

Obituary & Eulogy for a Longtime Friend

Today, we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in the bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; life isn't always fair; and maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (do not spend more than you earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when dictatorial federal regulations and unsound philosophical thinking were set in place. Parents and schools began developing a "no spanking" policy. Bible reading and prayers at home and schools became taboo and unimportant. Mothers and fathers became career-oriented rather than family-oriented. A lack of respect for parents,

teachers, and other authorities led to his further deterioration in health.

Common Sense lost ground when parents began attacking teachers for doing the job that they themselves failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. He declined even further when schools were required to get parental permission to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student, but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became businesses, social institutions, and fellowship gatherings rather than places of worship. He became much weaker when the churches refused to discipline her erring members, and a requirement for any level of decency of members was abandoned.

Common Sense took a beating when criminals received better treatment than their victims, prisoners lived in better conditions than those working

for minimum wages; and you could not defend yourself from a burglar in your own home without the possibility of the burglar being able to sue you for assault!

Common Sense finally lost the will to live when a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. When she spilled the cup of coffee in her lap, she was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason. He is survived by his four step-brothers: I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame, and I'm A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. However, a few are now working to raise his son and daughter, as well as support his wife and parents. There is much prayer and hope that through his son, we may once again see Common Sense.

Abstinence

by Robert Varn
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When the subject of abstinence comes up, most people picture the subject evolving around high school age students. God's word teaches His children of all ages to abstain from sexual intercourse outside of marriage. More adults are waiting later in life to take on the heavy task of marriage; therefore they must abstain that much longer.

I know it is extremely hard for people under the age of twenty-one to resist, but I've recently come to

the conclusion that things are harder as you get older! The reason being that society teaches once you are an independent adult, you are free to do as you please.

There are a number of unmarried professing Christians with whom I have talked that leave the sacrifice of abstinence out of their lives. The reason many claim for doing this is they think it is unrealistic to abstain before marriage. I know this to be untrue because Christ taught in II

Corinthians 12 that "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Any sin we try to resist is possible, with the help of Jesus Christ.

If we live like our flesh tells us to, we can end up in a world of hurt. God says it's wrong, and God is the same yesterday, today, and forever! May God help us to abstain regardless of age!

Effective Discipline

by Elder Geg Phillips
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The fourth quality Jesus looks for in His churches is effective discipline. This was expressed in His letter to the believers in Thyatira (Revelation 2:18-29). After praising them for their service and persistence, He said, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (Revelation 2:20).

Although we do not know who this Jezebel was, from the allusion we may take it for granted she was a woman of power and influence in Thyatira, who corrupted the true religion, and harassed the followers of God in that city, as Jezebel did in Israel. The name may have been symbolic for some prominent woman in the church in Thyatira who was very much like Jezebel of the Old Testament.

Jezebel was the wife of Ahab; a woman of vast influence over her husband--an influence which was uniformly exerted for evil. She was a daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon, and lived about 918 years before Christ. She was an idolater, and induced her weak husband not only to scheme with her in introducing the worship of her native idols, but to become an idolater himself, and to use all the means in his power to establish the worship of idols instead of the worship of the true God.

It appears that no one was confronting this false prophetess and dealing with her about her teachings and practices. She encouraged fornication among the church as did Jezebel of the Old Testament. It is not clear whether "fornication" is to be understood literally, or, as often in the Old Testament, in the spiritual sense of idolatry. The former seems more probable. Jesus

used that prophetic name to show His intense displeasure of her influence.

They allowed her to work her evil influences over the people in the church. It is not said that Jezebel received sympathy or encouragement, but merely that she was let alone; her wickedness was left unchecked, and that is sinful.

Christ was displeased with the true members for suffering (allowing) this blatant misuse of teaching in His church. It is the duty of the church to keep herself clean and clear of false teachings. In this case, it was a dangerous and diabolical attempt to overthrow the faith of the faithful, and to usurp authority that rightly belonged only to God Himself. There is indeed a lesson for our churches in this record.

In the letter to the church in Pergamos, false doctrine had crept into the church and was to be confronted. In the church at Thyatira, a false teacher was spreading false teaching and that individual was to be dealt with. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

There has been a lot of confusion about discipline in the churches. There has been too much of the wrong kind and not enough of the necessary kind. None can deny that Jesus taught that the church should maintain herself in His doctrine and practices. The entrance of any error should be handled immediately. The guilty party must be confronted and dealt with.

Discipline in the church is to be administered by the church as a body. It is not the responsibility of the pas-

tor to administer discipline. The pastor has the responsibility to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2). He is to advise and lead the congregation in all matters, but it is the congregation that is to discipline itself.

As well, there is no instance in Scripture of the deacons having responsibility for discipline in the church above any other member. Each believer is to practice self discipline. If one fails to discipline himself, his spiritual brethren should seek to correct him. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). If those efforts fail and the offense is public and brings a reproach on the church, then the entire body must deal with the matter.

There are some today who do not believe in strict church discipline. They say that every Christian should be judged only by God. They justify their position by quoting the words of the Lord, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). They seem to forget that the Master also said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). The term "judge" is used in more than one sense, but Christ's meaning is plain. (1) He does not prohibit the civil judgment of the courts upon evil doers, for this is approved throughout the Bible. (2) He does not prohibit the judgment of the church upon those who walk disorderly, for both He and the apostles have taught this. (3) He does not forbid those private judgments that we are compelled to form of the wrongdoers, for He Himself tells us that we are to judge men by their fruits. (See Matthew 7:15-20.) What He prohibits is

rash, uncharitable judgments, a fault-finding spirit, a disposition to condemn without examination of charges. The word judge in Matthew 7:1 is from the Greek krino. Our word critic is from this very word. It means to separate, distinguish, discriminate. We must "judge righteous judgment," looking at the word of God and seeking what its spirit really requires.

Matthew, chapter eighteen, deals with personal offenses between brethren, but the church may have to deal with public offenses against the entire church as well. A case in point is found in I Corinthians chapter five, where a gross sin was being committed without any interference from the church, even though it was well known by the members. The Church of God was likely being mocked and scorned by infidels for tolerating a kind of licentiousness which was not tolerated even by the heathens. Paul reproved them for being puffed up with pride even while this scandal existed in their church.

It was a terrible, unthinkable sin, namely, fornication and that of the worst kind. Actually it was incest, something that even the most worldly-minded usually openly disavowed. But the church did nothing. Paul had heard about this and wrote to them, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (I Corinthians 5:4-6).

The last part of verse six gives us a powerful reason for maintaining discipline in the church. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" A small quantity of leaven or yeast will pervade the entire mass of flour, or dough, and diffuse itself through it all. By leaven the Hebrews metaphorically understood sin and false teaching had the power of corrupting, whether doctrine, example,

or anything else. Consider as well the pervasive power of disease germs in the body as they spread through the body.

