

ARE YOU ASHAMED?

What do we mean when we talk about being “ashamed?” Ashamed means feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable because of fault, impropriety, or disgrace. A synonym is to be “humiliated.” There are times we should be ashamed, and times when we should not be ashamed.

When we have done something wrong, we should be ashamed or embarrassed. When Peter had denied Jesus Christ, and Jesus looked at him, Peter was ashamed, as he should have been. On one occasion when Ezra was praying, he expressed that he was ashamed because the children of Israel had not separated themselves from the worldly-minded people (Canaanites). “And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God. And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens” (Ezra 9:5-6).

In fact, the word of God tells us to separate ourselves from those who do not obey the word of God that they may be ashamed for their actions. “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (II Thessalonians 3:14).

There are things we can do so that we will not have to be ashamed: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

Are you ashamed of things you have done in your life? Would you be ashamed for the Church to know some of the things you are doing “behind closed doors?” Are you ashamed that you do not study, or visit, or serve other

people like you should? May God help us all to strive to live in such a way that we will never have to be ashamed of our words, thoughts, or actions; or our failure to be doing what we should.

But God’s children are sometimes ashamed when they ought NOT to be ashamed! There are times when children of God are ashamed to be identified as Christians. They would rather be a friend of the world than the friend of God. The word of God teaches us that if we are ashamed of God, His word, or His way, HE WILL BE ASHAMED OF US! Jesus said, “For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:25-26).

There are some people who live in such a way that God is not ashamed of them! “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:16). If you are afraid to stand up for Jesus, if you are ashamed to confess that Jesus is your Lord and Savior, then Jesus is ashamed of you! If you are ashamed of the doctrines Jesus taught, or ashamed of anything in God’s word, then Jesus is ashamed of you! If you are ashamed to clearly declare truth to someone, or are ashamed to state what you believe, then Jesus is ashamed of you.

The apostle Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (see Romans 1:16). Are you ashamed of anything the Bible teaches? Are you ashamed for others to know you believe in feet-washing? Are you ashamed for others to know you believe what the Bible says about elec-

tion, predestination, or any other doctrines of the Bible? Are you ashamed to tell others what the word of God says about Church discipline, or disciplining children? Are you ashamed to tell others any truth in God’s Holy Word? Paul also warned the young preacher Timothy not to fear and not to be ashamed: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (II Timothy 1:7-8).

As Christians, we must take stands that will cause the world to hate us. Paul was even put in chains and in prison. But he thanked God for those who were not ashamed of his chains (II Timothy 1:16). We must never be ashamed to suffer as a Christian! “Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf” (I Peter 4:16). Are you ashamed to take a stand as a Christian? Are you ashamed to do what you know is right publicly? Are there some people you are willing to do right around, and around other people you live differently because you are ashamed to be known as a true Christian?

ARE YOU ASHAMED? ARE YOU ASHAMED OF THE WAY YOU SOMETIMES ACT?

Can you change your actions
(with God’s help)
so you do not have to be ashamed
of the way you live?

ARE YOU ASHAMED? ARE YOU ASHAMED OF GOD’S WORD, OR OF HIS TRUTH?

Will you try to be more diligent in
never being ashamed to do
and say the right thing?

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Hope Maketh Not Ashamed

by Elder Jason S. Solomon
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Where Does Shame Come From?

Do you ever wonder where shame comes from? A product of failure or sin, shame is a result of falling short of the mark. When Adam and Eve first ate of the forbidden fruit, they ran into the bushes to hide. They were terrified of the results of their sin. They knew immediately that they were disgraced and fallen. Have you ever experienced that feeling? It feels like the wind has been knocked out of you, and you cannot catch your breath. You cannot lift your head up because your strength has failed you. You know what you did was wrong and that you failed to do what you otherwise knew was right.

Adam and Eve were the first people to feel shame. The Scriptures say that "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden" (Genesis 3:8b). They feared the reaction of God. They knew what they had done was wrong. Further, since they ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were aware of the gravity of their sin. They knew exactly why their disobedience was so bad. So they hid.

This account may sound silly to us today, but what would you have done? Adam and Eve had experienced God's presence regularly. For untold mornings and evenings, Adam and Eve had known God's loving and powerful presence. That same presence now frightened them. If God had the power to create them, then He must have the power to "uncreate" them. Not hardened by years of sin, they felt deep shame that caused them to panic at the thought of God seeing them.

The Bible goes on to tell the familiar story of how they were cast out of Eden with the promise of future redemption

through a Son. All their days, Adam and Eve must surely have looked for that redemption. Little did they know that it would take millenia for this promised Son to be born to bruise the head of the serpent, and begin the return of God's people to Paradise.

In the meantime, sin further hardened their hearts like it does yours and mine (I Timothy 4:2). Of course, we can still feel shame today, but our hearts are "naturally" hardened from the beginning by sin. Through denial and other means, we learn to harden our hearts, to shield it from the pain of sin, while the body seeks to satisfy an endless chain of desires.

Shame Versus Anger

You cannot precisely teach someone shame, but by diligent correction, they learn to understand the prompting of their conscience. This is one reason why training up a child in the way he should go early is so important. Shame results from the realization that we have disappointed someone. Another reaction could be fear or anger, or both. Adam and Eve reacted with fear and shame. They feared the power of God, and they felt shame because they knew their actions were a direct violation of a very simple command. Having trespassed God's command, they knew they had violated His trust and His loving care for them.

By contrast, in the account of Cain killing Abel in Genesis 4, Cain kills his brother and then makes excuses for his sins. Further, he shows no genuine shame for the murder of his brother. God then curses him to live out his days in exile. Cain's reaction is not one of shame, but rather anger. He is angry with Abel and God. Cain's heart was hardened. He did not love his brother or God. Therefore, he struck

out in violence against the only one of the two he could harm.

If we lead a rebellious life from the beginning with improper discipline, we become hard hearted even more quickly like Cain. Hence the reason we find so many hardened criminals with a bad childhood. These men and women were often either abused or neglected, and their consciences are seared. Their ability to love and receive love is hampered by a scarred heart. It cannot sense pain or pleasure like a pure heart. And as for pure hearts, Jesus Christ said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

King David gives us an excellent example of how we should seek God's aid to cleanse us of sin. When David is convicted of his adultery with Bathsheba, he turns to God in repentance. He recorded Psalm 51 concerning the matter saying, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me" (Psalm 51:9-11). Repenting of his sin, David recognized the separation from God that occurred with his sin. In fact, even though God often communicated with David, it is the prophet Nathan that brings the Word of God to his court to accuse him of his sin with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of Uriah. David yearned for God's assuring presence. His shame is palpable in his words, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." David's shame helped turn him back to God.

Filthy Rags

Men and women have argued for hundreds, even thousands, of years

that human beings are not truly sinful at heart. However, I believe these arguments have been made because deep down, we fear the consequences of our sins and we want to know peace either with or without God's help. Sadly, left to our own devices, we can never know that peace. We cover up sin with philosophies and psychology and all manner of excuses, but at our core, we are still just like Adam and Eve trembling in the bushes, afraid of the coming presence of an Almighty God, Holy and Just.

The Bible clearly refutes this idea of human righteousness. In the time of Noah, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). The prophet Isaiah said, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Rome that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). So, if you hold to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God recorded by men moved of the Holy Ghost, you cannot say truly that we have any pure and true righteousness of ourselves. Left to ourselves, our actions are polluted by selfish intentions, fear and desire.

