

# Gifts

In this season of the year, most of us do a lot of giving. We give to those we know and love and feel a great desire to give. We also give to many individuals, families, and organizations we may not know personally who we feel deserve a special gift or help. Sometimes, we do a lot of giving we do not even want to do. We get trapped into much "exchanging" of gifts and spend much of the Lord's money He has given to us in an unwise manner. Giving because we feel obligated to "exchange gifts" or giving when we are not able to afford to give is not pleasing to God, and causes much trouble, confusion, and unnecessary expenses. May God give us wisdom and grace to only give in a way that is pleasing to Him.

But the main thought on my heart today is to be thankful for the gifts we receive. Being unthankful and ungrateful is a sin. The word of God tells us one of the signs we are in the last days is when we are "unthankful" (II Timothy 3:1,2). We seem to have so much and are so prosperous, it is hard to really feel thankful and appreciate what we do have. Prosperity can ruin a people. May God help us all to realize how much we have, remember the source of all those good and perfect gifts (James 1:17), and help us to truly have a thankful heart and express our gratitude to God and His people for giving to us.

The greatest gifts we ever receive are blessings we seldom even consider. Most people usually think of material gifts and minimize or ignore the greatest gifts of all. May God help us now to consider some of the most wonderful gifts God has ever given to men. May He then help us to feel extreme gratitude for His goodness, mercy, and

grace in our unworthy lives!

1. "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, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9:6. (See also Isa. 42:6; 55:4; John 3:16.)

2. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

3. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27,28).

4. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15).

5. "For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11).

6. "For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 2:26).

7. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13)

8. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

9. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32).

10. "For I would that all men were

even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that" (I Corinthians 7:7).

11. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:4).

12. "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (I Corinthians 13:2).

13. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (II Peter 1:3).

14. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

15. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Timothy 6:17).

16. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7).

17. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

18. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

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***"AND SHE SHALL BRING FORTH A SON,  
AND THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS:  
FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."***

# Zeal

by Elder W. H. Durrence  
Brooklet, Georgia

Zeal may be defined as an active, enthusiastic interest or an ardent desire to do or have something. It is synonymous with fervor and passion and is the opposite of apathy and indifference. Zeal is an important factor in any worthwhile cause; without it, the cause will not have a position of proper importance in the lives of its followers. Without zeal, the followers do not possess proper fervor and without fervor there is little faithfulness. The success of any cause is greatly increased by the zeal of its proponents.

Because of the nature of zeal, it is an important objective to be sought by all Christian disciples. The cause of Christ and His truth will be greatly enhanced if we are zealous about it. When people become zealous about Christ, His Word, and the church, they are more eager to work tirelessly for His cause. Those who are content to remain as they have always been or to lessen the intensity of their Christian service; likely have lost their zeal, if they had ever possessed any. I think that zeal can be illustrated by the fuel in a jet engine that propels the vehicle upward and onward. Without the fuel, the plane remains motionless; with inadequate fuel, it will remain in flight for awhile and then fall to the ground. It is sad that so few believers have zeal to propel them onward to greater and higher service to our King Emmanuel. Sometimes people have manifested zeal and been motivated by it for a season; then, losing their zeal, they fall away and become inactive in the cause of Christ Jesus.

Zeal is so important in the Christian's life that the Bible repeatedly reminds us of the need to acquire it. God said through the Apostle Paul, "But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing..." (Gal. 4: 18). If you pos-

sess zeal, you will be affected by it and others will be infected by it. Zeal has a way of spreading from one person to another, as does an infectious disease. When a person has a contagious disease, others who are near him often become contaminated and infected by the same germs or virus. I believe that zeal has a similar infectious power, for when one person is zealous about a cause, his zeal has a way of affecting others also. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every saved person were infected by zeal and became zealous of good works? Paul wrote of Jesus saying, "... Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Do you have a zeal for good works? If you are saved by God's grace, you should!

It is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ possessed zeal. It accounts for the sense of urgency and purpose which is seen in all that He did. He said, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4). Can't you sense the zeal of Christ as He expressed His feelings with regard to the works of His Father? I can also sense the zeal of Paul in His words, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1:15). So consuming was his zeal that every fiber of muscle tissue and every cell of his being ached to preach the gospel at Rome. His zeal forced him to give it his best and to do all that he was capable of, so that others might hear the glorious gospel of the grace of God. He thought of neither life nor limb for he was willing even to die for the cause of Christ and to declare boldly His grace (Acts 20:24). We certainly need more such ministers today and more

such zeal in those of us whom God has called to preach His Word. It would be an inexhaustible source of spiritual fuel, it would spread among saints as an epidemic, and it would soon become an unquenchable fire that could not be extinguished by the combined powers of Satan and all those who serve him.

Zeal is like a fire. A fire may be kindled from a small spark and grow into an enormous blaze that may spread from one building to another; so does zeal. A fire may be used for good or bad purposes; zeal too can be for good or bad. Zeal used for bad purposes is evident in today's world. Terrorism is often the product of bad zeal, and many are destroyed by it. Paul described the baneful effects of some in his day when he said, "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Gal. 4:17). The effects of their zeal was evidently not good. People may also have a zeal for God that is aimed in the wrong direction. Many times Christians have aimed their weapons at each other, not at Satan. The consequence of such misguided zeal has been disastrous through the ages. Paul said, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

When people possess zeal with proper biblical knowledge, the fire that burns is a good one. Paul acknowledged that the saints at Corinth had zeal and encouraged them to rightly use it for the building up of the entire body of the church. He said, "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel in the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14:12). If we can achieve this in the church today, then zeal will be a good fire burning in the right direction, fanned by the wind of the Holy Spirit. Christian

zeal not only intensifies our desire to do more in the cause of Christ, but it also intensifies our desire to rid our lives of the sins which displease God. Zeal refuses to allow us to remain at ease in the sinful practices which have previously plagued our lives and dishonored God. Because of zeal, we cannot be content to remain as we were, for there is a holy quest to become more and more like our Saviour. For this reason, God has intentionally linked together zeal and repenting. The church of the Laodiceans was evidently a body of saints for whom Jesus cared very deeply. The Laodiceans are depicted in Scripture as being lukewarm, self-centered, and self-satisfied. Because Jesus saw them as they were (and us as we really are), He gave this solemn warning, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). He could have been suggesting that they continue their zeal and add to it repentance; however, I prefer to think that He taught them to direct their zeal in the direction

of their sin. Their zeal was to create an insatiable desire to remove sinful practices; this desire would be manifested by their repentance. So may the fires of zeal burn from our lives the dross of sin and leave us as gold that has passed through the melting pot of the purifier (Job. 23:10).

