

# Let's Have a Better Year In 2009!

The word of God declares many things that are "better" than other things. Too often, the devil has us running after things that are not "better", but are rather much worse! May God help us to look at God's word. Believe Him, and seek after the "BETTER THINGS" this year!

## BETTER THINGS LISTED IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS:

Prov 3:13,14 Happy is the man that findeth **wisdom**, and the man that getteth **understanding**. For **the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold**.

Prov 8:11 For **wisdom is better than rubies**; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

Prov 8:19 **My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver**.

Prov 16:16 **How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!**

Prov 16:32 **He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city**.

Prov 19:22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and **a poor man is better than a liar**.

Prov 21:9 **It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house**.

Prov 21:19 **It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman**.

Prov 25:7 **For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than**

**that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen**.

Prov 25:24 **It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house**.

Prov 27:5 **Open rebuke is better than secret love**.

Prov 27:10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for **better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off**.

## BETTER THINGS LISTED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS:

### **BETTER REVELATION**

**Hebrews 1:1-4**

### **BETTER HOPE**

**Hebrews 7:19**

### **BETTER PRIESTHOOD**

**Hebrews 7:20-28**

### **BETTER COVENANT**

**Hebrews 8:6**

### **BETTER PROMISES**

**Hebrews 8:6**

### **BETTER SACRIFICES**

**Hebrews 9:23**

### **BETTER POSSESSIONS**

**Hebrews 10:34**

### **BETTER COUNTRY**

**Hebrews 11:16**

### **BETTER RESURRECTION**

**Hebrews 11:35**

## AS CHRISTIANS, ALL OF US COULD DO BETTER THIS YEAR!

In Paul's writings to the Hebrews, he said, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation," (Hebrews 6:9). I am persuaded we too can do much better, thereby growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

1. **Do better in your walk with God!** Ephesians 4:1,17; 5:2,15; I John 1:7; 2:6; II John 4; III John 3; Galatians 5:16; II Corinthians 5:7.

2. **Do better with your family!** Ephesians 5:21-6:4; I Peter 3:1,7; Genesis 2:23,24; Proverbs 31:10-31; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 22:6; 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; Titus 2:2-8.

3. **Do better in Church worship!** Make a serious commitment to be present at all worship services (Sunday morning Bible Study and worship, Sunday evening worship, and Wednesday night prayer meeting and Bible Study) unless you are so sick you cannot go anywhere. Prepare your hearts by prayer and study on Saturday nights, getting to bed early, getting up early, arriving at Church at least 10-15 minutes before the appointed hour to pray, fellowship and greet visitors. Sing and pray with the spirit and with understanding. Pray for your pastor to be able to preach; then listen carefully, follow in your Bible, take notes for future study. Be sure to go out of your way to speak to all visitors FIRST, then fellowship with others. (See Hebrews 10:25-27; Acts 17:11; John 4:24; I Corinthians 14:15; Matthew 21:13.)

4. **Do a better job in daily devotionals, prayer, and Bible reading!** (See II Timothy 2:15; Deuteronomy 6:6-9.)

5. **Do better in witnessing, sharing the truth with others!** Talk to others about the truth. Help prepare and distribute THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH magazines locally as well as for mail distribution. Visit in the nursing homes, as well as those who are sick or in need of encouragement.

6. **Do a better job of giving!** Tithes and offerings should be brought to the house of God, as well as sharing materially with others what God has blessed you to have.

W.M.M.

# Sin

by Elder W. H. Durrence  
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Sin is a dark and ugly subject, so it is most unpleasant to consider. However, we cannot ignore it or look the other way and expect it to disappear, for it will not. Sin presently exists in this world and in our lives, and its presence will remain in this world until Jesus comes again. We must, therefore, endeavor to understand sin in order to discover how we may best deal with this awful problem.

It is not sufficient for us simply to accept the fact that sin exists. We must also understand its nature if we are to deal with it effectively. I think at this point it is essential for us to define sin. There are three New Testament Scriptures which spotlight the problem for us. Paul said to the church at Rome, "...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin:" (Rom. 14:23). Based upon this statement, any action that is not accompanied or motivated by faith in God is sin. Those who are born again possess faith as the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23) and are therefore to exercise their faith with every act of service. Where this simple formula is ignored, sin emerges. The just are to live by faith (Heb. 10:38), and failure to do so constitutes sin in their lives.

The second spotlight verse is I John 3:4. John wrote, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." God's laws are clearly defined for us in the Bible. If we ignore God's laws and violate them, such transgressions become sin. It matters not whether His Word states a positive or negative commandment; if we act contrary to God's expressed will, we commit sin. God makes the laws, and when we break the laws, we sin against Him (Ps. 51:4).

The third spotlight Scripture is also found in the Book of First John. He

said, "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death" (I John 5:17). Righteousness means being just or right. That which is not just or right in the sight of God is unrighteousness and therefore sin. If we fail to live as God has ordained for man, then every deviation from His divine plan must be considered sin.

Let us now consider the different kinds of sins which beset us. Basically, sins may be divided into two groups: sins of omission and sins of commission. There are times when we omit or neglect to do what God has commanded of us; this is the sin of omission. There are other times when we do what God has forbidden, and that constitutes the sin of commission. Paul struggled with both kinds of sins. The good he should have done was often neglected and omitted. The bad which he should not have done was often the very thing of which he was guilty (Rom. 7:19). What person has not faced these same struggles at times? If we do that which is wrong, obviously it is sin; but it is just as much sin to leave undone that which is right and good (Mt. 23:23 and James 4:17). We must exercise great care in our obedience to God. Let us be equally careful with regard to both kinds of sin, for all sin displeases God.

Having considered a brief explanation of the two kinds of sin, let us move on to recognize the universality of it. Because of the original sin of Adam, it has touched all families of the earth. Its presence is found in every individual that has ever lived, with the exception of Jesus Christ. David declared that all mankind has become filthy before God (Ps. 53:3), and Isaiah echoed this truth in Isaiah 64:6, saying, "But 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." He also described us as sheep that have **all** gone astray (Is. 53:6). God is our Shepherd in the person of Jesus. When we depart from His precepts, we have wandered down the forbidden path of sin. In the New Testament, Paul emphatically states that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). The Apostle John declared that those who deny they are sinners in reality are calling God a liar (1 John 1:8-10). Such individuals have either deceived themselves or allowed Satan to do so. The Bible repeatedly reminds us of the fact that none of us live apart from sin. Although that which is born of God abides within, the flesh continues to offend God and violate His holy laws. Obviously, not one of us is free from sin.

Next, we must consider the penalty of sin. As forcibly as the Bible declares our guilt of sin, it also announces the penalty for sin: death. This truth reinforces the universality of sin. Since the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23) and all humans die, infants included, then the evidence is indisputable and the conclusion becomes a simple deduction. We all die because we have all sinned. In the beginning, Adam sinned and had to die (Gen. 2:17). Paul said, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..." (Rom. 5:12). The death penalty is still prescribed for sin. James wrote, "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death" (James 1:15). While death is the most serious penalty of sin, it is by no means the only consequence. Sinful actions affect us daily as the chastening hand of God touches our lives. When Adam's son Cain killed his brother Abel,

he was punished by God (Gen. 4:13). When King Saul disobeyed God, His kingdom was taken from him (1 Sam. 15:28). When Israel sinned as a nation, they lost fellowship with God and He refused to answer their prayer (Is. 59:1,2). In the New Testament when Ananias and Sapphira sinned, it cost them their lives (Acts 5:5,10). Time and time again the Bible points a holy finger at the guilty sinner and pronounces judgment upon him by announcing the price to be paid for his sins. Sometimes the penalty affected more than the offender. When Achan sinned, all Israel suffered defeat (Joshua 7:5,20). When David sinned, all his house suffered with him (2 Sam. 12:10). These Scripture references should leave no doubt concerning the seriousness of sin and the fact of its consequence. We can no more elude the consequences of sin than did they, for sin will surely find us out (Num. 32:23). Let us not delude ourselves into believing that somehow we will be the exception. We need to turn from the willful pursuit of sin and repent of those sins which we have already committed (Acts 3:19).

