

A Parent's Love

by Sis. Sarah D. Ledger
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I happened to be looking out the kitchen window on this beautiful summer morning as I washed the breakfast dishes. There were four birds just outside the kitchen on the lawn: a mother bird and three little ones. I think that they had gotten strong enough to get out of the nest, but not strong enough to use their wings to fly away yet. I stood amazed for several minutes and watched them. The mother pecked in the grass searching for worms or bugs and in turn, she fed each of the little ones a morsel. When they had all eaten, she pecked for something for herself and I saw her swallow it. The next morning, there were only two of the little ones out. The next morning, there was only one of them, and the day after that, I did not see any of them, including the mother bird. She apparently had seen them all get strong enough to make their

own way in the world.

I thought a great deal about the little birds and I shared my story with my husband and a friend, who also loves nature, who was having lunch with us. For some reason it made me think back to my childhood.

I grew up on a small farm, the youngest of seven children. Since we lived on a farm and my mother saved everything, I don't ever remember not having enough food, although I know now that a lot of her dishes were prepared to make the food go farther. But since money was in such short supply, I wonder how many times she did without something she would have liked to have, or perhaps needed, so that we could have a warm sweater for school or a little spending money for a class trip. I'm sure that she made many sacrifices that we never

knew about.

Our Heavenly Father is the Perfect Example of a Parent's love. He gave His only begotten, precious Son to die for our sins and give us eternal life. But, He also blesses His children while we live here on this earth. I know how wonderfully blessed I have been. Although we have always lived a modest lifestyle, we still have an abundance of everything to enjoy. I have a good husband, three children who love us and each other and four wonderful grandchildren. It humbles me to think that God should be so good to me.

I think often of the little birds. I hope that they are doing well out in the world. I do know, for sure, that our Heavenly Father is watching over them too.

THANKSGIVING

by Sis. Debi Pearce
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There's so much to be thankful for,
all these things and much, much, much more:
For the privilege of approaching God in prayer,
And the blessing of His providential care,
For assurance of eternal salvation,
And faith in God of all creation,

for forgiveness of all of our sins
Good health, and the love of family and friends,
for freedom to worship and opportunities to serve,
And so many other blessings that we don't deserve,
Yes, there's so much to be thankful for,
All these things and much, much more!

*I'm tired of hearing sin called a sickness, and alcoholism a disease.
It is the only disease I know of that we're spending
hundreds of millions of dollars a year to spread.*

Vance Havner

Draw Nigh To God

by Elder Steve Pearce
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James 4:8 tells us "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners: and purify your hearts ye double minded." Often we quote the first part of this verse, but neglect the remainder of the verse. We want God to draw nigh to us, but we want Him to draw nigh to us on our terms, not His. Drawing nigh to God requires effort on our part, not just words.

Jesus said in Matthew 15:7-9, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Drawing nigh to God with our mouths *only* is not acceptable unto God. He is interested in what is in our hearts, not in words that do not match our hearts. In fact, he calls the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites because they said one thing, but their heart was not true to their words. Jesus said their worship was in vain: useless and unacceptable to God. Moreover, they were teaching the commandments of men as the doctrines of God. When our hearts are not in the right place, that is often what we do. We will convince ourselves that our sin and double-mindedness are pleasing to God.

According to James 4:8, two things must occur for us to draw nigh to God, and in return for God to draw nigh to us. First, we must cleanse our hands. Another word for cleansing our hands is repentance. Repentance is more than just words. It is more than just saying, "I am sorry." When true repentance occurs, there is a change in heart, attitude, and actions. True repentance means a turning away from sin, with evidence in our lives of that turn from sin.

Acts 26:20 states, "But showed first of them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Repentance involves turning from our sin and turning to God. That turn is evidenced in our lives by the fact that we do works meet for repentance. We turn from doing evil works to being obedient to God. We serve God through our worship and through serving others. People around us will be able to see the difference in our lives after repentance occurs because we are different in attitude, thought, and actions.