"How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street" (Lam. 4:1). These profound questions which filled the mind of the weeping prophet should and must be asked by each of us today. What accounts for the sad plight of modern-day Christianity? What explains the fact that saints of God, who are the objects of divine mercy, grace, and love, have because of sin become as dimmed gold? What has changed the fine gold and precious stones of God's people into something of diminished value? The answer cannot be ignored; it is the absence of zeal. Because we have lost our zeal or, at the very least, allowed it to diminish to a

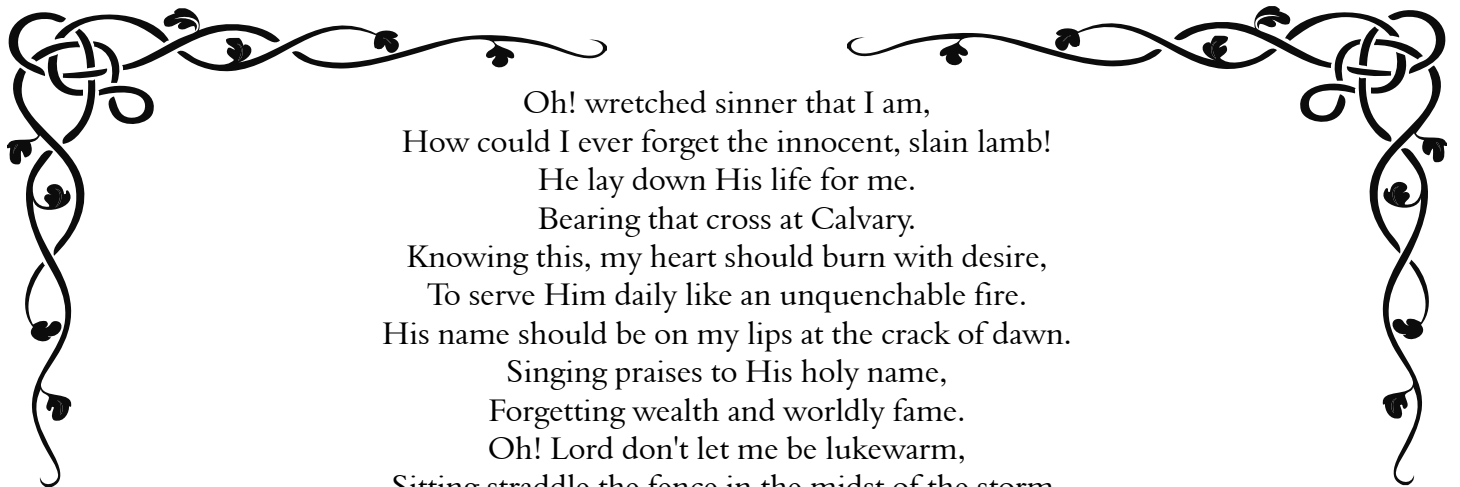
dim, flickering flame, we have ceased to agonize over our sins and to be consumed with an endless desire to be free from them and to be filled instead with righteous and true holiness (Eph. 4:24).

I pray that not all zeal is lost. I hope it will never become extinct as some creatures of God's earth have. I long to see more zeal in my life and in the lives of those who surround me in the service of our God. What about your zeal? Has it fueled your life? Has it affected you and infected others? Does it burn as a fire ablaze for the glory of God? The Scriptures emphasize the necessity of zeal, and they inspire and encourage us to become more and more zealous. Ecclesiastes 9:10 teaches us, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." When and if we do succeed in this endeavor, our lives and those of others will be drastically changed. Through zeal we can become more of what God tells us to be.

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# Lukewarm

by Sis. Gale Groover Smith  
Statesboro, Georgia



Oh! wretched sinner that I am,  
How could I ever forget the innocent, slain lamb!  
He lay down His life for me.  
Bearing that cross at Calvary.  
Knowing this, my heart should burn with desire,  
To serve Him daily like an unquenchable fire.  
His name should be on my lips at the crack of dawn.  
Singing praises to His holy name,  
Forgetting wealth and worldly fame.  
Oh! Lord don't let me be lukewarm,  
Sitting straddle the fence in the midst of the storm.  
Touch my heart with Your unselfish love,  
Remind me daily of that wonderful home above.  
Give me patience and willingness to do Your will.  
One step at a time, to climb life's rocky hill.

# The Birth of The Savior

## Lessons for Children

by Elder McKinley Wright  
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*Devotional Reading: Matthew 1:18-25.*

*Background Scripture: Matthew 1, 2; Luke 1, 2.*

*Memory Selection: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1: 21).*

### **The First Christmas**

Luke 2: 1. And it came to pass in those days that their went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3. And all went to be taxed, everyone to his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6. And it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the Inn.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over the flock by night.

9. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I give you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.

11. For unto us born this day in the city of David a savior which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying,

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

### **To the Parents**

Most young people are familiar with the Christmas story. Younger children may understand little more than the basic facts. They cannot understand the significance of the virgin birth, simply because they don't know what one is. They may not completely understand the true meaning of Christmas. You are like Mary who took swaddling clothes because she expected His birth, although she could not know exactly when it would occur. You can enlarge upon the basic facts of the birth of Jesus, and teach these facts. Later, the facts will be used at the right time just as the swaddling clothes were.

### **To the Children**

Jesus was born in a little town called Bethlehem. He was born there because his mother and Joseph had gone there to pay taxes. At least, that was the apparent reason for their going. The real cause was that He had said that Jesus must be born there. They did not know this, but God used the taxes to bring them to Bethlehem to fulfill His will.

They arrived in Bethlehem a few days before the day of taxing so they had to wait. While they waited, Jesus was born. When He was born, the only shelter they could find for Mary and the baby was a stable. As soon as he was born, she wrapped him in some warm clothes and laid him in a manger. The manger was only a box in which the

animals were fed. No doubt, a few days later Joseph paid their taxes, and they all returned home in Nazareth. But on the night Jesus was born, several things happened.

The first was that they looked for shelter and could find none.

Many other people had come to Bethlehem to pay their taxes, also. Everyone had to go to their home town, so the town was pretty crowded with people waiting for the tax books to be opened. Also, some who lived in Bethlehem had gone to other towns to pay taxes, so there just wasn't room for so many people. All rooms were soon rented. So, when we think of how mean the innkeeper was, we may be doing him an injustice. Maybe he really wanted to give them a room.

That night some shepherds were watching their sheep, keeping wild animals from harming them. Suddenly their was a shining light, and they saw an angel. The angel told them that the Savior had been born in Bethlehem. He also told them how they could know Jesus when they saw Him. Doesn't it seem strange that the angel would tell them how to recognize Jesus? But we should remember that they did not know what Jesus looked like. There were other babies in Bethlehem, so they needed to be told how to know the right one when they saw Him. The angel told them, and they immediately got up and went to Bethlehem looking for Jesus.

Please read more about the childhood of Jesus from the background Scripture at the beginning of this lesson.

**Questions**

- 1. What was the name of the town where Jesus was born?
- 2. What was the name of the town where His family lived?
- 3. Why had Mary and Joseph come to Bethlehem?
- 4. Where were the shepherds when Jesus was born?
- 5. What were they doing?
- 6. What did they see?
- 7. What did the angel tell them?
- 8. What did they do?
- 9. What would you have done if you had been there?

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# Grow in Knowledge

- 1. "God is \_\_\_\_\_, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
- 2. "There hath no \_\_\_\_\_ taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
- 3. "Let us hold fast the \_\_\_\_\_ of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised:)"
- 4. "but the \_\_\_\_\_ is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil."
- 5. "If we \_\_\_\_\_ not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."
- 6. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth \_\_\_\_\_ mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."
- 7. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to \_\_\_\_\_ us from all unrighteousness."
- 8. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful \_\_\_\_\_."
- 9. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are \_\_\_\_\_, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."
- 10. "Thy faithfulness is unto all \_\_\_\_\_: thou has established the earth, and it abideth."