The sense here is plain. A single sin indulged in, or allowed in the church, would act like leaven--it would pervade and corrupt the whole church unless it was removed. On this ground, and for this reason, discipline should be administered, and the corrupt member should be removed.

The purification of the church by removal of the offenders is compared to the removal of leaven from Jewish homes at the feast of the Passover (Exodus 12:15,19; 13:3,7). "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7).

The problem in the church in Thyatira was a compound one. The woman Jezebel was apparently teaching in the church in violation of apostolic command. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:11-12). She "callest herself a prophetess," though clearly she was not. She was teaching false doctrine, and her teaching was leading others to sin. Paul said, "...a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and there was more than a little leaven here.

While the church had not dealt with this situation, the Lord would not allow it to continue very long. "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Revelation 2:22-23). The Lord had been longsuffering with this woman and the church, but the time of mercy was at an end. "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not" (Revelation 2:21).

The Lord said, "Behold, I will cast her

into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation," and "...I will kill her children with death." Jezebel and her followers would be dealt with in a very severe manner. But notice that the Lord also speaks of the church: "...and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Because the church had not dealt with this situation, she would face the Lord's judgment for her failure. We dishonor God when we fail to confront and discipline people who are erring in doctrine or in living or in both. That failure weakens the testimony of a church and harms the offender by encouraging him to continue in his evil course. Our Lord requires effective discipline in His churches.

The correct approach to discipline is for each one of us to first be on our guard. We must know the truth ourselves so that we might detect the slightest wanderings from it. By that I mean truth of doctrine and godly practices in line with that doctrine. When the spiritual minds in the church detect any such departures they should lovingly and faithfully approach the instigators, and kindly reprove them for their mistakes. The beginning of discipline must always be motivated by love. Love for the church is essential. Love for the truth of Christ in the church is even more important. But it must not be forgotten that love for the aggrieved party is Christ-like. We must aim for restoration rather than separation and accomplish restoration if possible.

Some churches have gone about housecleaning recklessly and without divine guidance. They have especially gone about disciplining without love, without that prayerful desire to save rather than to destroy.

Extreme cases of discipline may require the excluding of a member from the fellowship of the church. Actually, the erring member, by his own action, has excluded himself from the fellowship of the church. The church is only required to recognize that fact by declaring that it will not fellowship ungodly acts. Paul called this action

delivering "... such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5).

Again, church discipline should always be done in prayer and love, with the idea of saving rather than destroying. Even Paul, ardent in his defense of the gospel, had that in mind when he invoked his apostolic authority in delivering people over to Satan. It was so, as he said, that the flesh may be diseased, but the soul purified during the punishment. Saving one from the error of his ways and restoration was paramount to him. So should it be in

every God fearing mind. Nothing cures or brings a child of God to his knees quicker than sudden and severe trials. That was Paul's main reason for using such authority.

It must be realized that in every church there is the possibility of such things coming to pass. It is known through history that there have been heresies and heretics in the church. He who forsakes the truth in Christ Jesus, who brings false doctrines which corrupt the faith and break the peaceful communion of the church, must be dealt with immediately. Admonish him first. If he listens not, but is persistent in

his attempt to overthrow the faith, put your church first. We must preserve the church's integrity to please the Master. Paul's advice to Titus is the best rule. "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3:10).

We should spend time in prayer asking God to deliver us from evil, in ourselves and in those who might visit us. May He give us purity of thought and enhance the love of His truth in our hearts. May we strive for such godly living in ourselves that by God's grace our influence will overcome all the attempts of Satan to invade our ranks.

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Grow in Knowledge

1. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy _____, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

2. "For we are not as many, which _____ the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

3. "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's _____."

4. "And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before _____; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

5. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this _____: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

6. "Humble _____ in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

7. "But let it be the hidden man of the _____, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

8. "_____ in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

9. "So shalt thou find favour and good _____ in the sight of God and man."

10. "And he did that which was _____ in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done."

Too many people are clamoring for freedom to do what they ought not to do.

God Created

by Elder Richard Williams
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“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

The scriptures teach that God created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created. Genesis chapter one is not a story of creation; it is God’s historical record of creation. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). God as Creator is a central truth of the Bible, undisputed among all that contend for the faith of Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. Throughout the Bible, it is the witness of God’s inspired writers, that God is Creator. Hear the testimony of the early church; “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:” (Acts 4:24). God the Father; God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, all three are mentioned in the work of creation. Jesus addresses His Father as; “O Father Lord of heaven and earth” (Matthew 11:25). John declared of Jesus; “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Moses wrote; “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2b). We must be thoroughly grounded in this truth!

The truth that God created the heaven and the earth is under attack today, more than ever. In our culture, we are indoctrinated everywhere by teachings that do not align themselves with the Bible’s account of creation. Some scientists say that in the beginning there was an explosion. They call it “The Big Bang”. This is what is taught in our public schools and most universities.

It is taught as if it is a proven fact or as the best explanation of the earth’s existence. This lie is part of the humanist world-view that is taught to our children in our public school system. These are the fallible beliefs of men. Who are we to put our trust in? We are warned by David; “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man” (Psalm 118:8). Beware of the world’s belief systems, for as Paul wrote; “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” (1Corinthians 2:14). The aim of the teaching of “The Big Bang” and “Evolution” is to deny or cause to doubt, the existence of God. It is sad that some Christians accept these worldly beliefs and attempt to fit what they teach into God’s word. Those that believe that God used other means than Himself in creation, such as evolution, compromise the word of God. We and our children should not be tempted with such ideas, but need to be properly grounded in the truth of God’s word.

“In the beginning God” tells it all! Only God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) was present when the heaven and earth were created. To understand creation one must know who God is. Scripture is the basis of our belief since it describes who God is. Moses said unto God; “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exodus 3:13-14). God revealed Himself as always existing. He

revealed Himself the same way to Isaiah when he said to him; “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:” (Isaiah 46:9-10). The name that God took for Himself of the children of Israel was Jehovah (LORD) “the existing One”. God reveals Himself to us in creation as Paul wrote; “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20). The fact of God’s existence and His mighty power are clearly seen by us in the creation of heaven and earth and all that is contained in them.