Though sin is serious, do not despair! God has provided a remedy for it. His gracious provision is manifested in the wonderful person we know as Jesus Christ. Jesus was sent by God

the Father for the expressed purpose of saving His people from their sins (Mt. 1:21). Paul reminds us that the wages of sin is death, but then adds this glorious declaration, "...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20-21). Jesus saved all the elect from the eternal penalty of sin (which is death), and gave us that most generous gift of eternal life. This our Savior accomplished as He suffered for our sins (1 Peter 3:18) and by His death paid our debt in full (1 Cor. 15:3). Being now justified by His precious blood, we shall later be saved from the outpouring of divine wrath (Rom. 5:9). Oh, what a wonderful Savior we have! I have no hope in self, only in Him (Acts 4: 12).

Because of His suffering and death, we should recognize how horrible sin really is. It should not be taken lightly, for it necessitates our physical death and is responsible for untold miseries which mortals suffer. If we can discern the seriousness with which God regarded sin, requiring the death of

His only begotten Son, then surely we shall begin to take the problem seriously ourselves.

Having confronted the Biblical truths that have been outlined in this study, I hope you now feel a repentant attitude with regard to your personal sins. The presence of daily sins demands repentance.

Remember that repenting is more than merely saying, "I'm sorry." It involves a turning from the sin, that you may remove it from your life. If you truly repent, you are assured forgiveness. John wrote, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from "all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). How long has it been since you confessed a sin to God and asked for His forgiveness? Perhaps it has been far too long. Please take sin seriously, for God certainly does. Sin is a problem of undetermined magnitude from which you should genuinely desire to be free. Take each sin and deal with it individually. One by one you will rid your life of sin, and little by little you will become a better person. Do this for the glory of Jesus who is your eternal remedy, and ask His help daily, for He can give you grace to overcome.

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# A PRAYER OF

George Washington

*'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.'*

# Doctrinal Purity

by Elder Greg Phillips  
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Another quality the Lord Jesus requires of His churches is a zeal for purity in doctrine. This is made known in His letter to the believers in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17). The church at Pergamos was drifting into worldliness and carnality. There were some who were resisting the general flow of the tide, but many, perhaps the majority, were being swept away. There were some who still held to the truth of separation from the world, but the majority were content, like Lot, to seek the "best" of both this world and the kingdom of God.

After commending them for remaining true to Him even after Antipas, one of their number, had been martyred, Christ issued this rebuke: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate" (Revelation 2:14-15). The Church in Pergamos was tolerating false teaching.

We may first note that while this church seems to have been persecuted from without, this danger is coming not from outside the Church but from inside. We may also note that the Nicolaitans and those who hold the teaching of Balaam were, in fact, one and the same. There is a play on words here. The name Nicolaus, the founder of the Nicolaitans, could be derived from two Greek words, *nikan*, to conquer, and *laos*, the people. Balaam can be derived from two Hebrew words, *bela*, to conquer, and *ha'am*, the people. The two names, then, are the same and both can describe an evil teacher who has won victory over the people and subjugated them to poisonous heresy.

The church did not deny their faith though some members of the church had actually been pressured to do so.

From Pliny's letter to Trajan and from the story of the martyrdom of Polycarp we know that in the second century it was customary that those accused of being Christians should be invited to clear themselves by cursing Christ. The words indicate that the temptation was an ever-present one, not confined to the brief crisis in which Antipas met his death.

In comparison with the things commended, the things against them were few, but they were very serious. The Nicolaitans were not prepared to be different; they were the most dangerous of all heretics from a practical point of view, for, if their teaching had been successful, the world would have changed Christianity and not Christianity the world.

One characteristic of the early church was "... they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," Acts 2:42. Christ gave gifts to the church, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" Ephesians 4:14. The church must keep herself doctrinally pure.

The Church of Pergamos is called on to repent of not having hated the Nicolaitane teaching and practice. If they refused to repent, Christ said, "...I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Revelation 2:16). He would come against the church for tolerating them, but his opposition would be principally directed against the Nicolaitans themselves.

We don't know exactly what the Nicolaitans taught. They were seemingly a class of professing Christians, who sought to introduce into the church a false freedom or licentiousness, thus abusing the doctrine of grace, and were identical with those who held the doctrine of Balaam.

We do know that Balaam, whose story is told in Numbers 22 through 25, advised the Midianites to send their women into the camp of Israel, and allure them to uncleanness, and so draw them into idolatry. This counsel was followed and it succeeded in leading Israel to trespass against the Lord by worshipping Baalpeor, the god of the Moabites and Midianites. Their participation in heathen worship finally led them to commit fornication. This sin was highly offensive to God, Who sent a plague among the congregation and in that plague 24,000 persons died (Numbers 25:9).

It appears that some false teachers in Pergamos were suggesting that Christians participate in heathen festivals. We don't know how radical these false teachers were, but we do know that their doctrines were evil. The apostolic council held at Jerusalem (Acts 15:29) issued a command that the Gentile churches should "...abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." Apparently, the Nicolaitans were teaching exactly opposite to the commands of the Apostles.

The restriction from meats offered to idols was intended to prevent the Christian communities from joining in public festivals, and so brought upon them suspicion and dislike of the community around them, but was necessary to prevent a return to a pagan laxity of morals.

Balaam was supremely influenced by the love of gain, and was capable of being employed, for a price, in a wicked purpose, thus prostituting his high office, as a professed prophet of the Most High. Balaam, though he professed to be influenced by a supreme regard to the will of God, (Numbers 22:18,38,) was really influenced by the desire of reward, and was willing to prostitute his great office to secure such a reward.

It was not only money that influ-

enced Balaam, but a desire for honor and power as well. Balak promised "For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me..." (Numbers 22:17). For the love of "the wages of unrighteousness" (II Peter 2:15), many are willing to sacrifice doctrinal purity in order to gain the praise of the world.

A zeal for purity of doctrine is very important to the Lord Jesus. We need a sense of oneness. We must feel a unity with the Lord and with people in our local assembly as well as with believers who attend other churches.

David declared, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1). Paul wrote, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

"Unity of the Spirit" springs from the Spirit of God and is based on agreement to the truths revealed by Him. "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). When we are agreed on these truths there is a unity of sentiments, desires, and affections, such as is worthy of true believers.

We cannot, therefore, purchase unity at the expense of truth. A statement like "No creed but Christ; no law but love" may sound pious, but it's both dangerous and false. You can't really talk about the Lord without expressing a creed. He either is the eternal Son of God or He isn't. He either paid the full price for our sins on the cross or He didn't. He either rose bodily from the grave or He didn't. What we teach about these matters makes all the difference in the world.

Jude wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). One goal

of this epistle encourages the godly in both true doctrine and good conduct and to warn against certain wicked men. The faith is the system of religion revealed in the gospel. The faith was once delivered in the sense that it was then complete, and would not be repeated; that nothing was to be added to it. It was once given, that it may never be changed.

We are to earnestly contend for the true faith. We must not allow prevailing errors to draw us from the faith and practice of the gospel. The original word rendered earnestly contend refers to the severe struggles of the champions in the Grecian games. The same allusion upon the same subject is employed by Paul to the Philippians: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together [according to the original, 'wrestling together'] for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God" (Philippians 1:27-28).