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# GRADUATION

By Bro. Brooks Strickland (20 years old)  
Waycross, Georgia

Some will stand and some will fall; The fear of losing is in us all. Precious child don't hang your head, As you put these memories to bed. Lift up your head, open your eyes! See destiny is on the rise!	We're joining hearts, but parting hands. I hope you run across the sands Of your heart and of your mind, To places out of reach and time. Keep the Lord now on your mind, Don't leave beginnings too far behind	And God above will lead the way; I hope, dear friend, you do not stray. I stand alone and wave goodbye Who says there's a reason to cry? I silently walk out of sight Cause our destiny is on the rise!
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***The greatest temptation in the wilderness  
is the temptation to lower our standards.  
And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan.  
Mark 1:13***

# "God Setteth the Solitary in Families" (Psalm 68:6)

by Sis. Stacie J. Tucker  
Tifton, Georgia

"I bow my knees unto the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole FAMILY in heaven and earth is named." Ephesians 3:14-15. The Lord has done great things for my husband and me, and I desire to give Him the praise for His marvelous works!

In the summer of 2004, I was reading my Bible on the patio one morning. I read Matthew 25:35-40, when Jesus said, "I was hungry, and you fed me, thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison, and you came unto me." And that is when the adoption process started for my husband and me. From the start, I never pictured a "baby," but children that had a lesser chance of finding a home. I had never really thought about adoption before, but at that moment, I was so convicted that that is what the Lord wanted us to do. I felt so strongly about that conviction! It was a burning desire! And that flame has not gone out since that moment! Usually I indecisively flounder around trying to make the right decisions, but after reading that passage, there was NO DOUBT in my mind. I was FULLY PERSUADED that the Lord had orphans in our future. And I wasn't making it up in my mind and heart. I **know** the Lord spoke to me through that passage, and besides, the Bible is God's message to us! (And I think now, what if I had been too busy that morning to read my Bible? How would things be different?)

Well, after reading the passage in Matthew, it really lit a fire under me to see what the Bible says about adoption and knowing the Lord's will for my life. I wanted to make sure this was something of God and not my own

natural feelings. If I had a burden that I felt was straight from the Lord, I wanted to make sure His word supported my feelings. So for awhile, I struggled with the question, *How do I know God's will for my life?* Our pastor had said before that one of the main ways God reveals His will to us is through His word. So, I studied my Bible to see what God had to say about adoption. I just wanted to share a few verses dealing with adoption that confirmed my strong desire to adopt and that gave me a peace, assurance, and motivation in beginning the adoption process. This time of praying and searching lasted from late summer 2004 to early summer 2005. During this time, I prayed that if it was the Lord's will for us to adopt, then to let my husband feel just as passionate as I did. Which he did! These are some of the verses I found that gave me complete and total assurance and confidence that God does and can build families through adoption.

## **What the Bible Says About Adoption**

Since I have not conceived, one verse that seemed to trouble my mind was, "The fruit of the womb is His reward." And then it suddenly dawned on me one day on the way to church, an adopted child IS the fruit of the womb—maybe not MY womb, but they ARE the fruit of the womb, nonetheless, and therefore STILL a reward from God! God used our inability to conceive as an opportunity to bless us! That's how powerful He is!

God can use adoption to build families. In fact, that is how the family of God is made! "God sent forth his Son...To redeem them...that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth

the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." Galatians 4:4-6.

A powerful verse to me is Psalm 68:6. "God setteth the solitary in families." So God takes ones without a family, those that are lonely, the orphans and places them IN a family!

When God chose Abraham He also "chose" his entire household and not just his physical seed. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised." Genesis 17:12-13

One thing I noticed in the New Testament was the emphasis Jesus placed on our relationship to Him, and not on blood ties. I know this is in relation to the family of God, but I think we can also apply that to some degree to a natural family here on earth. As Ephesians 3:14-15 states: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... OF WHOM the whole **FAMILY** in heaven and **EARTH** is named."

"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matthew 3:8. The Pharisees were priding themselves in their genetic ties to Abraham, and Jesus rebuked them by saying He could take ROCKS and make them children of Abraham! Genetic blood ties cannot save us! Only Jesus' blood can!

"They answered him, We be Abraham's seed...Jesus answered them...I know that ye are Abraham's seed...If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." John 8:33,

34, 37, 39. Once again, Jesus pointed out the uselessness of their genetic tie to Abraham when it related to salvation.

"Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children... That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Romans 9:7-8.

In Luke 8:21 Jesus said, "My mother and brethren are these which hear the word of God and keep it."

When Jesus was dying on the cross, He asked John to take care of Mary His mother. "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold **THY** mother! And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home." John 19:27. Jesus asked John to care for His mother by telling him she was now HIS mother.

In the book of Ruth, we read that Ruth's husband died, and she is still living with her deceased husband's mother, her mother-in-law Naomi. Then, Ruth marries Boaz, and God blesses them with a son named Obed. I found these verses interesting. "And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman...and he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy *daughter-in-law*, which loveth thee, *which is better to thee than seven sons*, hath born him. **And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom...And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a SON born to Naomi.**" Ruth 4:14-17. Even though Obed was not a biological grandchild to Naomi, the women there said, "There is a SON born to Naomi!" And God's word talks of the blessing he would be to Naomi! God builds families through adoption!

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. ..There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all ONE in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26, 28. I want my

family to be ONE in Christ!

If blood relations is not a requirement to be in God's family, why should it be a requirement for our family? The true blood that ties a family together is the blood of Jesus. I'd rather be a family by the blood of Jesus than by a genetic blood tie only.

From the moment I read the Matthew 25 passage, I pictured the orphans in the Philippines, probably because of the Gus and Bettye Jo Harter's story. (The Harters are a couple in their sixties we know that lived in the Philippines for several years and ran an orphanage-hospital. They are now back in the States and brought several children home with them!) But we wanted to be completely open to God's will and adopt where He led us. From the start, we felt led to the Philippines, but we wanted to make sure that was the Lord's will. During this time, we corresponded a little with the Harters, and realized it would not be as easy as I thought--I thought Sister Bettye Jo could just send us some of the children from the orphanage she ran! (After the mountain of paperwork we have now gone through, I can't believe I actually thought it would be that easy!) In one email, Sister Bettye Jo wrote me, "*The Lord himself burns into the heart a desire for a particular labor. How can anyone else know [what the Lord has placed on your heart]? Our burden to come here [the Philippines] developed over a year period.*" And that's the exact description of how I felt about adoption: A burning desire. Looking back now, God placed this desire on my heart during the exact time frame when Nehemiah was conceived, which was late July 2004. I know I have loved him from the moment he was conceived. Of that, I have no doubt.