In considering Genesis 1:1, I wish to briefly look at the first acts of God on day one of creation. God created time, space and matter simultaneously and instantaneously, out of nothing. “In the beginning” tells us that God created time. God existed before time was, as the Lord said; “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty” (Revelations 1:8). God is eternal, He has no beginning or ending. God existed before time and is not subject to it as we are. God creating heaven and earth teaches us that He created space and matter. Jeremiah trusted in God’s work as he said; “He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion” (Jeremiah 10:12). There are numerous Scriptures that describe the work of God in creation. This descrip-

tion of God's power in stretching out the heaven, alone, is testified of seventeen times. The psalmist also trusted in God as creator, as it is written; "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). The heaven in Genesis 1:1 is the space that surrounded the earth. God would later create the firmament or atmosphere and the habitation of the sun, moon and stars in this space, and they would then be called the heavens (plural), when referred to as God's creation. The Bible teaches that God is, was and always will be the only power and means of creation. He is, was and will always be self-sufficient. God needed no other means in creation. Certainly He did not need man to counsel him. God asked Job, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). God in His Word has given us the history of His work of creation. Job describes God's work: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7). Without a doubt, creation is the supernatural work of the power of God. Such are God's ways as He says; "For my thoughts are not

your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). How awesome is God's power that He spoke by the power of His Word and all things were created.

Our understanding of the Biblical account of creation is important to the foundation of our faith. Jesus asked Nicodemus; "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12). If one believes not the Biblical account of creation, how can they believe the Gospel of Christ? Throughout the Bible, we are instructed in God's work of creation. If the first verse of the Bible is not believed, how can the rest of God's word be believed? We can stand on the truth of God's word, for it is the infallible history of the world and creation. Solomon exhorts us; "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12:1a). Solomon knew that the fear of Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Our faith must be established in the knowledge of God as our Creator. This is especially true in the formative years of our youth. It is our

utmost responsibility that we teach and demonstrate the Bible's account of creation to our children and grandchildren. Isaiah asks us; "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding" (Isaiah 40:28). Isaiah does not only acknowledge God as Creator, but teaches us that with God's inexhaustible power and great wisdom, He continues to watch over His creation to the end.

As believers in God's word, we have a calling to know what we believe and that we are able to defend it with Scripture. Peter emphasized this when he wrote; "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asked you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" (1 Peter 3:15). Part of being the salt of the earth is defending God's word when it is denied. We have been taught by God that He created the heavens and earth. Do not give His glory to another. The evidence of God's power and wisdom is all around us! Let us be found daily praising Him for His mighty works of creation.

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Physician of the Roadside

The Healer from Galilee did not set up an office, hire a nurse, and keep a waiting room. He did not hang out His shingle and wait for the people. He did not provide the finely appointed treatment rooms and the sterile surroundings of today's medical men. He went out where the people were. He walked the roadsides where they walked. He stood beside the benches where beggars sat. He tramped the trails where they stumbled. He exposed himself to the moral and physical corruption and infection which was always prevalent. He invaded the unfriendly world where the people He would save were bound by their pains and agonies. He worked among the flies. He was undaunted amid the dirt. His office was where the people were, and He continually moved to meet the needs of new people.

Today is the day of specialization, and the doctors need the finest kind of facilities for the healing of the bodies of humans. However, the healing of lives diseased with sin must be done after the manner of the Great Physician. We dare not set up our offices and our waiting rooms, hire our receptionists, and hang our shingles. It would be nice if we could bring the people to our clean, quiet, impressive offices. to deal with them, but we cannot. Usually we must go where they are. It may be a rodent infested shack or it may be in a cold prison cell. It may be in an ornate house made cold by hate, or in a mortuary where death lies. It may be in a lonely nursing home or in a highly mechanized hospital, but we must go where the need is.

A few will come to our offices and a few more will sit in our pews, but if we are to have a real impact upon the suffering world such as our Lord visited, we must go where they are. He who sits, professional and neat, in his office will have a pitifully meager ministry. He who follows the Galilean will become very much a physician by the roadside.

Milo L. Arnold

God's Thoughts!

by Elder Edward McIntyre
Fitzgerald, Georgia

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them. Psalm 139:17

This scripture confirms that God has thoughts. The text containing words of the Psalmist refers to the precious thoughts God has of him. So it appears that God does have thoughts concerning us. He has concern for His chosen people and for His creation. God tells us that His thoughts are not as ours and are higher and beyond our comprehension.

Listen: Isaiah 55:8 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, said the LORD. (9) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Also, Psalm 92:5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

It is wonderful to know that God cares for us, loves us and continually shows us grace and mercy. When I

consider the greatness and vastness of God, how that He fills His creation with His presence and power, it humbles me to think that HE thinks about me! We know that we are finite (without strength) and He is omnipotent (all power), and yet He has time for us. When we consider our very being compared to His creation, we are small. The Bible says we are as dust. We are insignificant as to our size, strength, and our being when compared to God or His Creation. But, in God's eyes we have been made significant because He has known us and loved us even from eternity past. I am thankful for His thoughts toward me, for His love and mercy and grace. I am thankful for the precious promises He has made to His people. I am thankful that I am able to claim those promises for myself today. I know that those promises are real because I have come through a time of claiming and relying upon His promises to carry me through a time

of distress. He has promised to hear us in times of need and deal with our affliction; and this He did. "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law." Psalm 119:153

We are weak, nothing but dust, and are needy creatures. YET the Lord loves His own and makes us of value in His sight, because His Son died that we might be known as HIS people. He deals with us as His children. I hope that I will continue to trust His Fatherly counsel and care. I hope I continue to cast my cares (concerns) upon Him, knowing He cares for me and for you! I Peter 5:7, Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you. May we claim His promises and walk in His ways. When needs arise, may we know to cast our care upon Him. Knowing this: I John 4:19, We love Him, because He first loved us. When I think upon God, there is no way that I can understand the Love that causes Him to think upon us.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Sight - Psalm 19:14 | 6. Yourselfes - James 4:10 |
| 2. Corrupt - II Corinthians 2:17 | 7. Heart - I Peter 3:4 |
| 3. Womb - Luke 1:15 | 8. Precious - Psalm 116:15 |
| 4. Men - Luke 16:15 | 9. Understanding - Proverbs 3:4 |
| 5. Matter - Acts 8:21 | 10. Evil - II Kings 23:32 |

**ALL THAT IS NECESSARY FOR
THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL
IS THAT GOOD MEN DO NOTHING.**

Offices in the Church

by Elder William M. Mullis
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*"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the **apostle** of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office..."(Romans 11:13)*

The Apostle Paul magnified not himself, but rather magnified the office which he held. In the worldly organizations of men, he had held some important offices. He was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." (Philippians 3:5-8).