We earnestly contend and strive together for the faith by constancy in the faith, zeal for the truth, holiness of life, mutual exhortation, prayer, suffering for the gospel, and standing against those that would pervert the gospel.

Christ said, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Revelation 2:16). Not only the Nicolaitanes, but the whole Church of Pergamos is called on to repent of not having hated the Nicolaitane teaching and practice. True gospel repentance, or "repentance unto life," (Acts 11:18), is sorrow for sin, grief for having committed it, and a turning away from it with abhorrence, accompanied with sincere endeavors, in reliance on God's grace and the influences of the Holy Spirit, to live in humble and holy obedience to the commands and will of God.

The Lord Jesus said, "... I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." He would come against the church for tolerating the Nicolaitanes, but his

opposition would be principally directed against the Nicolaitanes themselves. The church would know His displeasure at their tolerating them, but it was in the power of the church to save themselves from destruction. If the church would repent, or if it would separate itself from the evil, then the Saviour would not come against them. If this were not done, they would feel the vengeance of his sword, and be subjected to punishment. The church always suffers when it has offenders in its bosom; it has the power to deliver itself from judgment if it will repent of its own unfaithfulness, and will deal with the offenders.

Christ said He would "...fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Balaam himself was first withstood by the angel of the Lord with "his sword drawn," (Numbers 22:23), and afterwards "slain with the sword," (Numbers 31:8).

Jesus promised great blessings to those who overcame Satan's attempt to corrupt the church. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," (Revelation 2:17).

To a Jew "to eat of the hidden manna" meant to enjoy the blessings of the Messianic age. To a Christian it meant to enter into the blessedness of the Kingdom. The manna is called "corn of heaven" (Psalm 78:24); and it is said to be the "angels' food," (Psalm 78:25). Here the manna may mean heavenly food. If that is so, the Risen Christ is saying that a man must abstain from the seductions of earth if he wishes to enjoy the blessings of the kingdom.

There is one possible further interpretation of this. John tells us that when the Jews said to him that their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness, so receiving bread, and Jesus said "I am the bread of life" (John 6: 31-35). If the hidden manna and the bread of life are the same, the hidden manna stands for nothing less than Christ, the bread of life; and this is a promise that to him who is faithful he will give himself. The overcomer will enjoy communion with

Christ as no one else can, thus it is "hidden" to all but the overcomer.

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the

world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know

we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:4-6).

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# Grow in Knowledge

1. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the \_\_\_\_\_ according to the will of God."

2. "Precious in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord is the death of His saints."

3. "Praise ye the Lord, Sing unto the \_\_\_\_\_ a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints."

4. "Let the saints be \_\_\_\_\_ in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds."

5. "O \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, all ye His saints...."

6. "O \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him."

7. "Until the ancient of days came, and \_\_\_\_\_ was given to the saints of the most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the Kingdom."

8. "He will keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

9. "He keepeth the \_\_\_\_\_ of judgment, and preserveth the way of His saints."

10. "To the end He may establish your \_\_\_\_\_ unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

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# UNUSUAL THANKSGIVING

I am truly thankful: for a wife who says,  
"It's hot dogs again tonight,"  
because she is at home with her husband  
and family and not out with someone else;  
for a husband being a couch potato  
watching football,  
because he is at home with me,  
and not out at the bars;  
for a teenager who is complaining  
about doing dishes,  
because it means she is at home  
with her family, and not out on the streets;  
for the taxes I pay,  
because it means I am employed;  
for the mess to clean up  
after a birthday party,  
because it means I have been  
surrounded by family and friends;  
for the clothes that fit a little too snug,

because it means that my  
family has plenty to eat;  
for the shadow beside me as I work,  
because it means I am out in the sunshine;  
for the lawn that needs mowed,  
the windows that need cleaned,  
the gutters that need fixed, because it  
means that I have a home;  
for all the complaining I hear  
about the government and the election,  
because it means that I still live in  
America and have freedom of speech;  
for the parking spot I find at the far  
end of the parking lot,  
because it means that I am capable of  
walking, and I have also been  
blessed with transportation;  
for my huge heating bills,  
because it means that my family

is warm in the winter time;  
for the lady who sings off-key  
right behind me in church,  
because it means I can hear;  
for the huge pile of laundry and ironing  
that's waiting on me,  
because it means that we have  
clothes to wear;  
for weariness and aching muscles  
at the end of the day,  
because it means I am able to work;  
for the alarm that goes off  
in the early morning hours,  
because it means that I am alive  
to begin another day;  
and finally, for too much email,  
because it means that I have friends  
who are thinking of me.

# I Was Glad

by Elder Edward McIntyre  
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PSALMS 122: A Song of degrees of David. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD .

I can identify with the Psalmist in the statement he made to being glad in going into the Lords house. After 13 days in the hospital as a result of having surgery for blood clots in my leg and the subsequent days of treatment, and then being at home recovering, it had been four Sundays since I was able to be in Church. I will be very honest and sincere with you. I was hungry and thirsty for the Lord's house and being able to worship with my brothers and sisters of the church. I find strength, peace, guidance, instruction, learning, and communion with the Saints and with God, a place of prayer, a place of worship and adoration for my Savior, and even correction in the House of God.

I know there are others of like precious faith having a desire to please our heavenly Father by coming together to join our hearts and spirits together in praise and adoration of one Who loved us enough to die for our sins. In dying, He redeemed us, claimed us to

be His own and made us fit for entrance into his earthly Kingdom, and thus for Heaven itself.

I find the presence of Christ in the true Church. When God's people come together as the Church for worship, there is a very special manifestation of Christ in that place. Everyone may not experience this, but I believe if we gather with the sincere desire to worship, that Christ will meet with us. I suppose the major reason for having a great desire to be in the Lord's House was to be able to commune and fellowship with Jesus and His Saints. How do I know that Jesus will meet with us if we come together to worship? **Because of the promise found in Matthew 18:20.** "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." **Jesus said it and I believe it, I know that I have experienced His manifest presence in His Church.**

The Church that I had a desire to return to is the Lord's Church. It is not owned by man, or nations or the world but is the Church of Jesus Christ. It is His Church because He built the church and purchased the Church. IT IS HIS

CHURCH! After Peter had declared that Jesus was the Son of God (The Rock), Jesus said, "Upon this rock, **I will build MY Church.**"

(Mt 16:18) And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.** One thing that I find hard to understand is this, How can a Child of God, (that does not have a bodily affliction) who has been born again and saved by the shed blood of Jesus Christ become so harden that they seem to have no gladness in going to the Lord's House, The Church. They need to examine themselves as to their faith. **I WAS GLAD!**

**May The Lord bless us one and all as we assemble\* in The Lord's Church to Worship and Praise our Savior for His redeeming grace.**

\*Please read Hebrews 10:23-30

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## Godly Preaching: Pulpit Has to Thunder

The editor of Louisiana Baptist paper rightly cries, "The pulpit has to thunder...if the church does not raise questions of morality, no other institution will."

Therein lies our problem: Far too many preachers no longer thunder about **anything!** The pulpit was once the moral conscience of our nation. Remember, preacher, if you do not teach your people that gambling is wrong, it will come back to haunt you when those who have squandered their money no longer tithes and offerings your church! We, too, can reap what we sow. It's a terrible thing when a man of God Loses his thunder! Sword of the Lord.