In early summer 2005, we actually began the first steps in the adoption process, which is interesting, because Nehemiah's birthday is May 14, 2005. (Just as background: After your adoption paperwork is approved, you have to wait 18 or so months for a referral of

a child, called a "match." Then it takes 4-6 months before you can travel to get your child. So we didn't know who our child was until June 2007 when we were "matched." You can see we had a long road ahead of us!) During this time, I had a strong love for a CERTAIN child. I felt with all my heart God had a CERTAIN child for Terry and me. One night, Terry was reading a book in bed. I didn't have my contacts in, so I couldn't see what book he was reading. We were discussing when and where we should begin the adoption process, and I said, "It's like that verse in *How Firm a Foundation*: What more can He say than to you He hath said?" He said, "That's the exact verse I'm reading now out of the hymnal!" I didn't even know he had a song book! I'm blind as a bat without my contacts, so I just thought he was reading a book. Sometimes I think we search for and wonder what God's will is, when actually, He has already made it quite evident!

In July 2005, I was talking to a lady at a church meeting, who has adopted several children. I was explaining to her how I already loved a CERTAIN child so much! I couldn't even talk about it without tears filling my eyes! And very matter of factly, she said, "Well, it's probably because your child is already born." At the time, Nehemiah was two months old! Looking back now, Nehemiah's birth marked the time frame when I started loving a CERTAIN child.

On August 1, 2005, we mailed off our adoption paperwork. On that same day, I started our child's life book. On the inside cover I wrote: *This is your adoption story, A story of love! August 1, 2005.* Also that same day, I started our child a journal. For two years, I have written letters to our child and my prayers to God concerning the adoption. The first entry date is August 1, 2005. Later we found out that Nehemiah's birthmother signed over her rights completely on that same day-August 1, 2005.

**To be continued...**

# *So Shalt Thou Put Evil Away*

by Elder V. F. Agan  
(Deceased)

The increase of evil in the churches, in our cities, and in our land is so well known that no evidence is needed to convince us of this fact. Laxity of government in church, school, state and nation is the leading cause of the increase of evil.

When God gave His laws to Moses for national Israel, He gave definite instructions on how to put evil from among the people. As God gave this law, we find this word repeated often: "So shalt thou put away evil from among you." We shall find these words several times in the Scriptures which shall be used in this article. God meant for His national Israel to be a people of noble standards of good living with each other and with their neighbors. He meant for the gospel church in the world to be made up of people who would regard His gospel laws in faithful, devoted service and worship to Him. The degree to which we fail to do this is the degree to which we fail to put away evil as our Lord taught us.

In the book of Deuteronomy we find the following instructions and instances: Deuteronomy 13: 1-5. Here instruction is given regarding false prophets and teachers. "That prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to trust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." It is a pity that false teachers and leaders must arise; but it is a greater pity when the people of God are not wise enough to so recognize them and so deal with them.

Deuteronomy 17:1-7, 12-13. In this Scripture we have the case of one who transgressed the covenant of the Lord

and served other gods: "Thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed this wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." The Israelites were to listen to the authority which God placed over them. The priests were to teach the law; the people were to hear and observe it. "And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel." Authority was observed; failure to do so was to be punished.

Deuteronomy 19: 15-20. Here we have the case of false witnessing. One bearing false witness was to be punished that honesty and fairness in judging might be practiced among the people. "So shalt thou put evil away from among you." One of our brethren recently asked me the question, "Are we troubled with a determined minority or with an unfaithful majority?" We have cases among us where the majority will not deal with cases that should be dealt with. All in such circumstances are very wrong in their attitude.

Deuteronomy 21:18-21. This Scripture deals with stubborn children. The Lord taught that parents should control their children. Here Israel was told that "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." Note in this lesson that others seeing such judge-

ment and faithfulness would "hear, and fear." If churches allow their members to continue in unfaithfulness, they will do so; if correction is made, others will "Hear, and fear." If states and courts allow citizens in violations to continue, they will increase. Criminals commit their crimes because they know they can do it and get away with it. This has led to shameful disorder in Georgia as well as in other states.

Deuteronomy 22:13-24. Our present lesson is that of accusations against one's wife. Fellow citizens were to judge these accusations; if they were false that husband could not put her away in such a manner; if they were true accusations then she was to be stoned to death. In the case of common fornication both were to be stoned to death. "So shalt thou put away evil from among you." Deuteronomy 24:7. If any man were found making merchandise of his brethren, developing a slave trade, "then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put away evil from among you."

These Scriptures are sufficient to show that God's method of discouraging evil among the people was to be a faithful discipline, by exercising lawful authority in the matter of violations. If parents in the home allow the children to do wrong and get by with it, they will continue to do wrong, but if correction is given the violations will be discontinued. Laxity of government in the home, the church, or the state, encourages others to do wrong. Some may be shocked that a man or a woman, a son or a daughter, should have been stoned to death in some of the instances given above; that was God's order. It maintained good standards when accepted faithfully; when disregarded then sin increased. Our churches and our states have encouraged sin and mischief by disregard of sins, or by



unfaithful judgements in cases of violations.

When a church fails to hold up good standards for its members, that church is on the downward road to more ungodliness; this means less godliness in

her body; it means failure and decay.

May our hearts and lives be revived in standards of good living among the people of God; may we know how to sustain good order in the churches of God. And may we be faithful in coun-

selling the erring. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5: 19-20.

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# *A Husband's Prayer for His Wife*

Most Christian husbands are aware that the Bible tells us to love our wives "as Christ loved the Church" (Ephesians 5:25). But, how often do we consider that one primary way Jesus shows His love for the Church is by interceding for her? (Romans 8:34). An essential part of our priestly role in the family is our prayer, not only with our wives, but for them as well.

No doubt we all pray for our wives regularly, yet our prayers can be more effective if we invest some time in identifying our wives' specific concerns. The more focused and concrete our requests, the more our joy and confidence grows when they are answered specifically. So, here are some ideas for building a discipline of prayer for your wife. 1. Make it a point to ask your wife (daily, if possible) her current concerns. Ask specifically: What challenges are you facing today? What fears or

frustrations are you feeling? What do you hope to accomplish today? What special physical, emotional, or spiritual needs do you have? Are there any particular times today when you especially need my prayers?

2. Read between the lines for prayer needs she may be reluctant to express. Does she seem frazzled by the kids? Pray for patience. Does there seem to be a conflict with a neighbor? Pray for reconciliation.

3. Many people find a written prayer list helpful. It keeps you from forgetting items.

4. Consider which ongoing needs your wife may have and put them at the top of your list: for example, prayers for health, protection, growth, and wisdom.

5. Find a regular time in the day when you can pray especially for her, even if it is during another activity like

shaving, commuting to work, or eating lunch.

6. When she comes to mind during the day, turn the thought into a brief, one sentence prayer as a form of intercession.

7. Pray for her frequently when you are away on a trip. The pressures of parenting and maintaining the household will be doubled and perhaps compounded by loneliness.

8. When specific prayers are answered, share the victory with her.

9. Finally, ask God how you can become part of the answer to your prayers for her.

Like everyone else, your wife needs someone to be persistently praying for her... and if you don't who will?

P.S. Wives, you may use these same suggestions to pray for your husband.

