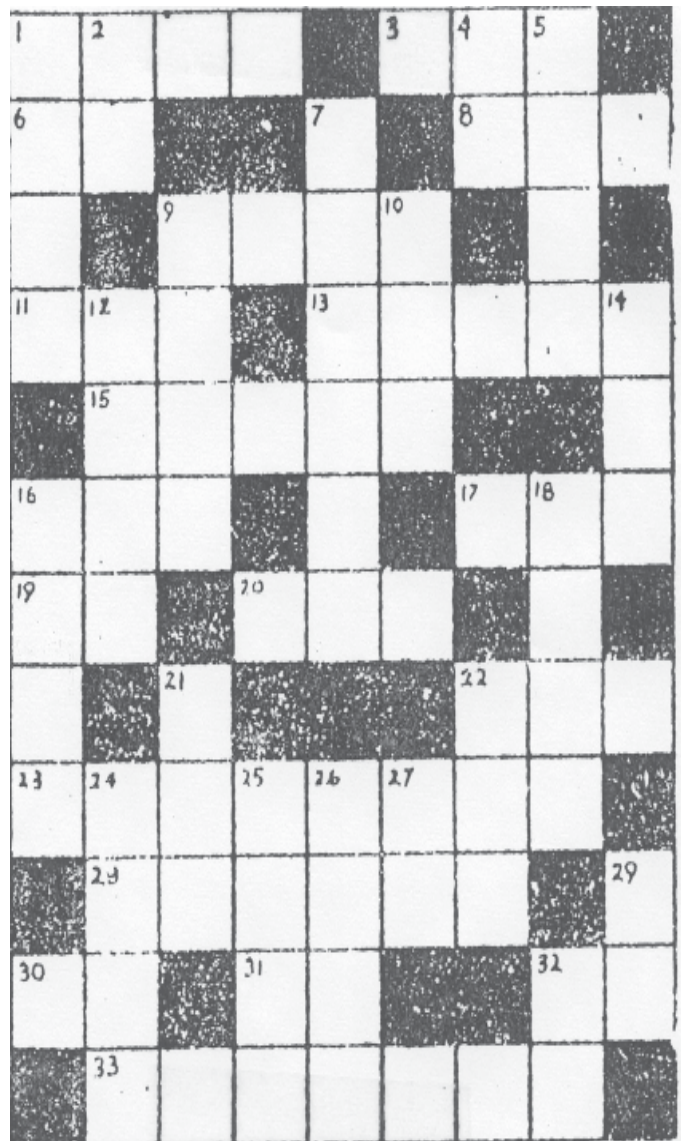
ACROSS

- 1. "____ your enemies" (Matthew 5:44)
- 3. "Blessed are ___ peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9)
- 6. "___ My Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:3)
- 8. To take in food
- 9. Another name for Jesus
- 11. A mother sheep
- 13. Leather straps used to guide horses
- 15. Moses' brother
- 16. "___ lead us not into temptation" (Luke 11:4)
- 17. A Bible word for "your"
- 19. Mountain (abbreviation)
- 20. To use a question
- 22. A person who lives close to you
- 23. Clothing, "gold or pearls or costly _____ 9s)" (I Timothy 2:9)
- 30. "Even __ Christ forgave you" (Colossians 3:13)
- 32. "The people stood by ... and heard __ " (John 12:29)
- 33. You, "Delight _____ in the Lord' (Psalm 37:4)

DOWN

- 1. "I am the way, the truth and the _____ " (John 14:6)
- 2. "He that believeth __ the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36)
- 4. "That __ gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)
- 5. Be paid, "he that _____ eth wages" (Haggai 1:6)
- 7. Pointed shafts shot from bows.
- 9. To show the way by going along in front
- 10. An animal home
- 12. To wish for
- 14. To speak
- 16. The word at the end of a prayer
- 18. A person who gets some property or money from someone who has died, "This is the _____ " (Matthew 21:38)

- 21. A kind of tree (Psalm 104:17)
- 22. A signal for help
- 24. Where the wise men saw the star
- 25. A color (Deuteronomy 32:25)
- 26. What we wear on our heads
- 27. "The end is not __ and __ " (Luke 21:9)
- 29. "___ was about the sixth hour" (John 4:6)
- 32. "___ it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:3)



Puzzle answers found on page twenty-one.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Bible is full of people who considered themselves too ordinary to perform God's work. We recall how Moses complained to God that he was not eloquent enough to speak on Israel's behalf to Pharaoh. "And Moses said unto the Lord. O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10).

Even today our families and friends sense our lack of conscience as they did in Moses' case. Sometimes those who know and love us best are also our severest critics, and the ones least likely to encourage us to try great things. However, we are usually our own worst enemies in this regard, often refusing to believe that we can do great things, or being hesitant to even try, perhaps due to a fear of failure.

All great things start with those first small steps. For example, writing just a page a day will produce a book-length work in less than a year. Reading a few articles every week in your chosen field will slowly but surely make an expert. Doing small acts of kindness every day will help to endear you to family and friends.

We have all been given gifts by the Lord. We have a choice - we can use them or not. What's your choice?