Please remember that Paul did not give up the offices of the world for the office of an apostle! He gave up all the offices of the world, and the glory of those offices, **to be a servant of Jesus Christ!** Being a servant of Jesus is better than being a king in the world with all its natural glory. David understood that when he said he would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 84:10). Moses understood that when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Esteeming the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. ..." (Hebrews 11:24-26). Being a servant of Jesus Christ, being a doorkeeper in the house of God, is greater than the highest, most prestigious position the world has to offer. If we are unwilling to sacrifice the glory of the world, we cannot step up to greater glory in the kingdom of heaven which God has prepared for His faithful, obedient chil-

dren in this world. Sacrifice, suffering, and service are necessary in order for us to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven.

"Paul, a **prisoner** of Jesus Christ..." (Philemon 1: 1). "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ " (Philippians 1: 1). "Paul, a **servant** of God, and an **apostle** of Jesus Christ..." (Titus 11). Paul went from lofty positions of the world to the **higher** position of "**prisoner**" and "**servant**" of Jesus Christ! Oh what a blessing to see the glorious position of being a servant of Jesus Christ! Jesus says, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your **minister**; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your **servant**: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:25-28).

It was only after Paul had first proven himself as a faithful prisoner and servant of Jesus Christ that God **then** called him to be an apostle. And Paul realized the mercy and grace of God in calling him to be an apostle. He felt unworthy. He sincerely felt that he was the **chief of sinners** (I Timothy 1:15), and the **least of the apostles** (See I Corinthians 15:9-10.) Therefore, Paul did not magnify himself! But because he realized the exalted position of the church, and the supreme office of apostle in the church, **he did magnify his office!** Paul was not bragging about being great himself, but was declaring that God had elevated him to the highest office in the world: to be an apostle of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ. He repeatedly declared that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ "by the will of God." He had not chosen that office, but **was chosen by God**. Jesus said to the original twelve Apostles: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..." (John 15:16). And so it was that when Paul became an apostle, he did not magnify himself, for he was a sinner saved, chosen, and called because of the amazing grace of God. But he did magnify his office.

Actually, there are very few "offices" in the Church of Jesus Christ. Men may appoint or "make up" many offices in the church which are not sanctioned by God. Too many times, these "offices" detract from the important true offices which God established for His Church. We need to depart from man-made offices and return to the God-appointed offices in His church. Remember: it is a serious matter to "add to" the word of God. It may seem better to us, but we cannot improve on God's way!

We find only three specific offices in the Church of Jesus Christ. As already mentioned, apostles were officers in the early church. These were men who were chosen by Jesus; men who were eyewitnesses of Jesus Christ. Jesus chose the first twelve apostles while he lived on the earth. They lived with Him, walked with Him, and were blessed by Him in many ways. The Apostle Paul was the last of the Apostles. Apostles were men who were eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "And **last of all** he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." (I Corinthians 15:8, 9). Saul of Tarsus saw the risen Lord on the road

to Damascus. Jesus Christ called him to hold the highest office in the church at that time. And Paul was **the last Apostle!**

Today, the only two offices in the church are the offices of bishop or elder (pastor), and the office of deacon. Jesus Christ is the head of His church. Under Him are the two offices of bishop and deacon. Just as Paul magnified his office without magnifying himself, we today should magnify the offices of the church: bishop and deacon. As Paul wrote to Timothy about these two offices, he magnified the offices: their importance, and the importance of men who hold these offices meeting certain qualifications.

“This is a true saying, If a man desire **the office of a bishop**, he desireth a good work.” (I Timothy 3:1). He proceeds, by inspiration of God, to list the specific qualifications for the office of a bishop and the office of a deacon. These are qualifications established by God; required by God! Even a casual reading of these qualifications makes it clear that most churches are refusing to follow God’s word for the qualifications for the offices in the church. We cannot depart from God’s standards without suffering serious consequences. When we ordain men to these offices who do not meet God’s standards, we fail to magnify the office of the church.

The office of a deacon should be an extremely important office! It should only be occupied by men who meet the standards clearly defined in I Timothy 3:8-15 and Acts 6: 1- 7. Before one should be ordained to the office of a deacon, the church should have a **NEED** for a deacon. The only scriptural need described in the Bible is when the church was caring for widows, and the apostles’ time was being consumed in the distribution of food and other needs of the widows. The apostles said, “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.” (Acts 6:2). Deacons were not ordained in the early church to magnify men! There was a specific need for men to care for the widows who were being supported

by the church. At this point in time, there were THOUSANDS of people in the church (See Acts 2:41-47; 4:4). “And the number of the men was about five thousand.” (Acts 4:4). By Acts 6, it is not unreasonable to assume there were at least 5,000 men, besides women and children. It was from among the (at least) 5,000 men, that seven men were chosen by the church to **SERVE the tables of the widows!** If a church is not supporting and caring for widows today, is there any need for a deacon? Have we “added to God’s word” by saying the deacons should serve the pastor’s table and serve the communion table? Do we have any scriptural authority for such? If only **seven** deacons were ordained with over 5,000 men in the church, doesn’t it seem “out of order” to ordain seven deacons with a church of less than 100 men? And if the church is not supporting widows, can we also be honest enough to admit that we have begun ordaining men to the office of deacon when there is not even a Scriptural need or reason? Is it possible we ordain men to the office of deacon to magnify the men, to give them an important position or title, to pretend we are really like the early church which had seven deacons (with its thousands of members, many of whom were financially supported by the church)? And in churches where there is a need for a deacon (where the church is supporting widows), does that church carefully pray, looking at God’s qualifications of the man to hold the office. The office should be magnified. The office of deacon is belittled when an unqualified man is ordained to the office. Ordaining men who are not needed, or ordaining men who are not qualified, will never be a blessing or help to the church. Departing from God’s word when we are declining does not bring about a revival. Trying to build up the church by following unscriptural, worldly ways will always lead to God removing the candlestick. But if we would REPENT, and return to God’s Word, return to magnifying the office, return to magnifying God rather

than men, it may be that our heavenly Father would have mercy on us all, and once again add to the church!

These same truths apply to the office of bishop or elder (pastor). No doubt, there is a shortage of bishops (pastors, elders). We certainly recognize and acknowledge there is a serious problem. But the solution is not found by “relaxing” the rules, and ordaining men who do not meet God’s standards. The office is important! Magnify the office! Magnify God! Pray for Him to send forth laborers into His Vineyard. If one comes forth desiring the office of bishop, but does not meet the qualifications, God did not call him to that office, and the church makes a vital mistake to ordain anyone to the office of bishop (elder) who does not meet all the scriptural qualifications. Also, if a man of God is qualified for the office, and is ordained, but later lives in such a way that he defiles his office, he should be removed from the office of elder (bishop). Once qualified does not mean always qualified. Magnify the office of bishop (elder). Magnify God! Magnify His holy word. May God help us to stop honoring men more than we honor God!