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## *Answers to Grow In Knowledge*

- 1. Faithful - I Corinthians 1:9
- 2. Temptation - I Corinthians 10:13
- 3. Profession - Hebrews 10:23
- 4. Lord - II Thessalonians 3:3
- 5. Believe - II Timothy 2:13

- 6. Covenant - Deuteronomy 7:9
- 7. Cleanse - I John 1:19
- 8. Creator - I Peter 4:19
- 9. Right - Psalm 119:75
- 10. Generations - Psalm 119:90

## **The Lord's People**

- I. A Chosen people (Deut. 7:6; Pet. 2:9)
- II. A redeemed people (Ex 15:13; Eph. 1:7)
- III. A peculiar people (Deut. 14:2; Titus 2:14)
- IV. A separated people (Ex. 33:16; John 15:19)
- V. A holy people (Deut. 7:6; I Pet. 1:15)
- VI. A happy people (Deut. 33:29; John 15:11)

# Working for Retirement

by Bro. Mike McInnis  
O'Brien, Florida

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19).

The latest economic woes that have beset this nation and the world in general, and the resultant stock market slide that has taken place recently, has brought grave concern to some, and near panic to others. It would seem to me that it should serve as a wake up call of sorts to those who profess to be the followers of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is sad, but true that quite often the true sons of GOD find themselves patterning their thinking after that of the world. When economic prosperity is all around us, and the comforts and indulgences of life are easily enjoyed, then the flesh can grow quite content. Often we are lulled into a sort of stupor wherein we think that we deserve such and grow extremely attached to the trappings of plenty. We start looking at ways to pad our nest and feed our desires for a life of ease.

It is only natural that our flesh would hunger after such. It is absolutely true that there is no benefit in depriving ourselves of those things we can afford just to deprive ourselves. There is nothing to be gained by wearing sackcloth and ashes when more comfortable clothing can be had. However, there is a danger in forgetting that the things which we possess are but temporary gifts which the LORD has placed within our hands and called us to be good stewards.

The possessions which the LORD has given us richly to enjoy are not simply for us to get pleasure from by consuming them, rather they are placed within our hands that we may be able to bless others. (see Acts 20:34-35; Eph.4:28; Rom.12:13). Paul commended the Corinthians for this very

thing. "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men" (2 Cor 9:11-13).

The man who is wise will look to the example of the ant. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest" (Prov 6:6-8). He is not waiting for a handout but is diligent to provide for his own needs and they of his house. (see I Tim.5:8). So it is prudent for men to look to the future and understand that they should make some preparation for that time when they shall perhaps be as the LORD told Peter, "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." (John 21:18)

Yet it seems to me that in the last 30 years our society has become obsessed with laying up great amounts of money for the future not just to provide for their needs but to insure that they can indulge themselves in old age with the baubles of this world. We must not forget that 401k's, stocks, and bonds are not the stuff of which life consists, most certainly not that of the sons of GOD. There is no shortage of financial gurus who often give good advice on monetary matters, but at the same time elevate the concern of men about these matters to an inordinate consid-

eration.

While we should be prudent, we must also remember what the LORD said, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Mat 6:25-34) Ye cannot serve GOD and mammon.

The life of GOD's people consists in much more than this world's goods. So is our life to be spent working for "retirement"? You be the judge.

# God Blessed Me With Cancer

by Sis. Michelle Streat  
Waycross, Georgia

Thank you, Father, for blessing me today with breast cancer. I am so thankful that You have lead me down this path in my life. I know that I told others last year that I had faith in You. I know that I thought that You could take care of me. I know that I told You that I trusted You to take care of my husband, my 13 year old daughter, my 7 year old little girl. You knew my heart, even when I didn't.

Lots of people, including me, feel like we trust You. But, when we go to bed at night, we worry. We worry about the man down the street that lingers at the stop sign that seems like a threat to our 13 year old. We worry about the drug problem in the high school. We can't stop thinking about the presidential election. We try to sleep but keep thinking about what may happen to the stock market, or if there will be gas at the station on the corner tomorrow.

It was then that You drew me closer. It was as if You whispered in my ear, "Trust Me, have faith in Me." And I sat there. Still, silent. The doctor had to tell me three times that I had cancer before I realized the truth. Less than one week later, I had to hear it again. "Yes, it's in four of your lymph nodes," the nurse told me. I was groggy from the lumpectomy, but managed to wipe my tears with the tissue. You whispered again to me, "I will get you through this." I wiped my tears again, this time as I stepped up onto the scale at the cancer center. I told the nurse, "I'm too young to be here. I'm only 37," as I looked around at the elderly ones surrounding me with warm, sympathetic eyes.

Then, You waited. You waited on me! "Where's your faith?" I imagined You asking me. I do trust You, I argued. I trust You when my husband goes off to work. I have faith in You, that You will keep my girls safe while they are at school. I trust that You will not give me

anything that I cannot handle. Death breathes on me, and I am silent again. "I'm not scared, God. Let me see You, let me feel You. Take me home when You're ready Lord, I'm ready." What about my husband? Well, he will have a hard time at first. He'll be alright. It will take a while. He will adjust. "Okay, Lord. I give you my husband, the love of my life. Here he is, I lift him up to You. I trust You, Jesus to take care of him." No, God! Not my girls! They need me. Look at all of the destruction. Look at all of the ungodliness. Look at all of the EVIL. They need ME! They have to have their mother. I watched them learn how to walk. I watched them get ready for their first day of school. I've already planned in my mind what I'll tell them on their first date, graduation, and wedding day. I've told them how I'll help them with their own newborn baby one day.

I wait. I wait for a PET scan. Is the cancer anywhere else? Is it moving to my lung? Is it already in my liver, my brain? Where else is the cancer now, God? You whisper to me in my thoughts, "Give them to me. They were mine before they knew you. I took care of them then. I take care of them now. Give them to me." I climb into my husband's lap, crying. He holds me and tells me to let it out. Let it all out. It's ok for me to be weak. Lord, You hold me within my husbands' arms as I weep. I feel your spirit wrapped around the two of us. I tell my husband that I am ready if You want me now. I tell my sweetheart that I gave him to You, Lord, and that I know he'll be alright without me. It was then, that I gave them to you, Father. I gave you my children. They were always yours. Everything is going to be alright. You will take care of them. You, Lord, will raise them. You will take care of every need.

It was then that the drain tube was able to come out. It was then that the

nurse was able to get the scan ordered for next week instead of three weeks away. That was when I had the peace. The peace that I can't explain. The peace that I can only feel with faith, with trust. It's alright, Lord. I am so blessed. I feel so peaceful. I'm okay, Father, even if the cancer has spread. I am ready. They all are yours. They always were.

The nurse called on the phone. The cancer didn't spread. You kept it from growing, Lord. You were waiting on me. I didn't have faith. I couldn't give them to you.

I used to walk around, feeling You most of the time, but a little whisper that something wasn't quite right. Something was pulling at me, keeping me from smiling quite as often as I used to. Keeping me from spending as much time with my family like I had in the past. Then I look around. This terrible land that surrounds me is full of people like me. We say that we trust you. We say that we are happy. We are numb and stuck in the boredom of life without pure joy. Routines, wasted time, just busy. What did it take for me, Lord? What did it take for me to trust You? What will it take for him to trust You? What will it take for her to trust you?

## WHAT WILL IT TAKE FOR YOU TO TRUST HIM?

It was when Abraham put his son under the knife that his Father let him go. It was when I was under the knife that I could let my family go. It was then, that my Father blessed me. I am at such peace. I never could have given them to you, Lord. Not without death staring me in the face. You knew that, Lord. You blessed me with cancer. I know that this is not the only reason that I have cancer, Lord. I have so much work to do. Use me, Father. Use me. Yes, Lord. You blessed me with cancer. Amen.