Christ Died For The Ungodly

Where does that leave us then? How can we return to the blessed presence of God? Well, it certainly isn't by ourselves. As we have already estab-

lished, even our righteousness is filthy before God. We cannot please Him without His divine intervention. The word for this intervention is grace. Jesus Christ is the greatest manifestation of God's grace "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). As the Son of God, holy and righteous, Jesus delivered the Church from the slavery and damnation of sin. The curse of Adam was annulled.

Writing to the Church of Corinth, Paul states that "in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21). Jesus is the cure. More than the cure, He is the resurrection of the dead. In the letter to the Romans, Paul lays it out very clearly writing, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:1-6).

We do not want to feel shame, but it is an indication of tenderheartedness and an appropriate reaction to God's authority for the child of God in the face of sin (Psalm 34:18). Anger demonstrates rebellion, but shame demonstrates repentance is possible and near at hand. Only God's children can genuinely repent. Having been first loved by God, they can return that love by a return to obedience (1 John 4:12-20).

We are made just and righteous in God's sight, not by our own goodness, but because Jesus' goodness is imputed or applied to us. Because of this application of Jesus' righteousness and obedience, those that earnestly believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior have peace with God. Being justified before God, we have access to His Grace as His children. Having access to God's Grace gives us Hope in the glory of God both in the Kingdom of God and for eternity, because the breach caused by the sins of Adam and Eve and ourselves have been bridged and washed by the Blood of Christ. This hope makes us unashamed before God, not in the sense that we are perfect, but through Christ we are justified. Paradise is now accessible to the child of God because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, condescended to our lowly estate and died on behalf of His people. Placing our God-given faith in the power of Jesus Christ, we have hope; and this hope helps us put aside shame, boldly proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior!

How To Grow Spiritually:

Get The Book

Read The Book

Obey The Book

Wear The Book (Eph. 6:10-18)

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Timothy 2:15

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22

The Imputed Righteousness of Christ

by Elder Clarence Hicks
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Please prayerfully read Romans 4:20-25 (Continued from last month).

Last month, we tried to convey, using the three ages of the Bible, the experience of a Child of God who is justified by faith. In the first period of the Bible, there was no written law given to the descendents of Adam. This simply corresponds to the elect of God, as dead in sins and trespasses, as all men are in Adam. They are void of the Law of God and receive neither the conviction of sins nor feel the need to be delivered (saved) from sin and the wrath of God. The doctrine of salvation, justification of faith, and the imputed righteousness of Christ has been terribly misunderstood by the majority of preachers and teachers of our day. It is commonly taught that the dead alien sinner must come to faith in Christ and **receive** Him as his Saviour. This erroneous doctrine is advocated by many because men have failed to see the absolute and totally depraved condition of the dead sinner. A dead sinner void of the gracious work of God upon the soul, has no will or inclination to the spiritual things of God. The gospel of salvation by Christ is foolishness to him. Again, I quote the apostle Paul. I Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It is important that we establish the difference between the intellect and conviction. The Random House College Dictionary defines intellect as follows: "The power or distinguished from that by which one **feels** and that by which one **wills**." One cannot feel the **condemning guilt** of sin, which is transgression with the **mind**. Neither can he **will** or desire the things of the Spirit of God by a mere intellectual

knowledge.

The same dictionary defines conviction as "the act of convicting or the state of being convicted. It also means (1) "to prove or declare guilty of an offense, especially after a **legal trial**" (2) "to impress with a sense of guilt." (3) "a person serving a prison sentence."

Before God quickens us to spiritual life and writes His laws in our hearts, we are void of conviction of sin. This corresponds to the second age of the Bible, when God gave His law to **His people Israel**. This represents the second step of experience in those justified by faith. The Jews failed to see the spirituality of God's Holy Law. They ignorantly believed they were righteous by the external and ceremonial keeping of the law. They believed they could work out their own righteousness. This separated them from the great blessing of freedom from the works of law and the peace of God which is to be found only in Christ.

God convicts one of His children of sin by putting His holy law within the heart causing him to see himself as a guilty sinner. This child realizes that he has transgressed God's law. The typical reaction at this time is to endeavor to live holy as God's law dictates in order to purge this terrible burden of condemnation and guilt from his heart. At this point, he is already a Child of God who is redeemed (bought) and justified with the blood of Christ. The child has received conviction of sin, which is one of the effects of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul tells us in I Corinthians 2:14 that the natural or unregenerate man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Spiritual conviction of sin is evidence and proof that this person is **already** a born again and saved Child of God **justified** by the redeeming blood of Christ. It is the blood of Jesus that justifies sinners and makes us acceptable to God. "To the praise of

the glory of His grace, which **He** hath **made us accepted** in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:6). How has He made us accepted in him? "In whom we have redemption through His **blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7). Justification is a legal term which means to render, to show, or regard as just or innocent, to free. From God's perspective, Jesus has rendered all the elect family of God, just and innocent through His redemption and justifying blood. God accepted everyone of those elect whom He foreknew when Jesus offered His redemptive sacrifice to God according to Hebrews 9:12.

All the blood of sacrificial animals in the Mosaic economy, or second period of the Bible, could never purge the conscience of guilt and the condemning power of sin. They could never be justified, cleared of guilt, by the blood of animals. The majority were not saved to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. They were saved and justified by the redeeming with God forever, but they did not receive the salvation/justification which comes by faith because of their unbelief.

We see then that all of the elect family for whom Christ died are saved and justified by the blood of Jesus. Everyone of them will be in the eternal Heaven; not one will perish. John 6:39: "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." We can say with absolute certainty that they all will be in the eternal Heaven because that fundamental salvation is based upon what Jesus did for His elect people and not on our belief and faith. Although a child of God is saved for eternal heav-

en, he will never be freed from the awful burden and condemnation of guilt he feels in his heart, unless he comes to embrace the finished works of Christ for justification. This justification says to the burdened heart, "you are cleared of all guilt, you are innocent, you are free." This is the salvation and justification that comes by faith. It is something extra we must do to make our justification, salvation and acceptance with God effectual. It is a freedom and deliverance from the guilt of sin we receive through faith in the substituting sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf. This is the predominate salvation taught throughout the New Testament where we are exhorted to believe and have faith in Christ that we might be delivered from the dead works of the law and legalism to the freedom and liberty which comes by faith in Jesus. Then, we can **serve** God in an acceptable way in His Kingdom here in the world. This is the foundation of the Apostle Paul's teachings in the book of Romans and all his other epistles.

The great theme of the New Testament or New Covenant is the Kingdom of Heaven, not the eternal Heaven. The gospel is not a road map on how to get to eternal Heaven. The gospel instructs us into the Kingdom of Heaven. Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven is predicated on our obedience, works of righteousness, on our belief and faith and our keeping the Commandments of God. Revelation 22:12-14: "And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Most of God's people realize our eternal salvation is not according to our works of righteousness.

The purpose and aim of this article is to provoke a more earnest and diligent study of the Doctrines of Salvation as clearly taught in God's Word. God will

never contradict Himself by saying our eternal salvation is by free and sovereign grace and then proceed to tell us what we have to do to get it. Surely any reasonable mind can see the folly of such a doctrine.