I believe every church must give account to God. I believe Jesus Christ, the head of the church, comes to judge His church. If the church is not following God’s word on these two offices in the church, He is not pleased and will bring His judgment. Also, any elder (bishop) who participates in any ordination is negligent if he fails to personally be sure the man he lays hands on meets God’s standard. The church cannot blame the ordaining elders (presbytery), and the ordaining elders cannot blame the church. Each is responsible to God for being sure His word is followed! “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” (Romans 14:12).

“The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.” (II Chronicles 15:2b).

Secular Humanist Objectives Identified

I have been interested in identifying the objectives of the secular humanists for several years. By reading the press and monitoring the media, it has been possible, I think, to identify a host of objectives that might be called "the family agenda of the left." Listed below are their goals as I perceive them

1. Convince the public that the training and development of children are far too important to be left to the whims and errors of parents. Only child-development authorities and professionals, commissioned by the government, can do the job properly. Mothers and fathers must yield control to those who are better equipped for the task of raising children.

2. Propagandize heavily against the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure with children. Equate it with child abuse, even when administered judiciously by loving parents. Ultimately, secure legislation to outlaw the practice.

3. Continually emphasize an exhaustive list of "children's rights," which will provide wedges to separate kids from their parents.

4. Provide mandatory schooling for every 4-year-old, so that young minds can be controlled. This will be accomplished first through government sponsored childcare centers. Once established with federal funds, they should eventually drive unassisted church-based facilities out of competition.

5. Teach students that gay and lesbian lifestyles are no less moral than heterosexual relationships, and that they typically involve long-term monogamous commitments. Teach girls that it is just as appropriate to fall in love and have intimate relationships

with another girl as with a boy (and do the same for boys.) Design counseling programs for gay and lesbian students that will permit subtle recruitment services. (This is being done in Los Angeles City Schools through a program called Project 10. It assumes that 10 percent of students are homosexuals, and provides programs to recruit and support new converts.

6. Demystify the occult. Shirley McLaine has assisted immeasurably here. Any belief system other than the Christian faith is seen as an improvement, including the mysticism of Eastern religions.

7. Remove all references to God from school literature, such as with regard to the Pilgrims' worship on Thanksgiving, and from every dimension of public life.

8. Work to remove tax exemptions for religious institutions and begin to control them through regulatory and legislative mandate.

9. Require churches, businesses and schools to hire gays, lesbians and others who contradict their faith.

10. Promote "Gay Pride" celebrations in every American city, and seek equivalent legal status of families for homosexual and lesbian partners.

11. Expand the power of government and its bureaucracies to control every vestige of private life.

12. Increase the tax burden of families, forcing more women into the work force and their children into child-care facilities.

13. Require military women to fight in combat.

14. Repeal all laws relating to obscenity and even child pornography.

15. Eliminate the motion picture rat-

ing system so that patrons (and parents) cannot easily avoid violent and explicit sexuality in films.

16. Make homemakers feel exploited, stupid and useless. Especially at the university level, ridicule female students who wish to marry, to have a family, or to postpone or avoid a career.

17. Oppose with a vengeance any effort to teach, even mention, creation as an explanation for the earth's beginnings.

18. Monitor every judge appointed or seeking election. The judiciary is the key to the leftist agenda.

19. Secure far-reaching rights of students on junior and senior high school campuses. Limit the authority of teachers and principals to enforce rules of conduct.

20. Implement an aggressive sex-ed program, beginning in kindergarten, that is guided by no moral code. "Safe sex" is its centerpiece.

21. Provide for legal infanticide in cases of severe handicap or mental retardation.

22. Guarantee the "right to die" to anyone desiring suicide. Doctors should be free to assist in the act of dying.

23. Work to remove all state sodomy laws.

24. Fight tooth and nail to retain the right to abortion on demand up to the moment of birth -for any reason whatsoever.

25. Operate aggressive "death education" classes in public schools to desensitize children to dying and to help them see life materialistically. There are other objectives, I'm sure, but these appear to be the most pressing.

From **Children at Risk**
by Dr. James Dobson

WE NEED YOUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

What is Your Purpose in Life?

1. What was the purpose of the life of Jesus?
2. What is the purpose of your life?

Jesus had several purposes or reasons for coming into the earth:

- a. To bear witness to the truth (John 18:37)
- b. To save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21; John 6:38-40, I Pet. 1:18)
- c. To establish His Church (Matthew 16:18)
- d. To give us an example of how to live (I Peter 2:21-24)

He came for many other purposes, and fulfilled each one! He declared in the Garden prayer, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." At that time, before Calvary, He had finished much of the work, but then finished His primary work at Calvary, and cried one last time, "It is finished!"

His people have many purposes while they live! Some of those purposes are common to us all, while some are distinct for each individual.

- a. We are all to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13,14).
- b. We are all to "Let your light shine" (Matthew 5:13-16).
- c. We are all to "do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God" (See Micah 6:8.).
- d. We are all to bring forth much fruit (John 15:1-11).
- e. We are all to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's (I Corinthians 6:20).
- f. We are all to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).
- g. We are all to run the race which is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).
- h. We are all to do good works (Ephesians 2:10, i.e. 4:25-31; Matthew 25:34-46; Titus 3:8).
- i. We are all to guard our tongues; and visit the fatherless and widows, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:26,27).

There are many other general things we all have to do!

But then there are specific things He has for each of us to do:

What were the specific works God had for each of the following?

- a. Jeremiah 1:4,5
- b. Moses
- c. John the Baptist
- d. Abraham
- e. Noah
- f. Paul (Did he finish his work? See II Timothy 4:7)
- g. Esther (see Esther 4:14-16)

What are the specific works and purposes God has for you to do in addition to the general works all of God's children are to be doing?

- a. If you have a wife, to love her as Christ loved the Church
- b. If you have children: to train them, teach them, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
- c. Each child of God has particular callings, talents, and gifts which are to be used in His service. Each day, there are opportunities for you to fulfill another purpose in your life. There are opportunities placed in your pathway by God each day to serve Him by serving His people. Every person you meet and see should be viewed as an opportunity to impact for good. Do not pass by on the other side!

WHAT IS YOUR PARTICULAR PURPOSE? DOES GOD HAVE YOU HERE FOR MANY PURPOSES? ARE YOU FULFILLING YOUR CALLINGS AND ROLES AND PURPOSES IN LIFE? AT THE CLOSE OF EACH DAY, AND AT THE CLOSE OF YOUR LIFE, WILL YOU BE ABLE TO SAY LIKE JESUS AND PAUL THAT YOU FINISHED THE WORK GOD GAVE FOR YOU TO DO?

Come Here!