# The Three Pigs

by Elder Phillip Nichols  
Blackshear, Georgia

When I was a young boy, I was told the story of The Three Little Pigs. In the story, we find that all three pigs left home and were on their own, each having the same amount of money. Before leaving their mother, she told them to beware of the big bad wolf. As the three pigs started on their journey, they came upon a man selling straw and one pig bought it, and built a house from the straw, and had money left over. The other two pigs continued to walk, saying they wanted something more durable to build a house. They soon came upon a man selling sticks, and one of the pigs bought the wood saying it was better and stronger than straw. He built his house and also had money left over. The last pig continued on his way thinking to himself that he would find something even more durable than wood to build his house. Soon this little pig came upon a man selling brick. He bought the bricks and built his house, yet it cost him every cent that he had. We all know the rest of the story how the straw and stick house didn't stand up to the big bad wolf's huffing and blowing, yet the brick house turned out to be salvation to all three pigs.

I believe that there is a great lesson in this children's story for us. We all must build our "house" with durable substance knowing that it will cost us all we have. In this article, I will be considering our house as our individual lives; but we can also apply it to the local church body. Matthew 16:25 states, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." We must not hold anything back, but give it all to Jesus. No I'm not saying to sell every material thing we have, but that we must surrender our whole lives to Jesus in obedience. As a beloved hymn states, "Trust and obey for there's no

otherway..." to be able to stand against the huffing and puffing of the real wolf -Satan!

The two pigs who didn't build their houses out of brick found out that their houses were destroyed easily by the wolf. Thankfully, they were able to go to their brother's house for safety. Unlike them, when our house or lives are destroyed, we can't get out of our life and move in with our brethren. We can only rebuild if God grants us repentance. Sadly, many of God's children die naturally with their lives in complete destruction. Yes, they are at home with God when they die naturally, yet their lives on earth were absent from the very presence of God.

Psalm 127:1 tells us, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it..." This makes it plain that we are to labour, **but it must be according to God's blueprint**, direction and instruction. If we really get down to it, all we can build is a life of straw and sticks. We simply cannot make anything of ourselves (John 15:5); but with Christ, we are able to build an enduring life made of spiritual bricks. Paul said in I Corinthians 3:9, "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." We are working with God to build our lives to please or glorify Him. Many times, we feel and say we can't do this or that, but God has given us His promise in Philippians 4:13 that **we can do all things through Him which strengthens us**. Jesus is very able to destroy Satan and his nasty threats against us. Even though Satan was successful in having Jesus crucified, Jesus still had and has the ultimate victory. When Christ arose from that grave, Satan lost the battle forever, and is as the wolf that was destroyed when he slid down the chimney. We are victorious through Christ. It is very important to remember

this when we face the fiery "winds" of Satan.

Another important thing for us to realize is that the devil is truly going about trying to devour God's people just as the wolf was the three pigs. I Peter 5:8 states, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Satan's desire is to eat us alive to satisfy his ever thriving appetite. He tempts us in every way we could imagine: promising good, but always delivering us in destruction. Yet, we can be victorious over Satan with Jesus' help.

The story of the three pigs reminds me of a greater story told by Jesus himself in Matthew 7:24-27. In this parable of the wise and foolish man, we can see the importance of doing what God says. It is evident that hearing is important because we can't possibly know what to do without hearing; but, unless we do what we hear and know to do, it is of no benefit to us. The person that will do what is God's will is compared to the wise man that built his house on a rock. The person that hears the instruction, but will do it his own way, is likened unto the foolish man that built his house on the sand. We must note that both the wise and foolish had calamities. Upon both men, the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon both houses. We find however that only one house stood through it all; the one that was built upon the rock! The house that was founded upon the rock stood because it was built according to the word of Jesus. The other house that was built upon the sand fell, and great was the fall of it. Why? Because the foolish man's life was built on idleness. He was not implementing what Jesus instructed. I would like to say again that both the wise and foolish



man heard. The foolish man is even more foolish than one that hasn't even heard. Luke 12:47-48 states, "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

In II Timothy 2:20-21, we find these words, "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." Every child of God is as a great house having been built from good, enduring substance, that being the Lord Jesus Christ within us. However, we must build upon that foundation. If our lives are built with such materials as the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23, we are honouring to God, and our lives will endure when the storms come. If we build our lives out of the fruit of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), we bring dishonor to God, and we will not be suitable for Jesus' use. I Corinthians 3:10-17 tells us that Jesus is our foundation, and what we build on this foundation will be tried by fire. Depending upon what we lay on the foundation (gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble) is whether we receive a reward or suffer loss as we are judged by God while we live. Also in this passage in I Corinthians 3, we are taught that we are the temple of God because of God's Spirit in us. If we defile His temple by bringing ungodly things in it, God will destroy us. Please

read Ezekiel 13: 10-15 for an example of how God will not allow a house to stand that is daubed with untempered mortar. Our lives must be built according to the pattern that God has given us in His word in order to stand the attack of the "big bad wolf."

Thank God that eternally we are His and nothing can keep us from the eternal Heaven, but we can live a miserable life on earth without God's presence. Because of Jesus Christ, all the elect family of God are saved eternally (Romans 9:11-23; Ephesians 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 1:9), but Satan is ever busy trying to destroy our lives on earth. We need only come to a strong spiritual house made of the strong and enduring teachings of God's word and built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. As said before, the teachings of the world lead to destruction, but those founded upon God and His word lead to life, and that more abundantly. The world teaches us to do what we want, when we want, say what we want to, and seek after whatever it is that we want. This is the broad way, and many go in that direction. God teaches us to do what He wants, to say what He would have us say, and to seek His kingdom first. He then will add all things we need according to His will if we do those things He commands us do. His way leads to responsible people: good employees, employers, parents, children, neighbors, husbands and wives. Building our lives upon God's instruction will cause us to have happy, joyful lives at peace with God. We will experience a cleansing feeling as we walk by faith (Romans 4:1-8;16 and I John 1:7-9). Sadly, we see only a few of God's people have this life (Matthew 7:13-14). It is wonderful to see that even when a child of God has blown it as the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) did, he can repent

and return to the Father's house in a humble spirit. The Father will rejoice and quickly comes to that once rebellious son or daughter, kissing him with His presence and hugging him with His love (John 14:21-23).

The apostle Paul, when he was known as Saul, was arrogant, full of pride, and went about killing and punishing Christians. Paul thought he was doing God a favor by getting rid of those who followed a man called Jesus. Paul at that point didn't realize that this man Jesus was the very Son of God. After God brought Paul down on the road to Damascus, Paul served Jesus Christ with greater zeal than he did before in the Jewish religion. Paul said of himself that he was less than the least of the saints, chief of sinners, and not worthy to be called an Apostle. Paul before his conversion had his life built out of the straw of Jewish religion, but afterward his life was one of duration - a life built upon the foundation of Christ Jesus. We, as Paul, should be able to say as he did in Galatians 2:20 "...the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God..."

Now, I know that any story can only go so far and has its faults in comparison to Jesus and His power. Some may think it is mighty strange using this child's story. But if we can remember the story of the Three Little Pigs and think of the spiritual lesson it represents, maybe we will be more careful how we build our lives. Without Jesus as our Master Carpenter, destruction is sure and we will fall prey to Satan. With Jesus, we can rejoice as the three pigs and live happily in our strong brick house. With our elder brother Jesus Christ, there is no need to fear the bad wolf- Satan. The victory is ours to claim. My prayer is that we as God's children will build a strong spiritual house that will endure Satan's threats.

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***HE THAT FORSAKES THE TRUTH OF GOD,  
FORSAKES THE GOD OF TRUTH!***

# Forgetting...And Pressing On!

by Elder William M. Mullis  
Waycross, Georgia

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13,14).