In the first period of the Bible, the patriarch period, there was no law given to man. This parallels an elect Child of God before he is born again. The laws of God are not in his heart, therefore guilt for sin is absent because there is nothing to convict him of his sins.

In the second dispensation, man was given the law which produced a sense of guilt! But man could never have this guilt purged from his heart by endeavoring to keep the law of works because it required **PERFECT** obedience. It was simply to point him to Christ who did keep it perfectly.

The third and present period is the New Testament time in which we live. It is the gospel dispensation and the revelation of Jesus Christ. The gospel is good news of a finished work that saved all the Elect of God. The gospel declares the finished work of Jesus Christ in saving His people from their sins. Those who believe the gospel are no longer burdened with despair and condemnation. Oh what joy and peace God's children experience when they look to Jesus and believe and trust what His gospel says. Through faith, receive the pardon of your sins and freedom from condemnation in your heart because of the accusing power of the law.

This is what Paul is teaching to the Saints of Ephesus in Chapter 2:8. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." In verse one of this chapter, Paul said, "And you hath he (God) quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins. It is impossible for a dead alien sinner to exercise spiritual faith in a spiritual God. According to the Apostle Paul, God must first give one spiritual life **before** he can experience faith to be

saved. Faith is a fruit of the spirit. The only ones who can exercise faith are those who already have spiritual life. We get this life by being born again. It is God's free gift. Notice Paul says God is the only one involved in the raising of the dead to spiritual life. The preacher and the gospel are not involved in this work of Grace--only God. Paul exhorts those who are already saved to spiritual life, to exercise the fruit and gift of faith to receive into their hearts the justification that saves us from the condemning power and guilt of sin from the Holy law of God which accuses us. When a Child of God is saved through faith, he has the righteousness of Christ **imputed** to him. God communicates to his heart, mind and soul the truth that the **grace** of God through Jesus Christ is sufficient. Through faith, he is fully persuaded that he is accepted in the beloved by the righteousness of Christ and nothing else. Not by the righteousness of Christ plus his belief, faith, and acceptance of Christ; but by grace alone! Faith gives us **access** into this grace wherein all the elect of God stand by the righteousness of Christ alone.

To say it as simply as I know how, I will repeat the words of the Apostle Paul, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have **PEACE** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This peace is absent when a Child of God is struggling under the accusing power and guilt of being under the law. The Child of God can never make himself acceptable with God by endeavoring to keep the commandments and law of God. As a child of God is trying to work out his own righteousness by his own obedience, and he envisions God as the judge on his throne, he hears the verdict of **GUILTY**. But when he, through faith, received into his understanding that he is accepted with God through Jesus' righteousness and perfect obedience to God's holy law, he then hears the verdict **JUSTIFIED**, cleared of all guilt, innocent! Then and only then is he freed from the condemning power and guilt of the law. The enmity

between himself and God has been erased. He now has received God's propitiation and is fully persuaded and satisfied with the righteousness of Christ as his own. Now his heart is filled with **righteousness, peace and joy** in the Holy Ghost. This is the kingdom of God! (Romans 14:17).

This is the New Testament and gospel salvation. He now enjoys the bless-

ings of the Kingdom of Heaven. Belief, faith and good works play no part in our eternal salvation which God purposed in our Lord and **Savior** Jesus Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is absolutely essential for us to be saved to the joys and blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven as we live here and now in this world. "For the Kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink but **righteousness,**

peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans 14:17).

I pray that the people of God who are laboring with the yoke of bondage under the law of legalism will be motivated to a diligent study of God's Word as they are led by the Holy Spirit to rightly divide the word of truth to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Daily Walk

by Elder Don McWilliams
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"And He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross DAILY, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

The remembrance of our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension have just passed. There have been great crowds of people that attended services to remember these events. Some even traveled to Jerusalem to be closer to the place where all these things happened in the last days of Jesus. Many passion plays are staged depicting these events. The trend seems to be year after year for the masses to attend services on Easter and then begin to fall away or refrain from attendance for another year.

As Jesus states in the Scripture from Luke, we are to take up our cross **daily** and follow after Him. There are a great many reasons to obey Jesus' instructions, some of which are: joy in the Spirit, comfort during sickness or death of a loved one, peace of mind

and soul, fellowship with God's other children -just to name a few. Each of us have been blessed in different ways, causing us to realize **how good God is to His people!**

In Exodus 16:4, we read, "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no." Here we see God giving explicit instructions for the Israelite people to go daily and gather the manna He rained from heaven. Those who refused to do so had no nourishment during that day. When we refuse to feed at God's table each day, we can't receive our spiritual nourishment for that day. I often WONDER how much spiritual food do I miss when I don't go daily to gather that which only God can provide?

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah." (Psalm 68:

19). David was well aware of God's daily benefits. God protected him from the lion and the bear, Goliath, many battles with the enemies of Israel, even King Saul, and his own son, Absalom, who attempted to take the kingship from him. Many of the Psalms written by David show how much he realized that **God's blessings came daily** into his life.

How is it, then, that God's people, who have been blessed with His Holy Spirit to believe and know God, through His amazing grace, can still turn to their own way, as Israel did time and time again and **not feed daily** on that spiritual manna He provides for His people? Oh, what nourishment we miss!!!!

God's blessings are daily, not limited to one or two days a year. Should we not partake of that which God has provided?

".....think on these things." Phil.4:8

*It is a good idea to give all your excuses a decent burial,
but it is all the wiser if you don't mark the grave.*

Shelton Smith

The Will of God

by Elder W. H. Durrence
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Have you ever prayed to know the will of God for your life? If you have a sincere desire to do His will, but you are uncertain about it, you need to pray for His will to be made manifest. I have often prayed for a discernment of God's will, and I confess to you that it takes a great deal of prayer for me to get through this sinful world. If you pray for God's will to be made known, then you will possess a sense of direction in the various situations you face.

Every child of God should be concerned with the will of God. When Jesus taught us to pray, He said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:9,10). I believe that such an attitude of prayer shows a desire that God do His will in the world and in our lives but also that we do God's will by purpose of heart and voluntary actions. Paul taught the Ephesians to serve Jesus by doing God's will from the heart (Eph. 6:6). If we are to do His will from the heart, it is essential that we have an understanding of it. Those who seek such knowledge should pray as did David. Long ago he sought divine guidance by saying, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (Ps. 143:10).

One means of knowing God's will is by the leadership of the Spirit of God. Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as our guide as we pass through the uncertain scenes of life. He said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit is quite capable of expressing God's

will to us since He abides within every born-again person. Sometimes He does this by stirring our souls with a condemnation for sins, while at other times He gently leads us to perform some good work. So when we pray for God to make known His will, one way by which He does so is by the Holy Spirit.

Another way by which the will of God is made known to us is the Bible, which contains the written expression of the will of God. Every commandment contained therein is spelling out for us what we should or should not do. Many things about God's will can be discovered simply by reading the Bible. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, let us search and study the Bible so that we may clearly discern God's will. (John 5:39 and 2 Tim. 2:15).

At this point in our study, let us recognize that there are two aspects of God's will which need to be considered: His determinate will and His suffering will, which is sometimes referred to as the permissive will of God. Let us now look more deeply into both facets of divine will.