When a child is raised in a godly home, and the parents say, "Come here!" the child either responds by going to the parent, or else suffers chastisement from the parent. I do not remember my Daddy ever saying "Come here" that I was slow about going. The reason I never remember being slow about responding, and never had to be called the second time, was not because I was born with such an humble, obedient spirit. The reason I quickly responded to him was because he was a firm disciplinarian and demanded respect and response. The training started early; therefore I do not remember the training to "Come when called" taking place. I do remember many other things for which I received a whipping because I did not do something right. But failing to respond to his call was not something I felt could ever be acceptable even one time.

Our Heavenly Father is much like my natural father was. He does not beg and plead like many parents do today. He does not ignore us when we fail to respond to his commands. Our Heavenly Father requires obedience. I hear people say, "God **wants** you to do something." The word of God does not tell us about a weak God who **wants** you to obey him, and **wants** to do something if you will just let Him. Though that is a common theology spoken from pulpits today, that is not the truth of the Bible. God commands, demands and requires! "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD **require** of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is,

God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). God gave ten "**commandments**," NOT ten suggestions! Please remember that when we do not obey God's commandments, we will suffer the consequences. The Lord loves His people; He saved His people (Matthew 1:21); and the Lord judges His people according to their works (Hebrews 10:30,31; Matthew 16:27,28; II Corinthians 5:10; I Peter 1:17; Revelation 22:12).

Now, consider the primary command in the title of this lesson: "COME!"

There are many different times in the word of God where He commands us to "COME" to Him. For example, He commands us to "COME" to Him for (1) cleansing, (2) spiritual food and drink, and for (3) rest. Please look at the following Scriptures, and consider whether you are obeying the command of God to GO TO HIM for each of these things. He is the only One who can really provide these great blessings. Failing to go to Him will always result in serious consequences.

1. CLEANSING

Isaiah 1:18-20 "**Come now**, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: **though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow**; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." (See also I John 1:9; Revelation 7:14.)

2. SPIRITUAL FOOD AND DRINK

Revelation 22:17 "And the **Spirit and the bride say, Come**. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him **take the water of life freely**." (See

also Luke 14:17; Matthew 22:4; Isaiah 55:1)

3. REST

Matthew 11:28 "**Come unto me**, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

PLEASE THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE FOLLOWING VERSES FROM PROVERBS 1:24-33

24: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25: But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27: When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28: Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31: Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32: For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33: But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." (Proverbs 1:24-33)

WMM

Mounting Up With Wings As Eagles

by Sis. Stacie J. Tucker
Tifton, Georgia

The moment had finally arrived! All of the prayers, tears, stress, and waiting had culminated to this point! We were finally able to board our airplane in October 2007! I do believe that the only thing that could get my husband on an airplane is going to get our son! He is terrified of flying! When we flew to the Philippines, it was the first time both of us had ever been on a plane! As the plane lifted off the ground, I was elated at God's greatness and fulfilled promises, and the verse came to mind, "Those that wait on the Lord will mount up with wings as eagles!" But my husband was just trying to cling to God's mercy that this airplane would get us there and back safely! He was a bundle of nerves! My husband loves history, so I just randomly chose an old history book from my mama's bookshelf to take for him to read on the flight. As we were taking off, he opened the book for the first time, and this is the passage he came to, written by William Bradford in 1620:

"Being thus arrived in good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element...What could now sustain them but the Spirit of God and His grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: "Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice and looked on their adversity...Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord, show how He hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor..."

My husband's fears did not subside at all during our journey, but every time our flight took off or when we met a little turbulence, he whipped that book out and started reading that passage over and over as if his very life depended on it! God is in the big things and in the little things.

We arrived at the Puerto Princesa City airport. A small band greeted all of the travelers as we descended the plane's steps! There were fighting roosters being unloaded off the plane, and much of the luggage was in cardboard boxes! We were under a simple tin building, where we tried to wait our turn to get our luggage off of the conveyor belt, but we learned from experience that Filipinos do not wait in line, and they do not wait their turn!

Expecting to go to our hotel first and take a shower after 22 hours on an airplane and two nights without any sleep, we were quite surprised to find out that the orphanage had arrived at the airport to greet us with all the children and caregivers! You would think after waiting two years and two months I would be emotionally, mentally, and physically ready to meet our son, but I was not! I wanted to take a shower, wash my hair, change my clothes, and put on some make-up first! But ready or not, this was THE moment! We had been seeing through a glass darkly, but finally, we were now face-to-face with our son! Our first sight of our "dearly beloved and longed for" was a frightened little boy with tears on his face and little hands clinging to the hair of his caregiver! Well, it's a good thing I knew that God was in this, because at this point I would have doubted! He was not excited about meeting his mama and daddy! He knew exactly why we were there! For the first day and a half in the Philippines, our son did not

accept us! If I hadn't been so sure of God's hand and plan in this, I would have thought, "What have we done?" But I kept reminding myself, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it!" I knew God had brought us this far and wouldn't leave us now! I could write another whole article about the wonderful orphanage Nehemiah was raised in. (It's called Aloha House, and their website is www.alohahouse.org if you are interested.) It was amazing!

I think Nehemiah's approach to us the first day and a half was "maybe if I ignore them they will go away." When I would try to hold his hand, he would conveniently put it in his pocket! I tried to feed him at the orphanage table, and he would just keep his mouth closed! (A man we know who is married to a Filipino woman said that Filipinos are quite stubborn, and I do believe him!)

The staff at Aloha House assured us that it was completely normal for the child to reject his parents, but by the third day, they were usually bonded, which proved to be true! Actually, by the second day, Nehemiah had begun to bond with me, and definitely by the third day we were bonded! On the second day, the Aloha House took all of us, including all of the children in the orphanage, on a field trip to a zoo, a butterfly center, and playground. This served two purposes: it helped Nehemiah bond with us, and gave the other children opportunities to see life beyond their orphanage. On the third day, we went to a gorgeous beach with two of the caregivers and Nehemiah and two other little boys. We shared our lunch with the stray dogs and chickens that were under our picnic table. Photographs could not capture the beauty of that beach. I won't even attempt to describe it.

On our last day at Aloha House,

Nehemiah told one of his caregivers (in his language), "I used to have Juvy [his primary caregiver], but now I have a mama and a daddy." He was delighted to leave and go with us, and now that I know his personality, that is a miracle for sure! When we were leaving, his caregivers asked him, "What is your name?" "Nehemiah Tucker!" he squealed with delight. I am so glad God sets the solitary in families! (Psalm 68:6).