# What Are We Seeking?

by Sis. Elizabeth Anderson  
(wife of Elder Lavone Anderson)  
Thomaston, Georgia

There is so much unrest in the United States today. I would dare say, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. Usually, according to my thinking, people who are feeling unrest in their lives are seeking something. They are feeling unrest in their lives and they need to have that unrest satisfied.

So many young people, and apparently some not so young people, have turned to drugs or alcohol seeking an escape from reality for a "feel good" period of time. It doesn't last long from what I understand; but they enjoy that feeling so much they get hooked on drugs or alcohol in order to experience that feeling. Somehow life has gotten dull, and boring, or overwhelming for them. They are seeking something.

Today many people treasure their "freedom to do as they please" so much that they refrain from marriage. They think they are experiencing all the joys of marriage through pre-marital sex and living with the opposite sex out of wedlock. They do not want to accept the responsibilities and commitment which goes along with marriage, but they want a marriage-type situation. They are seeking something.

Many married people are being unfaithful to their spouses these days. Usually, this will eventually lead to divorces. Divorces leave children without a biological two parent situation which is so important to the welfare and happiness of children. Either one parent (or occasionally both parents) do this because they are seeking something.

People rob, cheat, lie, sell drugs and take a chance on being arrested and sent to prison for a number of years in

order to have what everyone else has - the "keep up with the Joneses syndrome." They are seeking something.

Thousands of people stay home from church and use the Lord's Day as a day to "catch up" with work at home, or go about trying to fill an emptiness in their lives with all kinds of fun activities. They go back to work on Monday with the "same old, same old" feeling. They are seeking something.

Some people are so angry and some are so rebellious until they are miserable, but they cannot tell you why they feel the ways they feel. They are seeking something.

Many people in the categories I have mentioned, if asked, will tell you they are Christians, and some may even attend church fairly regularly or at least sometime. Could it be they are like those mentioned in Isaiah 4:1? "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." Could it be that the cause of so much of the unrest people feel in their lives today is because they want to do the things they want to do (eat their own bread and wear their own apparel), but be called Christians (let us be called by thy name).

They want to be a part of the things of the world, but be known as Christians. No wonder they feel unrest in their lives! The world and Christianity can never mix. There will always be unrest when anyone tries to have it both ways.

At one time in the Old Testament of the Bible, the Israelites wanted a God they could see, so Aaron made them a

golden calf. Even back then, they were looking at the world and what it had to offer, and they wanted to try those things. They were seeking something.

In another time period, they wanted a king, so they could be like everyone else. God allowed them to have a king, but the end result of that was much unrest.

Don't you think it is about time we, as individuals, and we, as a nation, make a decision that God is all we need? Don't you think it is time for us to feel rest and peace in our lives and in our nation again? There is only one way - JESUS. He has already told us, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." We must follow Him and we will experience a "peace which passeth understanding."

God has distinctly told us in His Word that there is only one way to have peace in our lives, and that is through Him. He has promised rest for our souls, also. He has the answers, but it seems so many are seeking for answers in all the wrong places.

Psalm 119:165 tells us, "Great Peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

Is. 26:3 says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Let us, as those who are trying to follow and obey the laws of God, pray for our country and our fellow man. Let us pray that rest and peace may come to the lives of those who are feeling so much unrest and turmoil in their lives, and let us pray that they will realize before they destroy their lives and the lives of others, that rest and peace can only come from following Jesus.

*God's acts reveal His persons  
The Heavens declare the glory of God;  
and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Psalm 19:1*

# A Field of Zinnias

by Sis. Sarah D. Ledger  
Bartow, Georgia

This past summer, my husband planted a field of zinnias. For those of you who are not familiar with these plants, they are colorful flowers that grow well in the heart of the south. If they wilt down, they are easily revived with a drink of water. They grow on stout stems and are, therefore, a good cutting flower. When he had finished planting, he told me that he had planted something for me. I have always loved zinnias; they remind me of a very pleasant time of my childhood. My mother always had a patch of zinnias. She saved the seed from year to year and since we had no running water at that time, we carried buckets of water around to the front yard to water them. I think she used the compost from the chicken pens. I don't remember ever seeing any commercial fertilizer.

My husband's field of zinnias was a thing of beauty. I don't remember my

mother ever cutting many of hers; we just enjoyed them in the yard. But, my husband cut for anybody that wanted a bouquet, or two, or a bucketful. In fact, he began to leave his clippers by the back door so that if someone wanted a bucketful, they could help themselves. The flowers just seemed to bloom that much more.

Toward the end of the summer, the field of zinnias dried up. The plants all turned brown and the field became unsightly. My husband took the mower and cut the entire patch down. I think he thought perhaps that would be the end of them, particularly since it was so late in the year. But, in a few days, he had another crop of zinnias which had come up from the seeds of the ones he had mowed down. As the weeks have progressed, they have become even more beautiful than the original crop with longer stems and bigger flowers.

He is again cutting bucketfuls for anyone that wants them.

I have known some people much like this field of zinnias. When the cares of this world and their problems (whether it is something physical, emotional, financial or perhaps family related) seem to have them all "spent out", by the Grace of God and their Faith in our Savior, they are nurtured and come back more beautiful than ever to bloom again as a shining example in His Kingdom. God has a place for each of us to fill, and He is pleased when we seek to overcome our obstacles to bloom again.

Since the weather is getting so much cooler, I'm not sure how long this field of zinnias will last. But, how beautiful they have been and what a wonderful lesson I learned from them. The Lord is so good!!!!

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## What Will I Leave?

by Sis. Gale Groover Smith  
Statesboro, Georgia

*If today should be my last, in this sin-filled world,  
If my eyes never behold another beautiful day unfurled,  
If life for me should suddenly end, what will I leave for my family and friends?  
Will my children remember that they always came first?  
Each day a little prayer to help them through the worst.  
Did I share my blessings and sprinkle laughter on others?  
Or think only of my self, forgetting that we all have brothers?  
Have I been a friend with a listening ear?  
Trustworthy and dependable when someone needs a word of cheer.  
Will I be forgotten as soon as my body is laid to rest?  
Will the world not remember that I strived to do my best?  
When they remember me, Lord, will they think of You?  
And be comforted by Your Spirit in everything they say and do.  
Let my life so shine that Your Son will receive the glory,  
And maybe when I die, Beulah Land will be the Sweet, Sweet, story.*



# GOD'S ACCURACY

God's accuracy may be observed in the hatching of eggs.

For example, the eggs of the potato bug hatch in 7 days; those of the canary in 14 days; those of the barnyard hen in 21 days. The eggs of ducks and geese hatch in 28 days; those of the mallard in 35 days. The eggs of the parrot and the ostrich hatch in 42 days. (Notice, they are all divisible by seven).

The lives of each of you may be ordered by the Lord in a beautiful way for His glory. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). If you try to regulate your own life, it will only be a mess and a failure. Only the One Who made the brain and the heart can successfully guide them to a profitable end.

God's wisdom is seen in the making of an elephant.