First, God's determinate will includes all that He has decreed or determined to do. Peter and John (in speaking to the other disciples) quoted from the ancient writings of David concerning the determinate will of God. They said, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel

determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28). While it is evident that God determined to give His Son to die for sins, He did not determine the cruelty of men's hands nor the hatred of their hearts, though He knew of their existence for He can see the end from the beginning (Is. 46:10). Someone may kindle a fire and another may throw a piece of wood into the flames, knowing it will be consumed. Even so, Satan kindled the fires of hatred and murder, but God cast His Son in the midst of violent men knowing that He would die and thus atone for the sins of His people. God's determinate will delivered Jesus into the hands of sinful men, and by His death on the cross He paid the sin debt for all the elect. Jesus came to this earth to do that which was decreed by the will of His Father; therefore He said, "...Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7). He knew that it was decreed for Him to die (Mt. 26:38-39). Paul also said that "...we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will..." (Eph. 1:11). In His determined will, He designed that none of His children can ever be lost. We may fall **from** grace (Gal. 5:4) which is to fall **away from** the beliefs and teachings of it, but we cannot fall **out** of the state of grace. For instance, a small child may fall out of a chair, but he remains in the room. The room represents grace, and all who are secured in it remain that way forever. Jesus said, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day" (John 6:39). In the morning of the resurrection when Jesus returns by the determinate will of God, all the elect will be raised to

life and when changed will be caught up with Jesus to live together in glory, without the loss of even one. God's will has determined it; and God, who has all power and cannot fail, will perform that which He determined beforehand. Let us therefore rejoice in His determinate will.

Second, let us examine God's suffering will. We generally think of suffering as bearing pain or affliction. It does have that meaning in Scripture, but it also means permitting or allowing. "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:14). This aspect of the will of God embraces those actions which God has not decreed or determined, but which He allows to come to pass. He has all power and could prevent them, but for some reason unknown to us, He chooses not to do so. Such was the case with Job, who suffered

(bore affliction) at the hands of Satan because God suffered (allowed) Satan to try him. In the safe protection of God, Satan could not harm Job (Job 1: 10) until God allowed him to put Job to the test. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord" (Job 1:12). Similarly, God allows us to be tempted and tried by Satan today. Paul said, "There hath no temptation 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 of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). Remember that in God's "suffering will," He does not cause the problem; but neither does He prevent it. He merely allows it to take place.

Sometimes in God's "suffering will"

He permits us to be touched by tragedy. He may allow us to be hurt and mistreated. He also allows sin to run rampant in the land and even allows us to ignore or disobey His expressed will. I do not profess to speak for God and explain the reasons that He does so; I only know that He permits things to happen or they could not occur. Since He had a design and purpose in those things which He determined, surely He also has a reason for allowing all things which happen. If we trust God, we can and will be reconciled to His suffering or permissive will.

Let me now briefly summarize by encouraging you to be reconciled to His suffering will, rejoice in His determinate will, and be obedient to His expressed will as revealed in the Bible and by His Holy Spirit. I am confident that the more closely we live to God, the more clearly we will perceive His will. Seek prayerfully to know His will for your life, and when you know it, do it for His glory.

Grow in Knowledge

1. "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were _____ went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."
2. Therefore be _____ also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."
3. "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to _____, willing to communicate."
4. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready _____ to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
5. "Feed the _____ of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"
6. "Keep thy _____ when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."
7. "Let us be _____ rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."
8. "...for I am ready not to be _____ only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."
9. "...Behold, I have _____ my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage."
10. "For I am now ready to be _____, and the time of my departure is at hand."

Bad men cannot make good citizens. It is impossible that a nation of infidels or idolaters should be a nation of freemen.

It is when people forget God that tyrants forge their chains. Patrick Henry

Stimulus

by Elder Edward McIntyre
Fitzgerald, Georgia

II Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

We are hearing much these days regarding how to reverse the downward spiral of our American economy. Congress has passed several bills to reverse the trend but as of now it appears that nothing is working. The latest effort passed is known as the "Stimulus Bill", which some think will be the answer. It seems that we, as Americans and our congressional body, think the solution to any problem is to "throw" money at it and solutions will come. I am convinced that the problem with our nation is not monetary but is morality.

We as a nation cannot continue to

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thumb our nose at God's standards of morality and decency and not expect God to bring judgment.

The greatest Stimulus available to America is the return to obeying God's Word, which was and is the greatest and surest return to prosperity. Second Chronicles 7:14, is the STIMULUS that America needs, but to be effective it must be followed in its entirety.

Beginning with the events of 911 and even in this time of recession, some have humbled ourselves to pray, we sought God's face but we have failed to turn from our wicked ways. America, as a nation has not turned. We continue in our ungodly practice of pursuing sins that God has forbidden through His commandments, then we wonder why our land has not been healed. We sought God's blessings based upon what we wanted and not

what was right. The scripture says, for God's people, to humble our selves, to pray, to turn from wicked ways, THEN, HE will hear and heal our land.

As of this writing, I have not heard anyone in government, beginning with the President on down even hint at this being the stimulus that America needs. Let us pray that God will awaken our leaders to the fact that God's stimulus package of II Chronicles 7:14 is the answer to our plight.

Pray for our leaders that God will have mercy on our nation and change their hearts and ways. I Timothy 2:1-2 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Don't Be Intimidated

by Bro. Robert Varn
Jacksonville, Florida

God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). From this verse, it is clear that God formed Jeremiah in his mother's womb, God set him apart for a holy use, and God ordained him to be a prophet unto the nations.

God is the creator of us all. Each of us was formed by God in our mother's womb! Recently, George Tiller, an abortionist, was shot and killed. He was not a true doctor because real doctors heal and help people. Abortionists kill children in the womb. However, I am against vigilantism, and I oppose us taking matters into our own hands by

personally shooting an abortionist or any other evil person.

I am a peaceful, pro-life activist. I am against violence of any kind against pro-abortion people. Everyone I know in the pro-life movement feels the same way! I have honestly never met anyone in the pro-life movement who condones violence against pro-abortionists. The vigilantes who have killed abortionists have acted alone and do not represent the pro-life community.

On the other hand, I DO support legal protections for the unborn, and I DO think that any abortionist that kills an unborn child should be tried by a court of law and, when convicted, should be executed just like any other murderer. Needless to say, any person

who is performing abortions should be excommunicated from the Church.

Sometimes when vigilantism occurs, many pro-lifers retreat or drop out altogether because of intimidation. Some are afraid others will think they also want to personally kill abortionists, and they therefore stop taking a right stand for fear of being misunderstood. The devil is proud when any soldier of Jesus Christ retreats from the battle to save unborn children. When we are intimidated, the unborn ultimately suffer!

May God bless us all to get involved in the pro-life movement! May we never retreat when a renegade does something deplorable. And may our Heavenly Father keep His protective hedge around you as you fight the good fight of faith!

The Little Red Bird

by Sis. Sarah D. Ledger
Bartow, Georgia

Between the two wings in our local hospital, there is a little patio. There are seating arrangements, a pretty bird bath, and several bird feeders placed around the area. A door from a nearby hall opens out into the area, so that visitors may go out for quiet time or to possibly use their cell phones in privacy. Some hospital employee apparently looks after the area, for it is well kept and the feeders filled. The patio is visible from the patient rooms.