In order to make progress in the race which is set before us, and accomplish the things that God would have us to do, we must learn to forget some things, put them behind us, and go forward in our service to God. Though there are many things God’s word tells us to “REMEMBER”, we tend to forget those things we should remember, and remember those things we should forget.

For our study, let’s first concentrate on some things we should forget!

1. We need to forget the things people have done to hurt us and offend us. Do not hold grudges! (See Matthew 6:14,15.) We are taught to forgive and forget, just as God has forgiven and forgotten the sins we have committed against Him. (See Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Luke 9:62.)

2. We need to forget our accomplishments, stop boasting and bragging, and remember it is by the grace of God we have been able to do anything good. (See Philippians 3:5-8; I Corinthians 1:29,31; 15:9,10; 4:7; Luke 9:62; 17:32.)

3. We need to forget the sinful pleasures of this world! Thinking about and dwelling on the pleasures of sin, will tempt us to go back to those things from which we have been delivered. (See Hebrews 11:15,16,24-27; I John 2:15-17; Genesis 12:1-5; Luke 9:62; Luke 17:32; John 6:66-68; Josh-

ua 24:14-16.)

4. We need to forget the sins of our past, forgiving ourselves even as God has forgiven us, and know that we have been cleansed and purged from our old sins. Once we have confessed our sins, and repented of them, it is wrong to dwell on them. (See Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9; I Peter 1:9; Luke 9:62.) The prodigal son could never have returned to his father’s house and been happy if he did not forgive himself even as his father forgave him. Paul could not have been an apostle if he had dwelt on the sins of his past. He forgot, and pressed on!!!

Numerous songwriters express the concept set forth in the Scriptures that God’s children need to be pressing forward and going upward in our spiritual lives. Consider: “I’m pressing on the upward way, new heights I’m gaining every day; Still praying as I onward bound, ‘Lord plant my feet on higher ground.’ Lord lift me up and let me stand, by faith on heaven’s table land, a higher plane than I have found; Lord plant my feet on higher ground.” (#378). “The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets before we reach the heavenly fields...or walk the golden streets. We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion; We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful City of God.” (#262). “Onward Christian soldiers, Marching as to war...forward into battle, see His banners go!... On then Christian soldiers, On to victory... Like a mighty army moves the church of God... Onward then ye people, Join our happy throng!” (#546).

Though our eternal salvation is not determined by our works, by us pressing onward and upward, yet we

know that if we are to enjoy fellowship with God in the kingdom of heaven, we must be going forward, pressing toward the mark, growing spiritually. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” (Luke 16:16). Failing to press onward and upward, being satisfied with our present spiritual achievements, is being lukewarm, and results in us being spewed out of God’s mouth, removed from His kingdom and fellowship! Pressing onward and upward results in new heights being gained every day, new heights in the kingdom of heaven, new heights on Mount Zion!

In order to press onward and upward, we must “forget those things which are behind” and set our affections on things above rather than on things of the earth. (See Colossians 3:1,2.) Daily, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ Jesus. The only reason Paul finished his course is that he daily was pressing onward and upward. If we want to have fullness of joy each day, it is absolutely necessary that we begin to make a devoted, consecrated, and committed effort to be diligent in our service to God! The mark to which we are pressing is to be like Jesus, perfect in every way. The prize we obtain is entrance into the kingdom of heaven while we live here on this earth. May God help us all to see and do the things necessary to experience the abundant life each day is my prayer for Christ’s sake.

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are

behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13,14)

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1,2)

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have

preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (I Corinthians 9:24-27)

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Galatians 5:7)

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (II Timothy 4:7,8)

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# The Power of Prayer

By Sis. Josie McKenzie  
Columbus, Georgia

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." (Jeremiah 33:3)

This verse is sometimes referred to as God's phone number. I'm not sure about that, but I have learned if you call on Him, He does answer and He can do great and mighty things!

I fell and broke my hip in July, 2005 and shortly afterward moved into an assisted living home. A year later, I finally realized my health dictated that I sell my home in Columbus and resigned myself to my little one bedroom apartment at Covenant Woods. During the months that followed, I began to experience sickness and health problems of one kind or another that always left me feeling weak and depressed. I kept getting weaker to the point that I no longer walked to the dining room and had to use my wheel chair.

My doctor examined me several times during this period. He finally decided it was time to go to the hospital for tests to determine what was causing this to happen to me. When I was admitted, I was put into ICU and the doctor proceeded to run several tests.

The next day, my doctor told me the results of the tests weren't good. I had a serious bleeding ulcer that needed immediate surgery and I would bleed to death if I didn't have the operation right away. The doctor explained to me all that was involved and that the recuperation period would be twelve months. I didn't like the sound of any of that, especially the prospect of serious surgery at my age of 86.

After prayerful consideration, I decided against the surgery. My doctor again warned me of the real prospect of bleeding to death and went so far as to advise my family that this would happen. My son, grand children and great grand children were called in because things looked bleak. My church, River Chapel Primitive Baptist, was praying for me as well as other churches in the area. I called two close friends who I knew to be prayer warriors and told them of my decision and asked them to pray for me. Immediately they began to call their prayer chain which included several churches and women's prayer groups. One of my friends called me that night and told me that half of Columbus was praying for me.

The next morning my doctor performed another test on me, this one twice, and came to my bedside and said, "I don't understand it, but the bleeding has stopped and you no longer have to have an operation. I really believe we can control this with medication." I knew God had heard the prayers of His people and had answered according to His Will.

The ulcer is under control. I am now confined to the bed or a wheel chair. I am convinced God has a purpose for my life in my present condition. That thought wasn't always easy for me to accept, but I now have full assurance that He has a plan for my life. Who am I to question or complain when God is in control. God is still in the miracle-working business, and I know personally the awesome power of prayer .

I have learned to be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, letting my requests be known to God and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard my heart and mind through Christ Jesus, my savior and healer. (see Philippians 4:6,7)

# Waiting on the Lord's Appointed Time

by Sis. Stacie J. Tucker  
Tifton, Georgia

"For the vision is yet for an **appointed** time...though it **tarry, wait** for it; because **it will surely come**, it will not tarry!" Habakkuk 2:3.

Wait, wait, wait is what my husband and I did from August 2005-June 2007! Almost two full years of waiting for news that we had been matched to a child in the Philippines! I think the reason we have to wait on things sometimes, is because God is teaching us something during the "waiting" time. I have a tendency to get easily flustered, fretful, and impatient when things do not seem to be working out on my time table. The times I have truly seen God work in my life is when I surrender to His will. It makes me think of this example: My husband said when you are training a puppy, hold him to the ground. Naturally, he will struggle, but keep holding him down. When he stops struggling, release him. This teaches the puppy that you are in control, and that he is supposed to submit to your rule. Often times, I am the struggling puppy. When we get to the point when we say, "All to Jesus I surrender," that is when God "releases" us. Surrendering to Jesus is not a one time event. It is a continual thing throughout our lives. And there is such peace and deliverance in surrendering!

When I read Matthew 25 that summer in 2004, my motivation for adopting orphans was to please the Lord. I wanted to do this to please Him, and I know He put that desire in my heart! However, the Lord has now shown me this adoption is something He is doing for us in His marvelous mercy and grace! It's like you try to do something for the Lord, but He turns around and gives you the blessing!

In my prayer journal, I recorded three lessons the Lord was teaching me as of September 14, 2005. Lesson One:

God is in control. Lesson 2: Patience. (Which is funny, because I had only waited a month and a half!) Lesson 3: Our joy can't be based on how smoothly things in our lives are going. Focus on Jesus, and not on circumstances. We had to get a health physical for our adoption paper work, which also asked had we ever been hospitalized, and at the time the doctor was able to check "NO." One day after we had mailed off the paperwork, my husband was in the hospital for his ulcerative colitis on two different occasions for a total of 17 days. I don't think his hospitalization would have affected the adoption, but it's just one less thing to have to worry about, and I just feel the Lord providentially dealt with that. During that hospital time, I think the Lord was teaching us to lean and depend more on Him. I wrote this in my journal, "In the midst of suffering, we are actually healed as we see our need of our Saviour."