The four legs of this great beast all bend forward in the same direction. No other quadruped is so made. God planned that this animal would have a huge body, too large to live on two legs. For this reason He gave it four fulcrums so that it can rise from the ground easily.

The horse rises from the ground on its two front legs first. A cow rises from the ground with its two hind legs first. How wise the Lord is in all His works of creation!

God's wisdom is revealed in His ar-

rangement of sections and segments, as well as in the number of grains.

Each watermelon has an even number of stripes on the rind.

Each orange has an even number of segments.

Each ear of corn has an even number of rows.

Each stalk of wheat has an even number of grains.

Every bunch of bananas has on its lowest row an even number of bananas, and each row decreases by one, so that one row has an even number and the next row an odd number.

The waves of the sea roll in on shore twenty-six to the minute in all kinds of weather. All grains are found in even numbers on the stalks, and the Lord specified thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold - all even numbers.

God has caused the flowers to blossom at certain specified times during the day, so that Linneus, the great botanist, once said that if he had a conservatory containing the right kind of soil, moisture and temperature, he could tell the time of day or night by the flowers that were open and those that were closed!

Thus the Lord in His wonderful grace can arrange the life that is entrusted to His care in such a way that it will carry out His purposes and plans, and will be fragrant with His presence.

Only the God-planned life is suc-

cessful.

Only the life given over to the care of the Lord is safe.

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. 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. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens" (Proverbs 3:5-19).

*I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.*

*I believe in love even when it is not felt.*

*I believe in God even when He is silent.*



*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,  
the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1*

# Night Blooming Cereus

by Sis. Ruby Daniel  
(deceased wife of Elder George Daniel)

It is rather early in the morning and I have first spent some time on our front porch reading my Bible. On one end of the porch, I have a night blooming cereus, and there are several big buds that will soon be opening. I remembered that I had rooted this plant from a cutting a friend had given me. Even though it is a member of the cactus family, it is not thorny or sticky. The foliage is not very pretty and it has long strands which cause some people to call it the "snake plant". But it is very strong and tough. It blooms only at night; therefore the name "night blooming cereus". The bloom stays open only one night. It is a rather large, white, beautiful blossom, similar in appearance to a water lily. The petals are as smooth as satin and the inside is of a very delicate structure. Its fragrance is a distinctive, sweet, unique one. For the few hours it stays open, our whole porch is filled with a sweet odor. Since it blooms only at night, immediately this thought came to me, as expressed in John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world,

and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest, that they are wrought in God".

As I meditated upon these thoughts, I came to the conclusion that there must be another lesson in this-the bloom was too beautiful and the fragrance was too sweet. Then this thought came to me. It reminded me of one of God's little children, even under a heavy burden (night season), yet blooming and being a sweet inspiration to others.

I have known people who reminded me of this plant in so many ways. When you first look at the plant, there is not much beauty to behold. But upon closer examination, you will find that it is a strong, tough and enduring plant. And when you stay long enough to see the beautiful blooms, even if they are only at night, you will be glad you did! It is not so much the outward

adorning, but the "hidden man of the heart-a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:4). The plant becomes a lovely plant and the people lovely people.

It seems that some people can be strong during difficult times, when they are bowed down with troubles, cares, afflictions, and persecutions. Truly this would be a night season. And yet, exercising faith and trust in God, they show forth a sweet spirit, not murmuring and complaining.

Even though this is a tough plant, I take it inside during the winter months for protection from the cold. God protects His children. He may feel the effects of the cold sometimes, but He has promised He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10: 13). He said He would never leave His people nor forsake them. Lord, help us to imitate this night blooming plant in the night seasons of our life.

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## "Sowing Seeds"

by Sis. Patricia Durrance  
Waycross, Georgia

My mom gave me some lilies to plant outside in my yard. During

the summertime, they bloomed out and were beautiful. But my goats, Maebelle and Briar, get out of their pen and love to snack on them and everything else. Just when I think they're going to grow, here comes my goats again.

Then the other day I was out messing around in my yard and I looked down around my patio and guess what is spreading ---- the lilies! No matter how many times my crazy goats eat

them all the way down to the dirt, the root is still growing underneath.

In Matthew Chapter 13 verses 18 -- 23, Jesus explains the purpose of the sower. We Christians are the sower, the Word of God is the seed, and the soil is our heart. How has God's Word taken root in your life? What type of soil do we have? Wayside soil, fertile but hard; shallow heart, stony soil, fertile but depthless; worldly heart, thorny soil, fertile but possessed; or the understanding heart, good soil, fertile

and prepared. If we expect our seed to grow and bear good fruit to perfection, we have to have our hearts ready. The hard heart must be broken, the shallow heart must be given depth and the worldly heart must be taught that the things of this world are only temporal. For my lilies to grow, it requires time, work and patience, and PROTECTION from goats!

May God help us all to prepare our hearts to receive His word, then bring forth fruit to perfection.

# Bible Reading Calendar for December

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Ezek. 43,44	II Pet.2
2	Ezek. 45,46	II Pet. 3
3	Ezek. 47,48	I John 1
4	Daniel 1,2	I John 2
5	Daniel 3,4	I John 3
6	Daniel 5,6	I John 4
7	Daniel 7,8	I John 5
8	Daniel 9,10	II John
9	Daniel 11,12	III John
10	Hos. 1-4	Jude
11	Hos. 5-8	Rev. 1
12	Hos. 9,10,11	Rev. 2
13	Hos. 12,13,14	Rev. 3
14	Joel 1,2,3	Rev. 4
15	Amos 1,2,3	Rev. 5

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Amos 4,5,6	Rev. 6
17	Amos 7,8,9	Rev. 7
18	Obad.	Rev. 8
19	Jonah	Rev. 9
20	Mic. 1,2,3	Rev. 10
21	Mic. 4,5	Rev. 11
22	Mic. 6,7	Rev. 12
23	Nah.	Rev. 13
24	Hab.	Rev. 14
25	Zeph.	Rev. 15
26	Hag.	Rev. 16
27	Zech. 1-3	Rev. 17
28	Zech. 4,5,6	Rev. 18
29	Zech. 7-10	Rev. 19,20
30	Zech. 11-14	Rev. 21
31	Mal. 1-4	Rev. 22