My husband was recently a patient in the hospital. For several days, he was really sick, so we didn't spend much time looking out his window. On the day that he was dismissed, he and I were sitting by his window waiting on his nurse to bring his papers and in-

structions. I happened to glance down at the window sill. Sitting on it was a little red bird. We could tell that she was the female because her coloring was not very bright and she was small. She apparently had eaten and was just enjoying the sunshine of this beautiful morning. As we watched her, every once in a while her eyes would droop, almost as if she were nodding off. My husband and I both love birds and we watched her for several minutes. His nurse came in with his papers and when we looked back, she was gone. We do not know what happened to her.

I gained a great deal of strength that day from this little bird. She reminded me that the Scriptures teach us that

God watches over these little feathered creatures and knows when one of them loses his life. He had also been watching over my husband and our family, just as he was with the gentleman and his wife next door to my husband, and the lady and her family up the hall from him. We serve a powerful God Who is present everywhere at the same time and has all things under His control.

My husband is now doing nicely and seems to be gaining a little strength every day. We have no idea what happened to the little bird. Hopefully, she is preparing her nest somewhere. We do know that our Father knows all about her, just as He knows and cares all about us.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

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|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Ready - Matthew 25:10 | 6. Foot - Ecclesiastes 5:1 |
| 2. Ye - Matthew 24:44 | 7. Glad - Revelation 19:7 |
| 3. Distribute - I Timothy 6:18 | 8. Bound - Acts 21:13 |
| 4. Always - I Peter 5:2 | 9. Prepared - Matthew 22:4 |
| 5. Flock - I Peter 5:2 | 10. Offered - II Timothy 4:6 |

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Your financial support to continue spreading the truth of salvation by grace is much needed! Please send a contribution today and ask the church of your membership to help also.

To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge.

To do the will of God is the greatest achievement. George W. Truett

Today Is My Gift!!

by Sis. Leslie Tucker Lanier
Waycross, Georgia
(Continued from July)

Two and a half years later, Lord, You blessed us once again to be an aunt and uncle. Kaitlin was going to be a big sister. We were all so excited!!! Michaela, God blessed our lives with you on September 13th, my granddaddy's birthday! We were living in Augusta at the time and received the call. I checked Logan out of school, then the children and I headed to Statesboro for your delivery! We were most helpful with Kaitlin. We picked her up from school that day and came to the hospital so she could see her mom and dad. Then I took her to Meme's and we cooked chocolate chip cookies so she could have something to bring to her family when she met you for the first time!!! I didn't get to meet you, Michaela, until about 24 hours after your birth, but oh, how sweet you were! We sat in the chair and rocked and sang! I will never forget your first smell, the feeling that you actually favored my own babies and how sweet you were! Thank You, Lord, for that minute!

Dear Lord, You've blessed our little family! We enjoy going everywhere together. Yes, we can be apart for some time, but we come back together at home with You in it, Lord, as our refuge! Kelvin lost a job; we got desperate; he went to truck driving school; then he was gone from my life, Lord, six days a week! Our life together hasn't been perfect because, Lord, You made us and You know us! You led us eventually out of Active Duty Air Force and back to Waycross, Georgia, the hometown I said I'd never return to! Wow! After nine years of marriage, for the first time ever, within 2 weeks, Kelvin and I were FINALLY members of the same church! Wait a minute. How'd that happen? We NEVER missed a service without each other. In two more weeks, my first born was a member, Lord! Wow!

My life was overwhelming! You were pouring out the blessings! Kelvin was blessed with a job in Waycross, to be at home at every meal at our table, Lord! Thank You!!! The following year things were tight; I prayed and prayed. I was blessed by You, Lord, to be at home with my children for eight years. Was it time to return to work? The only job I could've said yes to, Lord, You practically laid in front of me! My faith in You getting that job, Lord, was totally if You wanted me there! I was so blessed to be a secretary in the elementary school my 1st and 3rd grader would be in. You blessed me in my job, Lord!

But, Lord, before You blessed me with my job, You blessed me with a great doctor here in Waycross! I have had female trouble my entire life, and at 32, for the first time, I had a doctor agree with me, and I had a hysterectomy two months later!!! Some say "Why Waycross?" And I remember that I was living in Augusta with the BEST doctors. Thank You, Lord, for your timing! My children were 5 and 6! They still needed guidance, but Lord, they were fine! The next couple of years, I felt better and better and better! Wow! Lord, thank You for blessing me to have my children so early in my marriage because I was told by these doctors that by what they found, I should've never carried a baby full term! Wow! Lord, thank You for that minute! I had always considered my children miracles, but at that very minute, I KNEW they were miracles: pure gifts from You, Lord!

I've said all that to thank You, Lord, for the blessings along the way in my life, and to take the past nine months and thank You, Lord, for them, too! You've blessed Kelvin to stay in the Air National Guard since the Air Force, Lord, because that was such an impor-

tant part of our lives! In August, You allowed Kelvin to go to California for four months for training and test us again! Little did we know at the time, that wasn't the test, Lord! My greatest fear was that my husband would not return safely to me and my children in December, that we had said goodbye. The day after he left, You blessed me to witness a fatal train accident first-hand, standing in the street intersection with the cell phone on my ear to 9-11, and screaming at the engineer of the train in the cold, wet rain knowing there was nothing he could do! You showed me Your control, Lord, and wow! Did You put my life into perspective! Two weeks later, my best friend called me and said, "Leslie, I have cancer!" Wow, Lord, just when I thought my life was getting rocky, You took my best friend and flipped it all around and made me take care of her! Thank You, Lord, for removing my husband, so I could take care of my friend! Thank You, Lord, for the many talks, many prayers, feeling the Kingdom together with my best friend in what should've been the worst time of our lives!!! Nearly a month later, my mom called, "Your father has aneurysms, bladder cancer, and several other things!" Wow, Lord!!! All of this within a month!! I became frightened, I became scared, and I became a ball of tears!!! My friend had faith, Lord, greater faith than I could've ever imagined! I wanted her faith, Lord! I asked even again, "Are You preparing me for the death of my husband?" I knew by October, when You blessed me to fly out with my children to see Kelvin in California that You weren't through with us yet! I kept questioning You, Lord. What could You be preparing me for? Then, I did it, Lord; I gave it ALL to You! I said, Lord, how can You touch my life the way You have, and then me worry

about You preparing me for something bad? You always brought me through! You, all at once, Lord, made me be able to face the death of EVERYONE close to me!!! How overwhelming, Lord. I could not do it without You! Thank You, Lord, for that minute! I gave them all to You and told You, Lord that You knew the big picture and said You knew best, and whatever You were preparing me for had to be okay because it was in Your control! It was then, Lord, my husband came home! It was then, Lord, my best friend called and said, "I'm cancer free!" It was then, Lord, my mom called and said, "Guess what, Daddy's got no bladder cancer this time! He's going to be fine!" It was then, I wondered, Lord! I knew without any doubt that was a journey in my life for me and for no one but me! You were the one who put my co-workers, friends, family, church family in my life, real-life people, Lord, who eat, breathe, smell and live You!!! Thank You for that!