So during the two years of actual waiting time, I cycled through praying, crying, trusting, fretting, depending on myself, praising the Lord, worrying, but I was always brought back to the place of trusting in the Lord's promises, that all things work together for good for them that love God. So, it was a cycle. Terry and I had discussed the fact that something good can even become an idol if put before the Lord. We had discussed that even this much anticipated adoption could become an idol. We watched Facing the Giants, and the wife in the movie had to ask herself this question: Even if the Lord does not send us children, will I still love Him? In my journal on May 5, 2007, I had to ask myself the same question. It shouldn't be a hard question, but sometimes it can be! So I confessed in my journal on that date that I would still love the Lord even if He never sent us children, and

I would still seek to honor Him with my life and glorify Him, and I truly meant it. Which, I guess, leads me to the next question, do I desire a relationship with the Lord more than this adoption? In one of my last journal entries (May 7, 2007) before finding out about Nehemiah, I wrote: You know how my heart longs for this adoption. But Lord, let me long for You more! I feel I can say with an unfeigned heart, Lord, that I desire a relationship with you dear Jesus more than this adoption! I do! I long to live and love You above all else! I meant that entry with all my heart! I just wish I felt like that ALL the time! So I feel that is the point I was the surrendered puppy. I finally had stopped whining and squirming, and I just surrendered. I like this quote:

Because God is almighty, we have been set free from thinking that we need to manipulate our circumstances, maneuver people, manufacture resources, or move ahead of God in order to bring to pass what He has for our lives. God has everything that is needed to see that it is done. He will do it perfectly-in the perfect way, at the perfect time.

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time...though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry!" Habakkuk 2:3.

REJOICING! On June 6, 2007 at 6:14 P.M., I received THE CALL! And I wasn't expecting it! I had gone with my sister-in-law to Macon, and my cell phone rang on the way back home. And I just couldn't believe it! The man at our adoption agency told me about a little two-year-old boy on the island of Palawan who lived at the Aloha House, and I was just crying and I couldn't say anything! So finally he asked, "Does this sound like something you're interested in?" And I said, "YES! He's the

one I've been praying for for two years!" My sister-in-law and I were on our way straight to church, so we were able to share the news! Journal entry June 8, 2007: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for He that is MIGHTY hath done to me GREAT things: and holy is His name!"

But, my fretting, whining, crying, and worrying didn't stop there, because there was MORE paperwork. Our fingerprints paperwork was just sitting there, it seemed, and not moving forward! According to the USCIS website, they were just processing April 14 fingerprints, and ours weren't until June 27! Which basically meant it could be months before we saw our son! I was just in tears! I tried to cling to God's promises of His sovereignty, and recorded several verses in my prayer journal to help me remember! The one I put on the refrigerator was this: "Remember the former things of old, [remember God's past salvation!] 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...I HAVE SPOKEN IT, I WILL ALSO BRING IT TO PASS; I HAVE PURPOSED IT, I WILL ALSO DO IT." Isaiah 46:9-11. Just knowing that God was in control was the only thing

that would comfort me! I remember sitting in my car and just soaking in the song, All to Jesus I Surrender.

On August 5, 2007, Terry and I decided to fast and pray about the delay in receiving our fingerprint paper work in the mail—we prayed that the Lord would speed it up! (I had only fasted 2 ½ times in my life at that point. It is not easy for me.) In my journal that day, I copied this from My Utmost for His Highest book:

Jesus...led everyone of them[the disciples] to the place where their hearts were broken. [Jesus dying on the cross.] Jesus' life was an absolute failure from every standpoint but God's. But what seemed failure from man's standpoint was a tremendous triumph from God's, because God's purpose is never man's purpose. [He arose!] It [the call of God] cannot be stated definitely, because His call IS TO BE IN COMRADESHIP WITH HIMSELF FOR HIS OWN PURPOSES, AND THE TEST IS TO BELIEVE THAT GOD KNOWS WHAT HE IS AFTER. The things that happened do not happen by chance; they happen ENTIRELY IN THE DECREE OF GOD. GOD IS WORKING OUT HIS PURPOSES. If we are in communion with God and recognize that He is taking us into His purposes, we shall no longer try to find out what His purposes are. As we go on with Christian life it gets simpler, because we are less inclined to say--Now why did God allow this and that? There

is a divinity that shapes our ends. A Christian is one who trusts the wits and the wisdom of God, and not his own wits. If we have a purpose of our own, IT DESTROYS THE SIMPLICITY AND THE LEISURENESS which ought to characterize the children of God.

That week before August 5, I was crying, fretting, and whining. God is also concerned with the actual process of getting from Point A to Point B, not just the arrival at Point B. He is concerned with our attitude while getting to Point B. So, after that realization, I saw that I could not whine and fret the whole way, and then give God the glory at the end when I got my way. Sometimes, the problem is I want to direct my own path, even when I claim I want God to. I guess it's more like this: I want God to direct my path, but on my time table. Trusting in the Lord is a daily thing, not a one time momentous event. If the purposes of God are to learn to trust Him with all our hearts, doesn't it make sense that God will allow situations to come into our lives that make us do this?

The very next day after fasting and praying on August 5, on August 6 our fingerprint paperwork was approved! That's the approval date on the form! To me, that is not just coincidence! (And to top it off, it arrived in our mailbox on August 10, Terry's birthday!) I know God answers prayer, but it amazes me that He answers my prayer, and sometimes even puts a cherry on top!

To be continued...

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## *Answers to Grow In Knowledge*

- |                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Saints - Romans 8:27 | 6. Fear - Psalm 34:9              |
| 2. Sight - Psalm 116:15 | 7. Judgment - Daniel 7:22         |
| 3. Lord - Psalm 149:1   | 8. Feet - I Samuel 2:9            |
| 4. Joyful - Psalm 149:5 | 9. Paths - Proverbs 2:8           |
| 5. Love - Psalm 31:23   | 10. Hearts - I Thessalonians 3:13 |

# How Will You Prepare?

by Sis. Taressa Crawford  
Waycross, Georgia

If you were told that you and your family had one hour to pack your belongings and leave your home, would you be ready? Or, would you, after standing in a state of shock, begin to grab anything within reach, regardless of its usefulness? We've all been taught to stop, drop, and roll in case of a fire. We know that in areas of frequent tornados we are supposed to get to a room with no windows or go to a basement, if you have one. If you live along the coast, you may be familiar with hurricane warnings from May until November. Last year in our area, we realized that wildfires are not just in California. They can happen anywhere, even in the deep south, even in Ware County, Georgia!

No one is immune to natural disasters. Wherever you live, you are at some risk of falling victim to the elements. These are hazards we know and have lived with our entire lives. Do people move away from Galveston, Texas because they have experienced a hurricane? Do families leave their farms on the Mississippi River, that have been in their family for generations just because the river might flood if they have an abundance of rain? Because they know the possibility of disaster, many prepare for eventual danger.

This is where my story begins.