We left Aloha House for the final time and were heading back to our hotel. Nehemiah was sitting in my lap, and I don't think there has been another instance in my life where I have felt more completely drenched and immersed in God's showers of blessings! I was overcome at the sovereignty, goodness, and faithfulness of God! My heart just shouted praises to heaven! "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created!" (Revelation 4:8,11). Right then and there, I consecrated Nehemiah to the Lord as Hannah did Samuel. "For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD." I Samuel 1:27-28. If I could choose one moment to relive, that would be it.

I could write another whole article on the wonderful blessing Nehemiah has been to us and our whole family! He is such a part of us and I am amazed at God's goodness and grace! Our cup runneth over! There was never an "adjustment period" for us--he just blended in beautifully into our family. From the very first moment, he felt like he was ours!

I have written a letter to Nehemiah's birth mother that I plan to send soon, because I wanted to share with her how God still gets the glory, even when we feel like we have failed him. We have never met his birth mother, but in Nehemiah's paperwork, there

was a statement that said she felt like she had failed God and her family. This is a portion of the letter I plan to send to her soon.

To Nehemiah's Birth Mother:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me...he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound...to comfort all that mourn...to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness...that HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED." Isaiah 61:1-3

The reason I am writing you is this: All things work together for good for them that love God.

You said you felt like you had failed God and your family, and maybe so, but look how God has taken your mistake and given beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, THAT HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED!

See, the devil means our mistakes for evil, but God is STILL victorious in the midst of our faults and failures, by taking our mistakes and somehow, still getting the GLORY--even if we never make sense of it or even see how it all works out in the end. God works it out. And that is what faith is--sometimes we can't see things being worked out, and we may never see it worked out, but that doesn't mean God hasn't worked it out, or will work it out!

God has given us so many examples in the Bible of how He can take dark times in the lives of His people, giving beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. I encourage you to read about the lives of Joseph, Ruth, Job, and many other people of the Bible and see how God brought joy and light from the darkest times in the lives of His people. Jesus is MIGHTY TO SAVE. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1. Jesus Saves.

I just wanted to let you know there has been JOY brought from your pain.

It's just amazing to me how God was working on this side of the world in the small town of Tifton, and on the opposite side of the world on the island of Palawan, orchestrating all events, big and small, to bring Nehemiah into our family. And all to His glory! He took two hopeless, desperate situations, my inability to conceive and a child who needed a home, and meshed them together in a profound way to bring praise, honor, and glory to Him! He is the Master at bringing forth the richest blessings from what appears to be a hopeless situation. His ways are past finding out! I praise Him for sending us our "dearly beloved and longed for, our joy and crown." Philipians 4:1.

A beautiful and powerful adoption verse to me is, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Ephesians 2:19. Nehemiah is no longer a stranger or foreigner, but he is our SON, our parents' grandson, our siblings' nephew, and our nieces' and nephews' cousin! Praise God!

While my husband and I were waiting on the Philippine government to "match" us to a child in the Philippines, we prayed fervently that God would send us His elect child. I believe with all my heart He has. When Nehemiah was still two years old, he was looking at a picture of Jesus dying on the cross, and said very seriously to himself, "That's my Jesus and my God." I am so thankful that our son is a part of our family by the blood of Jesus, because His blood is the strongest bond in all the world! After all, adoption is how we entered into God's family, and it is the only bond that will last forever with our children.

I wanted to share this because I wanted God to get all the glory. He works His will and none can stay His hand or ask, "What doest Thou?" God does have a plan and purpose for your life, and there is a lot of peace in trusting God's plan. Like the hymn states:

"Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill,

He treasures up His bright designs,
and works His sovereign will.
His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour,
The bud may have a bitter taste, but

sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan
His works in vain.
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.”

I believe when we stop our own struggling, plotting, scheming, whining, and planning, and truly surrender to the Lord in faith, it has been my experience, then you will see His mighty acts.

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT (LAUS DEO)

One detail that is never mentioned is that in Washington, D.C. there can never be a building of greater height than the Washington Monument. With all the uproar about removing the ten commandments, etc., this is worth a moment or two of your time. I was not aware of this amazing historical information.

On the aluminum cap, atop the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., are displayed two words: **Laus Deo.**

No one can see these words. In fact, most visitors to the monument are totally unaware they are even there and for that matter, probably couldn't care less.

Once you know *Laus Deo's* history, you will want to share this with everyone you know. These words have been there for many years; they are 555 feet, 5.125 inches high, perched atop the monument, facing skyward to the Father of our nation, overlooking the 69 square miles which comprise the District of Columbia, capital of the United States of America

Laus Deo! Two seemingly insignificant, unnoticed words. Out of sight and, one might think, out of mind, but very meaningfully placed at the highest point over what is the most powerful city in the most successful nation in the world.

So, what do those two words, in Latin, composed of just four syllables and only seven letters, possibly mean? Very simply, they say 'Praise be to God!'

Though construction of this giant obelisk began in 1848, when James Polk was President of the United States, it was not until 1888 that the monument was inaugurated and opened to

the public. It took twenty-five years to finally cap the memorial with a tribute to the Father of our nation, *Laus Deo*, Praise be to God!

From atop this magnificent granite and marble structure, visitors may take in the beautiful panoramic view of the city with its division into four major segments. From that vantage point, one can also easily see the original plan of the designer, Pierre Charles l'Enfant, ..a perfect cross imposed upon the landscape, with the White House to the north. The Jefferson Memorial is to the south, the Capitol to the east, and the Lincoln Memorial to the west.

A cross you ask? Why a cross? What about separation of church and state? Yes, a cross; separation of church and state was not, is not, in the Constitution. So, read on. How interesting and, no doubt, intended to carry a profound meaning for those who bother to notice.

Praise be to God! Within the monument itself are 898 steps and 50 landings. As one climbs the steps and pauses at the landings the memorial stones share a message.

- On the 12th Landing is a prayer offered by the City of Baltimore ;
- on the 20th is a memorial presented by some Chinese Christians;
- on the 24th a presentation made by Sunday School children from New York and Philadelphia quoting Proverbs 10:7, Luke 18:16 and Proverbs 22:6. Praise be to God!

When the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was laid on July 4th, 1848 deposited within it were many items including the Holy Bible presented by the Bible Society. Praise be to God! Such was the discipline, the

moral direction, and the spiritual mood given by the founder and first President of our unique democracy 'One Nation, Under God.'

I am awed by Washington's prayer for America. Have you ever read it? Well, now is your unique opportunity, so read on!