You brought me to four weeks ago! I had an annual check-up at the doctor. My medical history had changed, Lord, and I was scared, but needed to share this with the doctor. You gave me not only the grace, but the wisdom of the doctor. I had a large cyst! At this doctor's visit, You placed his hand there, and said, "Take a look at this." Within four days, I was running around town so many times, Lord; many tests were in store for me! Fear? No, Lord, not this time! This is what You've been preparing me for! One of my co-worker's words to me were, "God knew it was there before you did!" Wow! How deep was that, Lord, for me and You, and where we've been? I was okay with whatever! You placed me in the situation of death with every one of my closest, but what about me? The table was now turned! I shared my news with my boss! Lord, thank You for giving me my boss!!! WOW!!!! It was the ending of the school year, and we were counting down the days! She said, "We'll do what we've got to do. God can do ALL things"! Thank You, Lord, for her! In

the meantime, I found out it was highly unlikely to be cancer, but was very big and surgery needed to be done ASAP. Then it was scheduled two weeks later! Lord, I'm okay! I worked for those two weeks making sure everything was in place before my surgery! I would miss the last three days of school and all of post-planning! I was okay, Lord! I was going to miss my daughter's 5th grade honor's program and my 3rd grade son's, but you allowed my husband to take off and be there, Lord; something he's never gotten to do!

The morning of surgery, I went to both of my children's bedrooms and kissed their foreheads and left for the hospital! Before I went into surgery, Lord, there were my favorite people staring me in the face – my husband, my best friend, my mom, my dad, my pastor and a Christian nurse! When she started to give the sleepy meds, my pastor asked if he could pray. I watched the nurse lay the needle down and grab hands with my family! Thank You, Lord, for that minute! I have never seen an operating room before. I was too sleepy the other times. But I saw this one shortly and then, I woke up! A nurse was poking my other arm and telling me she was giving me more pain medications! Then, Lord, I felt your presence! You looked at me and said, "Leslie, things are touch and go down there. How do you feel about that?" My whole life flashed before my eyes and I said, "Lord, you are in control of my life! I am okay with Your decision! If taking me out of the lives of those I love is the best thing for them, then do it, Lord! They're Yours and always have been! I'm Yours – always have been. Your timing is perfect!" The next thing I know, I wake up!!!! I'm in recovery and I remember my first words "Thank You, Lord," and then I ask for a phone, Lord. I needed to talk to Kelvin! He was in the room waiting to see me, Lord and shared everything with me on the phone! My cyst was attached to everything: my colon, my intestines, my pelvic bone, my ovaries, etc. and it had burst during surgery. What was

supposed to take 1 ½ hours took 5 ½ hours, Lord, and You were there holding my hand the whole time! The doctor nicked my bladder during surgery, Lord, and You gave the doctor the wisdom to know and repair it immediately! A nurse stuck herself during surgery with one of my needles, and Kelvin had to give consent for tests. I lost half of my blood during surgery, Lord, but I was breathing on my own!!!! They took me to my room! I was in the hallway waiting to see my family (who were in my room), and my beautiful daughter and my handsome son ran to my side and said, "Hey, Mama!!" I smiled! Yes, Lord, that's who I needed to see when I woke up! Yes, Lord, I'm thankful You chose to make that a good moment for my children! Thank You, Lord, for that minute!

The next morning, my doctor came in. Thankful to You, I had felt no pain! He said, "Your blood's low – we've got to give you blood". I said, "I know the numbers. How low?" He said, "The hemoglobin is 6.5". I agreed to the transfusion, Lord, and then I became scared. You, Lord, put my husband at my bed to squeeze my hand as the blood went all the way down the IV into my veins, Lord! Now, I look back and laugh that that scared me. It's not the first time You've given me blood! You were there; I will never forget the peace You gave me at that minute, Lord! Thank You for that minute! On Day 3, I did get released from the hospital to be under the care of my mom and husband, Lord! Thank You for them! They worked around the clock for me when I could not even talk. I could not lift a spoon. I could not eat. I could not go to the bathroom on my own! On Day 8, I gave up the pain meds. I wasn't hurting so far and wanted to see how far I could go with You on that, Lord! On Day 9, I went for my follow-up appointment! No cancer was confirmed! My bladder was healed; my blood levels were normal with 4 days of no iron, and I was feeling pretty good! Thank You, Lord, for that minute, and for blessing Michelle to share that with me!

Today is day 10, Lord! I feel great!!! I was myself today, except for sharing my story with everyone! I'm new, Lord! Lord, I know I need You every step of the way! I know I'm not healed, Lord,

and tomorrow is not promised, (I'm still singing "I Don't Know About Tomorrow"), but I've also learned through this that TODAY, Lord, was not something I begged You for. It was in Your control

to give my family TODAY with me!!!!!! May I show You for the rest of my life how thankful I am for TODAY, until You do make the other choice, Lord! Because, my friends, Today is my Gift!!!!!!

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Be of Good Courage!

by Bro. Tyler Murray
(23 year old student of UGA)
Athens, Georgia

A few years ago, my Uncle was diagnosed with testicular cancer that spread through parts of his body. The Lord blessed him as he went through chemotherapy, and today he no longer has cancer. The only problem with it afterwards was the fact the doctors said that it could be inherited. I saw this as a sign it could happen to me as well.

A few months ago, I started to notice a problem. I went to see a doctor about having a test run to see what was happening. A couple of days later, I had surgery, which was less than a month ago. I was diagnosed with testicular cancer. Well, now it has been a few weeks and all during this time, our God has really blessed me! Also, the cancer I had was not inherited, and did not spread throughout my body. The doctor was able to remove all of the cancer, and I have been blessed with the options of not doing anything, having two treatments of a mild chemo, or

radiation for a couple of weeks. After a televised conference with my problem being the topic of the day, some doctors recommended that I do the chemo as a precaution to stop it from ever coming back. I will have my first treatment this week.

Our God has been with me every step of the way! In Joshua 1:9, I was reminded of an important truth: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." The whole time I went through this, I knew not to worry, because God still has many great plans for me do in this life. He gave me great peace in my soul!

It is amazing to see the power of God! I feel this step in life I am going through is also part of God's plan to show the power of prayer. In Luke 11:9-13 the Lord says, "And I say unto you,

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." I have been so blessed! There have been so many people from school, friends of friends, the members and friends of the Waycross Primitive Baptist Church, and many other brothers and sisters in Christ who have been praying for me! I thank God for each of them. God teaches us to ask Him for blessings. He pours out His blessings abundantly upon us every day. May God bless you, as he has done for me.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

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Isn't It Funny!

Funny how a \$10 bill looks so big when you take it to worship, but so small when you take it to the supermarket.

Funny how reading the church bulletin is a chore, but reading a 30 page newspaper is easy.

Funny how long an hour is spent in worship, but how short it is when golfing, fishing, or attending a ball game.

Funny how we applaud when the ball game goes into overtime, but we

complain if the worship hour is over the regular time.

Funny how laborious it is to read a chapter in the Bible, but how easy it is to read a novel.

Funny how people scramble to get a front seat at the ball game, but scramble to get a back seat at church services.

Funny how we can't fit a Gospel Meeting into our schedule with a year to plan for it, but we can adjust our

schedule for other events at a moment's notice.

Funny that parents are so concerned about school lessons, but are completely unconcerned about Bible study.

All of this would be funny...if...it weren't so tragic! This is so tragic, yet so true, of the average church member today.