About a month ago, a family friend, who is far more knowledgeable about financial matters and stock market lingo than I am, had called me and was talking about the stock market falling and how the government was considering a plan to help bail out some of the major lending companies that had gotten into trouble. Frankly this meant nothing to me, because I don't invest in the stock market, so I didn't see how this problem had anything to do

with me or my family. He told me it would be a good idea to grow a garden, because we may need to grow our own food (HA HA) if the problem became more widespread than with just the lending companies. This was on a Friday. On Saturday, I received a catalog in the mail that was sent to me by another friend who is a Mormon. I've received these catalogs before, but had basically just looked at and discarded them. This time, however, I looked at the small catalog and even placed an order, online (which is very unlike me). I told myself some of these items would make really nice Christmas gifts. I even ordered myself a solar powered battery charger. The next day was Sunday. My family went to church, as we are accustomed to do, and the minister was preaching what I now refer to as "the Boy Scout Sermon," BE PREPARED. This was just a coincidence, you see, because the web site for that catalog I ordered from was 'beprepared.com.' That afternoon, after church, we went to visit my 86 year old grandmother in another town. She asked me if I was still canning and putting up vegetables. I told her that I hadn't in years, but she said I may need to start back because times were going to get hard. She said that she still eats vegetables that she put up in jars from 20 years ago, and they're still good to eat. She's seen hard times, and lived through the great depression. Therefore, I guess I should learn from her example and always try to be ready for whatever life brings.

Well, the following day (Monday), I was called in to work. I'm usually off on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. So I'm not home on Tuesdays as a rule. I was asked to switch workdays from Tuesday to Monday. On Tuesday my doorbell rang and upon answering

it I was greeted by a nice couple who were passing out pamphlets for the Jehovah's Witness. I am familiar with this religion, because I have an Uncle who is a member of their group in another town. They said they were spreading the word so that believers and their families could be ready for hard times ahead. I graciously took their pamphlet and thanked them for their time. By now I'm starting to get a feeling that possibly the Lord was telling me something. I spoke to another friend, who attends a different Baptist church in our area, and asked her what her pastor was preaching about. She told me he was speaking about families getting closer together and getting closer to God. Our pastor had mentioned this same thing that Sunday before when he was urging us to be prepared for hard times that could be in our future. Families need to get closer to each other and closer to God!

The following Sunday, our sermon was again about getting ready for whatever God has planned for us. I decided to do a little poll with some of the people I came into contact with that week. I asked customers at work, I talked to people in the check out line at Wal-mart, and I questioned another friend of mine who attends the Catholic Church. She told me that she hadn't been to mass in a few weeks, but had been watching sermons on local television from Methodist, Episcopal, and had heard a recent statement from the Pope. All were teaching much of the same thing: "Get ready for hard times to come and get closer to God".

My sister, who lives in another city a few hours away, said that her pastor was preaching about the same topic. He had even gone so far as to suggest that the following Sunday, when they had dinner after church, to only bring

beans, rice, bread, and water. You could bring fruits or vegetable, but only if they were fresh and you grew them yourself. This little experiment went so well that the next Sunday, he told them they were to bring only breads and water. It could be any type of bread that you made yourself, so there was quite a variety. He wanted everyone to see that they could live on food storage of dried goods if times were hard.

Do you think this is just a coincidence that so many different ministers, from such a wide spectrum of religions, in several different cities and states, would be preaching and teaching much the same topic to their respective congregations? I don't think so. I believe that God is warning us to get prepared for hard times. Whether from "natural" disaster or man-made economic disaster, we should ask God to give us wisdom to be prepared to try to sustain and support our family. Don't expect someone else to come to

your immediate aid. After Hurricane Katrina, there were some people who were not able to get help, even from the Red Cross or FEMA, for several days.

What is the purpose of my wandering thoughts? Well, if you feel that God is warning you to get prepared for hard times, you had better listen to Him and get ready. I'm not saying you should run out in a panic and frighten your children. I'm not suggesting that you should go into more debt. Rather, I am suggesting that we should be paying off what we already owe, and at the same time, conserve our resources for more trying times ahead. Don't fear the future, prepare for it to the best of your ability. The only fear we should have is the fear of the Lord. Ecclesiastes 12:13 "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." If He is warning us to do something, we should heed His warn-

ing. When Noah was warned to build an ark to prepare for a great flood, this was considered very unlikely because it had never rained before. The people thought he was crazy. They made fun of him, but he built that ark, even though it took him more than a hundred years to finish. God didn't bring his judgment on the land until the preparations were complete. God didn't wait around while Noah and his sons did nothing. No, they worked hard every work-day to complete their preparations, then they were saved when the flood came and everyone else perished.

Save yourself and save your family, not from the hard times we most likely will all face, but from the fear of uncertainty in those hard times. We can all prepare to face the future. The best way that I know is to get closer to Jesus, and get closer to your family. Do everything the Lord tells you to do in His word and leads you by His Spirit to do. Help your brethren and help your neighbor.

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## **AMERICA ON ITS KNEES:**

***\*\*\*\*not beaten there by the hammer and sickel, but FREELY, INTELLIGENTLY, RESPONSIBLY, CONFIDENTLY, POWERFULLY. America now knows it can destroy communism and win the battle for peace. We need fear nothing or no one...except GOD.***

### ***OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN:***

*We pray that YOU save us from ourselves.  
The world that YOU have made for us, to live in peace,  
we have made into an armed camp.  
We live in fear of war to come.  
We are afraid of "the terror that flies by  
night, and the arrow that flies by day,  
the pestilence that walks in darkness  
and the destruction that wastes at noon-day."  
We have turned from YOU to go our selfish way.  
We have broken YOUR commandments  
and denied YOUR truth. We have left your altars  
to serve the false gods of money and pleasure and power.*

### ***FORGIVE US AND HELP US***

*Now, darkness gathers around us and we are confused  
in all our counsels. Losing faith in YOU,  
we lose faith in ourselves.  
Inspire us with wisdom, all of us of every color, race and creed,  
to use our wealth, our strength to help our brother,  
instead of destroying him.  
Help us to do YOUR will as it is done in heaven  
and to be worthy of YOUR promise of peace on earth.  
Fill us with new faith, new strength and new courage,  
that we may win the Battle for Peace.  
Be swift to save us, dear God,  
before the darkness falls\*\*\*\**



# Bible Reading Calendar for January

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Gen. 1,2	Matt. 1
2	Gen. 3,4,5	Matt. 2
3	Gen. 6,7,8	Matt. 3
4	Gen. 9,10,11	Matt. 4
5	Gen. 12,13,14	Matt. 5:1-26
6	Gen. 15,16,17	Matt. 5:27-48
7	Gen. 18,19	Matt. 6
8	Gen. 20,21,22	Matt. 7
9	Gen. 23,24	Matt. 8
10	Gen. 25,26	Matt. 9:1-17
11	Gen. 27,28	Matt. 9:18-38
12	Gen. 29,30	Matt. 10:1-23
13	Gen. 31,32	Matt. 10:24-42
14	Gen. 33,34,35	Matt. 11
15	Gen. 36,37	Matt. 12:1-21

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Gen. 38,39,40	Matt. 12:22-50
17	Gen. 41	Matt. 13:1-32
18	Gen. 42,43	Matt. 13:33-58
19	Gen. 44,45	Matt. 14:1-21
20	Gen. 46,47,48	Matt. 14:22-36
21	Gen. 49,50	Matt. 15:1-20
22	Exod. 1,2,3	Matt. 15:21-39
23	Exod. 4,5,6	Matt. 16
24	Exod. 7,8	Matt. 17
25	Exod. 9,10	Matt. 18:1-20
26	Exod. 11,12	Matt. 18:21-35
27	Exod. 13,14,15	Matt. 19:1-15
28	Exod. 16,17,18	Matt. 19:16-30
29	Exod. 19,20,21	Matt. 20:1-16
30	Exod. 22,23,24	Matt. 20:17-34
31	Exod. 25,26	Matt. 21:1-22