**ANSWERS TO  
CROSSWORD  
PUZZLE  
NOVEMBER 08**

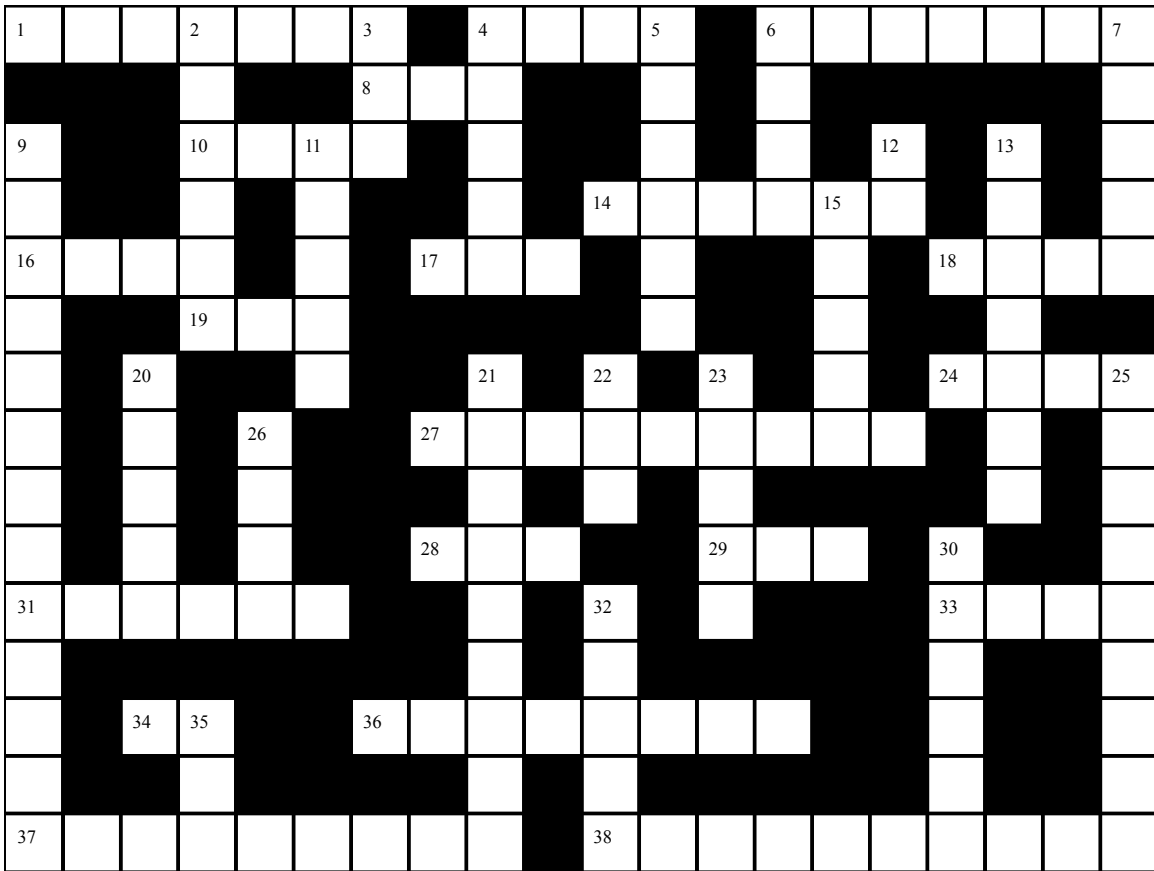
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G			T			E				A		O		31W	E	R	E		A	
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# Crossword Puzzle

## ACROSS

1. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is \_\_\_\_\_ life through Jesus Christ our Lord." 4. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little \_\_\_\_\_, and then vanisheth away ." 6. "Though he were a Son, yet \_\_\_\_\_ obedience by the things which he suffered;" 8. "Brethren, if any of you do \_\_\_\_\_ from the truth, and one convert him;" 10. "But God commandeth his love toward us, in \_\_\_\_\_, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." 14. "For an angel went down at a certain \_\_\_\_\_ into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." 16. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and \_\_\_\_\_ himself for it;" 17. "...and rejoice with the wife of \_\_\_\_\_ youth." 18. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he \_\_\_\_\_ keep my words: and my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." 19. "The \_\_\_\_\_ and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." 24. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of \_\_\_\_\_." 27. "The just man walketh in his \_\_\_\_\_: his children are blessed after him." 28. "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine \_\_\_\_\_ nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." 29. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, \_\_\_\_\_ according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 31. "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no \_\_\_\_\_ with it." 33. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, \_\_\_\_\_, Father." 34. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, \_\_\_\_\_ ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;" 36. "For there is one God, and one \_\_\_\_\_ between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" 37. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living \_\_\_\_\_, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." 38. "And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of \_\_\_\_\_."



## DOWN

2. "Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea \_\_\_\_\_, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." 3. "\_\_\_\_\_ every soul be subject unto the higher powers..." 4. "And ye shall know the \_\_\_\_\_, and the truth shall make you free." 5. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." 6. "But what things were gain for me, those I counted \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ." 7. "It is better to \_\_\_\_\_ in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." 9. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of \_\_\_\_\_." 11. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall \_\_\_\_\_ in my love; even as I have kept my Fathers commandments, and abide in his love." 12. " A continual dropping \_\_\_\_\_ a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike." 13. "In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk of blind, halt, withered, \_\_\_\_\_ for the moving of the water." 15. "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men \_\_\_\_\_ always to pray, and not to faint;" 20. "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee \_\_\_\_\_ the sun, all the days of thy vanity:..." 21. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ Jesus my Lord:..." 22. "... and be thou ravished always with \_\_\_\_\_ love." 23. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but \_\_\_\_\_ them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." 25. "And being made perfect. he became the author of eternal \_\_\_\_\_ unto all them that obey him. 26. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe \_\_\_\_\_ in me." 30. "And all thy children shall be \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord' and great shall be the peace of thy children." 32. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from \_\_\_\_\_ through him." 35. "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it \_\_\_\_\_ from him."

# Interesting Newspaper Article!

Taylor County News, Oct. 16, 2008

Ask the Chaplain, By:

Chaplain Barbara Reeves

“Once Saved, Always Saved”?

Chaplain Barbara,

Have you heard, “Once saved, always saved”? Is this biblical?

Not Sure

Not sure,

Yes, I have heard this many times. No, it is not biblical. When we become Christian, scripture is, however, quite clear on our end. We are to produce good fruit, as from the tree of life. If not, the Father will cut away every branch that bears no fruit. Read John 15:1-17. It should be quite enlightening to those who have believed once saved, always saved.

Dear Editor,

My heart was stirred this week when I read a question in the *Ask the Chaplain column*. “Not Sure” asked if “Once saved, always saved” is biblical. The Chaplain told “Not Sure” that “Once saved, always saved” is not biblical.

I am so thankful that I can tell “Not Sure” that “Once saved, always saved” IS biblical. I can say this with a clear

conscience before God. There is concrete documentation located within the Bible. My evidence comes from Romans 8:35-39. Paul wrote, 35-Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36-As it is written, FOR THY SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL THE DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER. 37-Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38-For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39-Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As one can see from reading the above verses, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. So, once we are saved, we are always saved. We are sinners by nature and can only be saved by the grace of God. I am so blessed to know this to be true. It gives me a peace that words cannot explain. My salvation and your salvation is a precious gift from God, and

nothing can take that away from me or you.

If “Once saved, always saved” isn’t true/biblical, then we can be eternally lost and eternally saved on a daily basis. I am so thankful that God has assured all of us there is nothing we can do to eternally save ourselves. Eternal salvation is by His grace and the good pleasure of His will. Ephesians 2:8 & 9 further explains to us that our salvation is by the grace of God and there is nothing we can do to gain it. Ephesians 2:8- For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God; 9- Not of works, lest any man should boast.

I hope that the information I have presented can help “Not Sure” to understand that once we are saved, we are always saved. Jesus said on the cross in John 19:30, “It is finished.” God finished our eternal redemption the day His Son died on the cross, and there is nothing anyone can do to change that. “Not Sure,” **I am sure**, and I hope that you will be too.

Lori Daniel, Member of  
Flint River Primitive Baptist Church  
Reynolds, GA

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