Author Unknown

Where Does My Strength Come From?

by Bro. Richard Lee
Waycross, Georgia

Human nature is to talk to others about things we don't like, and to tell others how we have been negatively affected by anything in our lives. For some of us, this is largely what our conversations center around. Recently, I have spent much of what could have been productive time doing this.

Within the last 6 months, the company that I work for bought another company twice our size. It seemed that our company had done a better job of managing because we had a large cash reserve, while the company we bought had a large debt; however, we started adopting several of their policies. Because we as humans don't like change, this led to our murmuring and questioning those in authority over us. I should have had more faith. Those same senior managers who had steered our company to success were the same ones who were still making the right decisions and bringing these new programs to us. Instead of complaining, I should have embraced these new policies and helped to implement them. After all, this is why I am paid. I have agreed to work for this company to lead my employees in these things. If I make excuses, what do you think the other employees will do?

In God's word, this is called murmuring. I saw two very clear pictures of what our Heavenly Father thinks about our murmuring. In Exodus, we learn how God had been faithfully providing miracles and manna to the children of Israel after he delivered them from bondage at the hands of the Egyptians. God had just freed them from slavery, parted the Red Sea so they could pass through, and then used the same water to destroy the Egyptian army behind them, and much more. During this journey, in the midst of these miracles (Numbers 11),

the children of Israel started murmuring about what they had to eat. The manna was good and nutritious, but they (as is human nature) wanted flesh to eat. After they started murmuring and crying, they even said, "why came we forth out of Egypt?" God was so displeased with these people that He said He would send enough meat for them to eat "until it come out at your nostrils and it be loathsome unto you: because **that ye have despised the Lord which is among you,..**"

Have you ever murmured about something that God provided? If so, we see how God views our ungratefulness.

Next, in verses 21-22, Moses reminded God that there were 600,000 footmen, and that God had said He would give enough meat for them to eat for a month. Moses questioned God about how He would provide, "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" In verse 23, God corrected Moses by asking, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Later in verse 31, you will see that God did deliver quail about 3 feet high for a day's journey around the camp. While they were yet eating the quail, God smote them with a plague and killed "the people that lusted".

In Numbers 13 & 14, we read another story where faith in God is absent from some of the children of Israel. God brought these people to the border of the land of Canaan and sent 12 spies into the land to return and give a report on what they saw. The report they gave (Numbers 13:27,28) was "surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the peo-

ple be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great..." Numbers 13:31 reads, "...we be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." In Numbers 14:1 it reads, "...the people wept that night." Then, in Numbers 14:2-3, we read, "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" Next, they even made plans to return to Egypt!

Caleb and Joshua, who were two of the original spies sent into Canaan land, said, "it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delights in us then he will bring us into this land and give it us."

Notice the contrast in the attitudes of these two groups! The end result was that Caleb and Joshua entered into this Promised Land and their seed possessed it. The rest of the murmuring children of Israel "either died by the plague before the Lord" or were sent away to wander in the wilderness until their death. Their joy was gone because they had no faith. They made their choice to die in the wilderness. Had they chosen to exercise their faith and believe God, they would have enjoyed the abundant life as long as they believed and followed God.

Sometimes I get caught in the trap of believing, "I murmur about some things, but I wouldn't murmur against God". After I studied these scriptures, I now believe that if we murmur at all about what we have or what situation we have been dealt, it is murmuring

against God. Also remember that you can't serve God while murmuring! In fact, you will go backward in your service.

We should always remember that even when we are faced with trials and tribulations, God knew of it before it happened. This is the time we should continue to exercise our faith. We have two choices, 1) choose what the 10 murmuring spies did and murmur and lose our faith and joy; **OR** 2) see the opportunity in all things as Caleb and Joshua did and trust in

God. The lesson I hope I have learned is that when faced with a situation, we can choose to perceive it as something terrible and murmur about it, displeasing God and losing our joy, **OR** we can choose to realize that God has lost none of His power, and we must have faith that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

The land of Canaan that Caleb and Joshua enjoyed is a natural picture of a spiritual land that God leads His children to every day. This is the Kingdom of Heaven which is here on earth where

Jesus comes to dwell with His obedient children. We make choices that either allow us to press into this righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17), or we make choices that keep us from entering this kingdom of heaven, and we will experience a separation from fellowship with God.

With God's help, we can make the choices to have faith in God, and receive the strength we need to cross into this Heaven while we live here on this earth.

* * * * *

Satan 's Plan

Satan called a worldwide convention of demons. In his opening address he said, "We can't keep Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate relationship with their Savior.

"Once they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to their churches, let them have their covered-dish dinners, but steal their time, so they don't have time to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do," said the devil. "Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" his demons shouted.

"Keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6- 7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their families fragment, soon their

homes will offer no escape from the pressures of work!

"Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice. Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive...to keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their homes and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotional offering free products, services and false hopes.

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines and TV so their husbands will believe that outward beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Keep the wives too tired to love their husbands at night. Give them headaches too! If they don't give their husbands the love they need, they will begin to look elsewhere. That will fragment their families quickly!

"Give them Santa Claus to distract them from teaching their children the real meaning of Christmas. Give them

the Easter Bunny so they won't talk about His resurrection and power over sin and death. Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted. Keep them too busy to go out in nature and reflect on God's creation. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, plays, concerts, and movies instead.

"Keep them busy, busy, busy!! And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, let them leave with troubled consciences. Crowd their lives with so many good causes they have no time to seek power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! It will work!"

It was quite a plan! The demons went eagerly to their assignments, causing Christians everywhere to have little time for their God or their families, having no time to tell others about the power of Jesus to change lives. I guess the question is...has the devil been successful at his scheme??? You be the judge.

Does "busy" mean:

- B**-eing
- U**-nder
- S**-atan's
- Y**-oke???

Bible Reading Calendar for August

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Psalms 62,63,64	Romans 1
2	Psalms 65,66,67	Romans 2
3	Psalms 68,69	Romans 3
4	Psalms 70,71,72	Romans 4
5	Psalms 73,74	Romans 5
6	Psalms 75,76,77	Romans 6
7	Psalms 78	Romans 7
8	Psalms 79,80,81	Romans 8:1-18
9	Psalms 82,83,84	Romans 8:19-39
10	Psalms 85,86,87	Romans 9
11	Psalms 88,89	Romans 10
12	Psalms 90,91,92	Romans 11:1-21
13	Psalms 93,94,95	Romans 11:22-36
14	Psalms 96,97,98	Romans 12
15	Psalms 99-102	Romans 13

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Psalms 103,104	Romans 14
17	Psalms 105,106	Romans 15:1-20
18	Psalms 107,108	Romans 15:21-33
19	Psalms 109-111	Romans 16
20	Psalms 112-115	I Cor. 1
21	Psalms 116-118	I Cor. 2
22	Psalms 119:1-48	I Cor. 3
23	Psalms 119:49-104	I Cor. 4
24	Psalms 119:105-176	I Cor. 5
25	Psalms 120-123	I Cor. 6
26	Psalms 124-127	I Cor. 7:1-24
27	Psalms 128-131	I Cor. 7:25-40
28	Psalms 132-135	I Cor. 8
29	JPsalms 136-138	I Cor. 9
30	Psalms 139-141	I Cor. 10:1-13
31	Psalms 142-144	I Cor. 10:14-33