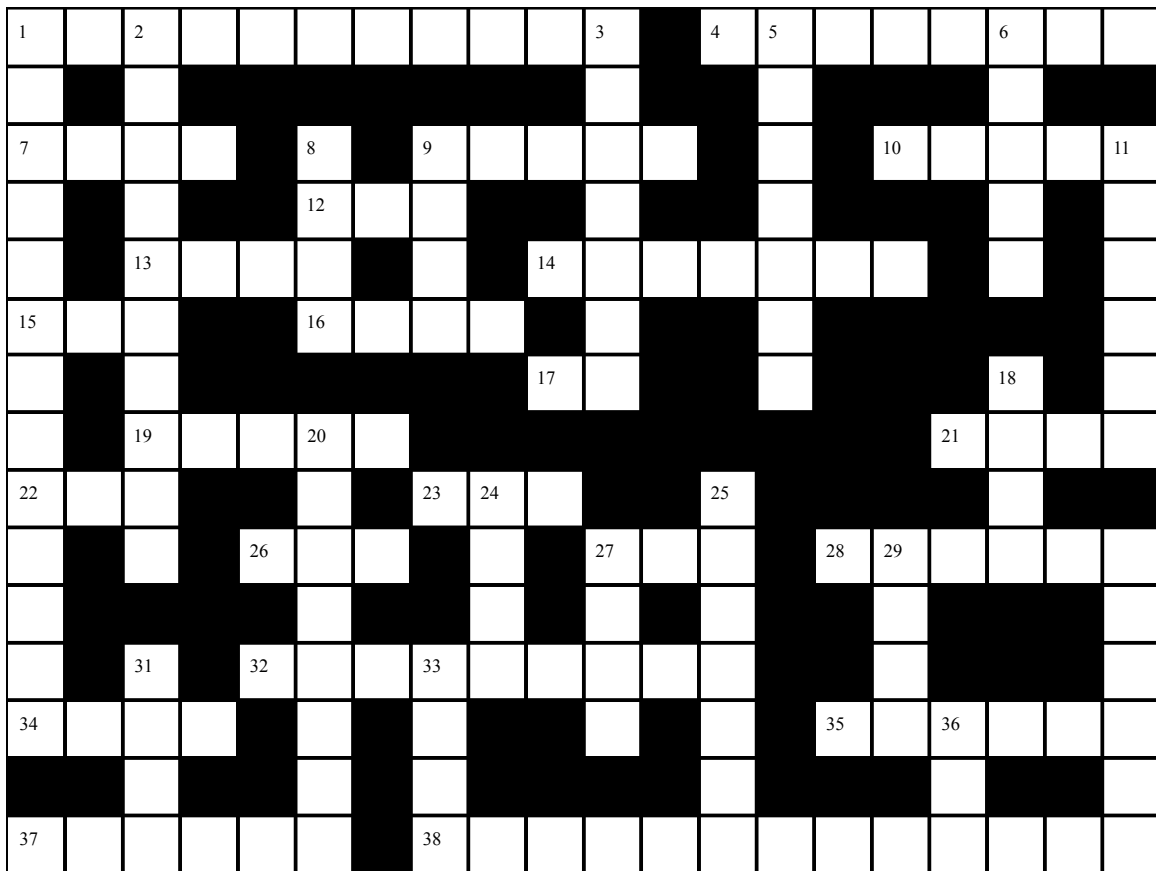
' Almighty God; We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large. And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation. Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.' *Laus Deo!*

When one stops to observe the inscriptions found in public places all over our nation's capitol, he or she will easily find the signature of God, as it is unmistakably inscribed everywhere you look. You may forget the width and height of 'Laus Deo', its location, or the architects; but no one who reads this will be able to forget its meaning, or these words: 'Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.' (Psalm 127: 1)

Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "This is the first and great _____." 4. "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the _____ which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restraineth them not." 7. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of _____, meekness, long suffering;" 9. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall _____ in my love; even as I have kept my Father's, and abide in his love." 10. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy _____, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." 12. "On these two commandments hang _____ the law and the prophets." 13. "When I remember these things, I pour out my _____ in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day." 14. "This is my commandment, That ye love one _____, as I have loved you." 15. "Herein is love, _____ that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 16. "And this is life eternal, that they might _____ thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." 17. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even _____ Christ forgave you, so also do ye." 19. "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone _____ about them: and they were sore afraid." 21. "We know that we have passed from death unto _____, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." 22. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we _____ in him." 23. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ Lord." 26. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down _____ life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 27. "_____ not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" 28. "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the _____ which he hath given us." 32. "And there were in the same country _____ abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night." 34. "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have _____, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 35. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might _____ in you, and that your joy might be full." 37. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet _____ what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." 38. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but _____, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."



DOWN

1. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy _____ out of your mouth." 2. "And the child Samuel _____ unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." 3. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good _____ of great joy, which shall be to all people." 5. "Where there is _____ Greek nor Jew, circumcision, nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." 6. "And have put on the _____ new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the _____ of him that created him:" 8. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to _____, even as he walked." 9. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought _____ to love one another." 11. "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall _____." 18. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a _____, and the truth is not in him." 20. "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy _____ as thyself." 24. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he _____ given us of his Spirit." 25. "This then is the _____ which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." 27. "The _____ hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." 29. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is _____." 30. "And above all these _____ put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." 31. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we _____ his commandments." 33. "Trust in him at all times; ye people, _____ out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah." 36. "No _____ hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

The Marvelous Love of God!

by Elder Don McWilliams
Brownsburg, Indiana

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11).

Each year during this season, we usually sing the song, “Joy To The World, the Lord is Come, , Let every heart prepare Him room.” The song ends with the phrase, “And wonders of His love.” Every heart that has been opened to the splendor of God’s love should be in constant joy and rejoicing for God’s great gift to His people.

What joy and anticipation the

shepherds must have felt as they set out for Bethlehem to see the great miracle the angels had proclaimed. God had sent His only begotten Son to this sin cursed earth to save sinners. Oh, the wonders of His love!

God had, for many centuries, promised through the prophets a Messiah. In the Garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve that some day that promised seed would bruise Satan’s head. How impossible, it seemed, that the promise was fulfilled in the birth of a child, born to poor parents and laid in a lowly manger. How can these things be? Had God forgotten His promise? No, God’s love is a never ending love as He says in Jeremiah 31:3, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.”

Only by the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit can we ever begin to comprehend the depth of God’s love for

His people in sending His only begotten son to redeem His children from their lost and ruined condition. He gave His life as a ransom for those given Him before the foundation of the world.

May God bless you spiritually during this season.

“...think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

We, perhaps, are guilty of carrying around, clutched tightly to ourselves. Just as one would grasp a beautiful flower, we do not realize that the more we share our love for Christ, as He instructs, the greater is our joy and appreciation of Him and His beauty. May we not be guilty of carrying around a Bible we never open as does old Bro. Wanna-look-good, never nourished by the comfort and joy revealed in its words.

Too many people confuse free speech with loose talk.