**ANSWERS TO  
CROSSWORD  
PUZZLE  
DECEMBER 08**

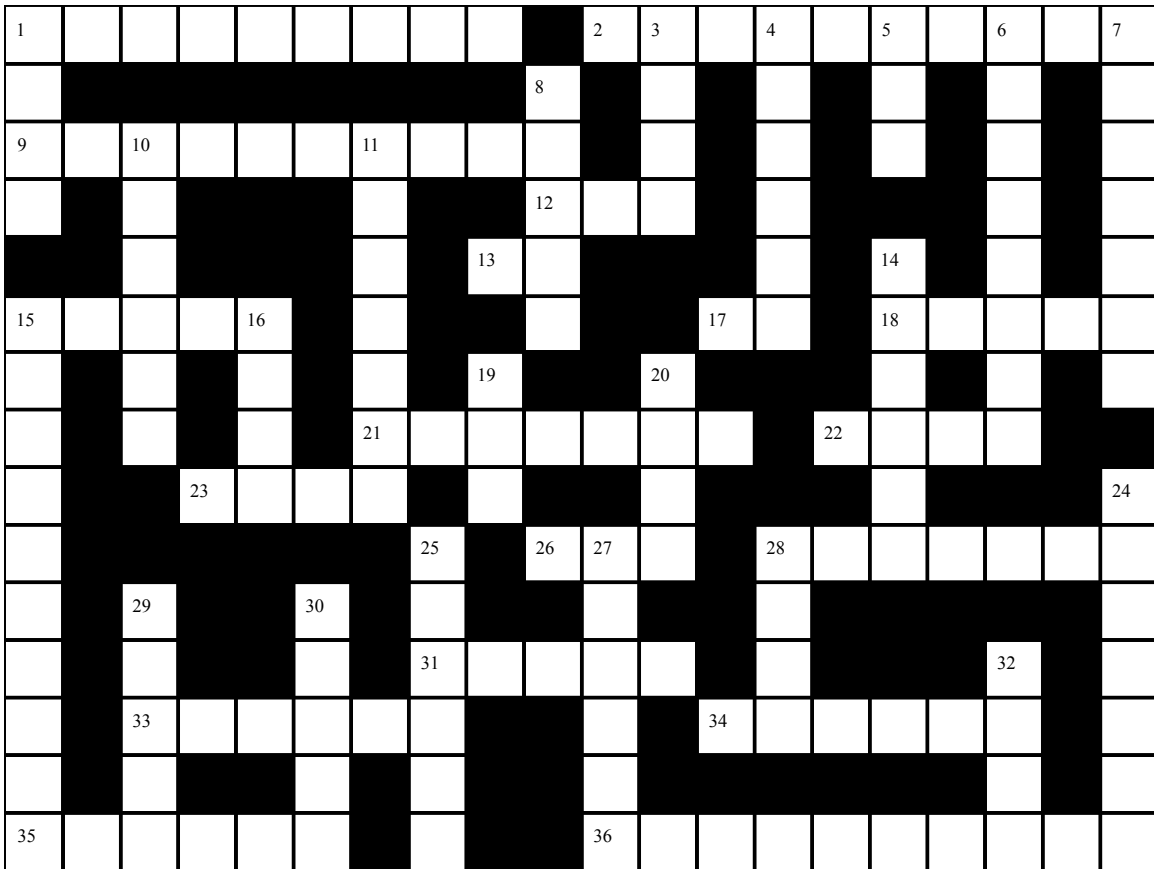
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# Crossword Puzzle

## ACROSS

1. "Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the \_\_\_\_." 2. "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our \_\_\_\_?" 9. "On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the \_\_\_\_; and they were read before the king." 12. "Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on \_\_\_\_ royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house..." 13. "Naked, and ye clothed \_\_\_\_: I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." 15. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father \_\_\_\_ is in heaven." 17. "Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find \_\_\_\_." 18. "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? \_\_\_\_ cast us not off for ever." 21. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, \_\_\_\_ the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." 22. "Neither shall \_\_\_\_ say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." 23. "\_\_\_\_ shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" 26. "Thou hast taken away \_\_\_\_ thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." 28. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a \_\_\_\_ god;" 31. "For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto thee \_\_\_\_," 33. "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger \_\_\_\_ us to cease." 34. "...for of such is the kingdom of \_\_\_\_." 35. "Enter ye in at the \_\_\_\_ gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat:" 36. "Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?" Will thou draw out thine anger to all \_\_\_\_?"



## DOWN

1. "Or when saw we thee \_\_\_\_, or in prison, and came unto thee?" 3. "Blessed are the \_\_\_\_ in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." 4. "And saying, \_\_\_\_ ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 5. "After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and \_\_\_\_ his seat above all the princes that were with him." 6. "Thou hast forgiven the \_\_\_\_ of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah." 7. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall \_\_\_\_ slumber nor sleep." 8. "When Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with \_\_\_\_, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;" 10. "Wilt thou not \_\_\_\_ us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" 11. "Now in Shushan the palace. there was a Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;" 14. "a good name is \_\_\_\_ to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." 15. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the \_\_\_\_ of Judea," 16. "The thing that \_\_\_\_ been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." 19. "He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know \_\_\_\_ mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." 20. "He \_\_\_\_ not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber." 24. "Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the \_\_\_\_ of the heart." 25. "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a \_\_\_\_, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." 27. "But Jesus said, suffer \_\_\_\_ children, and forbid them not, to come unto me:..." 28. "Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies \_\_\_\_." Then said Jesus unto his disciples, verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly \_\_\_\_ into the kingdom of heaven." 30. "...verily I say unto you, insasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the \_\_\_\_ of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." 32. "Lord, thou hast been favourable \_\_\_\_ thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob."

# The Walk of Life

by Bro. Brooks Strickland  
Waycross, Georgia

Life is an ocean setting.  
We stand on the beach  
wanting to go in.  
We see the waves crash  
then go back to the sea.  
The water is so pretty,  
we want to go out in it.

If we weren't on the beach, we  
would not be so enticed  
By this setting right in front of us.  
Since wading could lead to  
being taken by the rip-tide, and  
Walking on the beach could  
lead to wading,  
We should not be on the beach.  
We need to walk only on land  
where we can't see the temptations;  
Land that does not have such  
an enticing view,  
and is so close to danger.

riding that line between  
Righteousness and unrighteous-  
ness. The Bible teaches that we are  
not to "Walk on the beach,"  
but remain on high ground  
Because when we are on the  
beach, we are enticed by the water  
and waves. When given the choice,  
we are to fix our eyes  
and feet on solid ground.

We know there is a rip-tide  
and that the first  
Step to getting caught in it  
is by stepping out to wade.  
But we know it is not certain  
that we will get caught.  
We just want to get our feet wet.  
The water appears so cool and wet  
And it would be so nice,  
Not to swim, but just to wade.

The beach is that middle ground  
that the Bible warns about.  
When you are walking  
on the beach you are

We are to stay far away from  
the temptation of the ocean  
By not walking on the beach,  
Because the beach leads to wading  
which then leads to the rip-tide  
That washes you away  
into more sin.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Singing

by Sis. Kylee Wheeler (9 years old)  
Waycross, Georgia

*We need to sing. Our parents and  
grandparents sang while they worked.  
We should sing while we work too. The  
songs we sing should be about Jesus.*

*One song that has a lot of truth and  
is one that we should sing is Amazing  
Grace. Grace is very important be-  
cause we are saved by grace by Jesus.*

*If you understand that your eternal sal-  
vation is 100 percent grace, then you  
should be singing Amazing Grace.*

\* \* \* \* \*