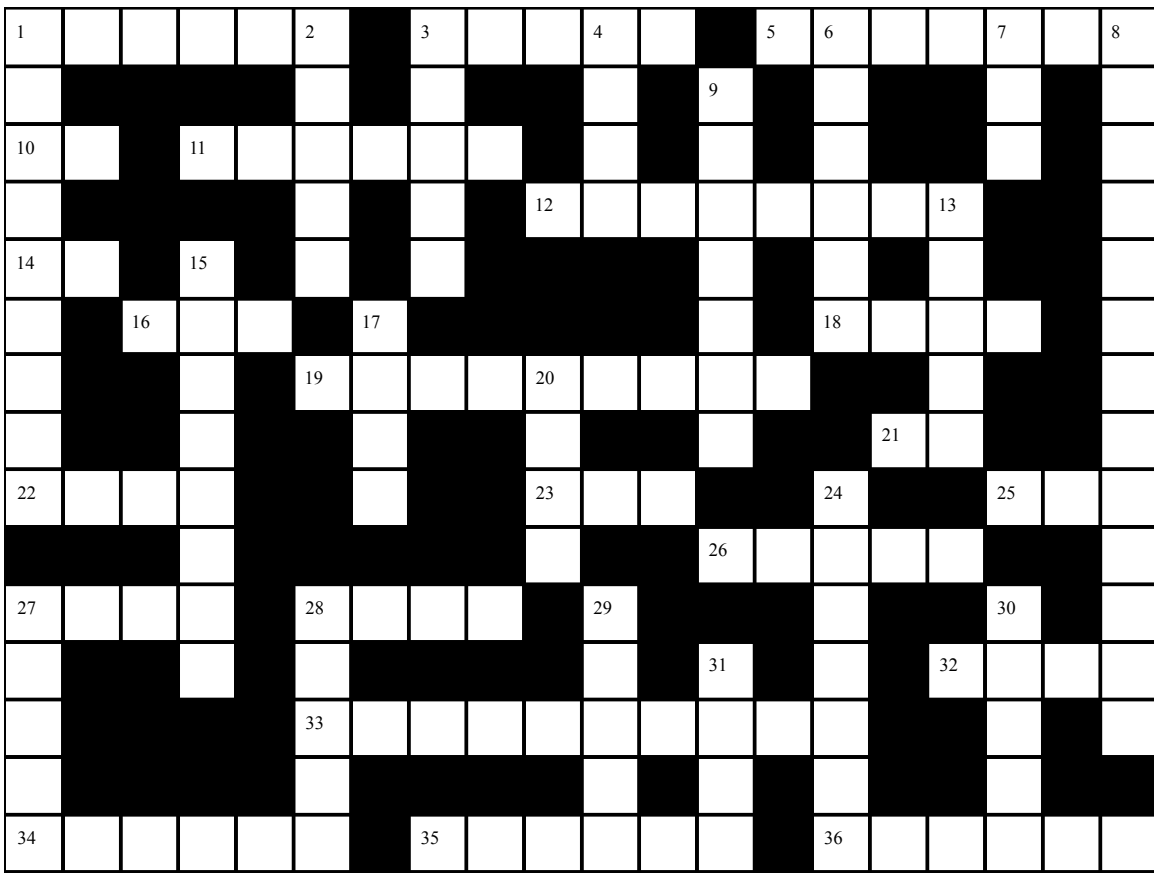
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
JULY 09**

1	R	I	G	H	2	T	E	3	O	U	S	4	S	U	5	F	F	I	C	I	E	N	6	T		
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7	P	E	A	C	E		F			8	M		R		9	E	L	D	E	R				A		
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16	D	E	A	D			O					17	P	R	E	D	18	E	S	T	I	19	N	A	T	E
				L			20	A	R	E						I						O				S
21	L	E	T				K			22	M	I	N	D			23	A	N	Y		T				S
	O			24	P			25	M				K									26	D			I
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33	R	E	D	E	M	P	T	I	O	N					34	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R			

Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "I ____ thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;" 3. "And thou shalt ____ them diligently, unto thy children;..." 5. "My little children, let us not love in word, ____ in tongue; but in deed and in truth." 10. "I will lift ____ mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." 11. "God ____; yea let God be true, but every man a liar;..." 12. "But evil men and ____ shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 14. "And he said to them all, ____ any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." 16. "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with ____ of the Holy Ghost" 18. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain ____ build it..." 19. "So that ye were ____ to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 21. "For by grace are ____ saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." 22. "And thou shalt write them upon the ____ posts of thine house, and upon thy gates;" 23. "Whether therefore ye ____, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 25. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down ____ life for us:..." 26. "He that saith he abideth in him ____ himself also so to walk, even as he walked." 27. "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will ____ bread from heaven for you;..." 28. "And now also the ax is ____ unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." 32. "...Fear God, and keep his commandments: for ____ is the whole duty of man." 33. "...O ____ of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" 34. "... shall their unbelief make the faith of God without ____?" 35. "...if there be any ____, and if there be any praise, think on these things." 36. "Then said Jesus unto the ____, will ye also go away?"



DOWN

1. "I am ____ with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me " 2. "...Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of ____." 3. "Therefore it is no great ____ if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness;..." 4. "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, ____ ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat;..." 6. " ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." 7. "But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need,... ____ dwelleth the love of God in him?" 8. "I do not frustrate the grace of God. for if ____ come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." 9. "For from you ____ but the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God ____ ward is spread abroad;..." 13. "That four days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord ____ unto your fathers to give them, as the days of leaven upon the earth." 15. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the ____; continue in them:..." 17. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves ____ the apostles of Christ. 20 "Bring forth therefore fruits ____ for repentance." 24. "He that is not with me is ____ me;..." 27. "...for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to ____ up children unto Abraham" 28. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of ____." 29. "Not of works, lest any man should ____." 30. "Therefore ____ ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes." 31. "From that ____ many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

SENIOR VERSION OF "JESUS LOVES ME"

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me, this I know,
Though my hair is
white as snow;
Though my sight
is growing dim,
Still He bids me
trust in Him.

(CHORUS)

YES, JESUS LOVES ME!
YES, JESUS LOVES ME!
YES, JESUS LOVES ME!
FOR THE BIBLE
TELLS ME SO.
Though my steps

are oh, so slow,
With my hand in
His I'll go;
On through life,
let come what may,
He'll be there
to lead the way.

(CHORUS)

When the nights
are dark and long,
In my heart He puts a song.
Telling me in words so clear,
'Have no fear, for I am near.'

(CHORUS)

When my work
on earth is done,
I'll no longer
need earth's sun.
He will take
me home above,
Then I'll understand
His love.

(CHORUS)

I love Jesus, this I know.
But I need to let it flow.
Jesus loves to see me walk,
Like I sing, and like I talk.

Adapted

You and I know and do not believe that life is so dear and peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery. If nothing is worth dying for, when did this begin....?...Should Moses have told the children of Israel to live in slavery under the pharaohs? Should Christ have refused the cross? Should the patriots of Concord Bridge have thrown down their guns and refused to fire the shot heard 'round the world? The martyrs of history were not fools, and our honored dead who gave their lives to stop the advance of the Nazis didn't die in vain! Ronald Reagan

***Happy moments, PRAISE GOD. Difficult moments, SEEK GOD.
Quiet moments, WORSHIP GOD. Painful moments, TRUST GOD.
Every moment, THANK GOD!***