David was a man who committed sin against God. He lusted after Bathsheba, committed adultery with her, and in an effort to conceal that sin, conspired to murder Uriah the Hittite. After being confronted of his sin, David repented. Psalm 51 gives us some insight into David's heart during his repentance. In verses 12-13 of Psalm 51, David states, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." After his repentance and recovering the joy of salvation, David planned to teach transgressors God's ways. David's heart was changing, and, as a result, his thoughts and actions were changing. Rather than seeking the pleasures of the flesh and covering his sins, he was now confessing his sin to God and making plans to teach the truth so that other sinners might be converted and change their ways. Repentance is not something that comes just from our words, but is a change of heart resulting in a change of thought and action. That change often does not come easy; it requires effort on our part.

Second, we are told that to draw nigh to God, we must purify our hearts. Double-minded people are those who try to live spiritually and try to live in the world at the same time. Of course, that is impossible. We are only fooling ourselves because we are living worldly, and the only thing spiritual about us is our words and the meaningless motions of worship we are performing.

Isaiah tells us in Isaiah 1:10-17 that God will not accept the worship of His people when we are only going through the motions of worship. When God's people's hearts are with other gods, while still going to the church and saying and doing all the "right" things, God becomes angry. He tells the Israelites, "When you make many prayers, I will not hear." God also tells them, "I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." God is not pleased with their worship, and calls their attempts at worship iniquity. When we attempt to worship God, while our hearts are with the pleasures of this world-material possessions, relationships with others or anything else - it is iniquity!

When our hearts are pure, we do as Jesus stated in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." We must be single-minded toward God. Our desire must be obedience to God in all things. It requires tremendous effort on our part to fight the temptation of Satan and be obedient to God-both in obeying His commandments and following His leadership in our lives. We must fight to keep our minds stayed on God, our hearts turned toward God, and our actions pleasing to God.

"Drawing nigh to God" is much more than the words we say. It involves repentance and purification. It is indeed work,

and difficult work. However, the results are well worth the work. As we draw nigh to God, He draws nigh to us. We find ourselves in the presence of God.

In the presence of God, we find rest, peace, and joy. Compare that with the weariness, fear, and anxiety that comes from being away from the presence

of God, and only the choice to "draw nigh to God" makes sense. So let us all cleanse our hands of sin and purify our hearts of double-mindedness.

Beyond Every Marah

by Elder Don McWilliams
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"So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore, the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, And said, if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee. And they came to Elim where there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters." Exodus 15:22-27

This account of Israel, led by Moses into the wilderness, could easily parallel many of our life situations. We so often escape one troubling problem only to find ourselves hampered by one equal or greater.

I cannot help but think of the saying, "Remember that in every situation

where faith is tested, the Lord has brought us this way." God does not have to find out if we will respond favorably or not, but he proves us to ourselves as we realize we are at a total loss on our own and need that which can only come from a higher power.

The late Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Lord, keep us at tasks too difficult for us, that we may be drawn to thee for strength." As we can see by the Biblical account, Moses cried unto the Lord. As the song states, "Where can I go, but to the Lord?"

There are numerous trials in our lives from which we can see no way to escape or correct. However, every experienced Christian has had evidence shown to them time and time again that God indeed answers prayers and petitions when offered up in sincerity and humbleness. We cannot expect God to answer our prayers and requests when we tell God how it ought to be done. It seems many want to be God's advisers as to how prayers should be answered.

The first verse and chorus of an old familiar hymn states, "Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin; Each victory will help you, some other to win. Fight manfully onward; Dark passions, subdue. **LOOK EVER TO JESUS**, He'll carry you through. **ASK THE SAVIOUR TO HELP YOU**, Comfort, strengthen,

and keep you. He is willing to aid you; **HE WILL CARRY YOU THROUGH.**"

How true that was with Moses and many others of the Old Testament saints. Each time they were tried, they called upon their God to aid, strengthen, and help them. Whether it is an individual, a family, a church, or a nation, when God is sought in sincerity and humbleness, God answers prayers.

We, as human beings, are usually impatient when it comes to expecting quick results in our requests to God. There are accounts in God's Word that show we cannot always expect immediate answers. Doesn't it seem strange that of all the vast amount of people, (probably over one million), there is only the account of one man, Moses, who called upon God for help for the whole nation of Israel? There is no doubt that God does indeed hear individual prayers. He also hears when many join together in their requests - Esther and all her people, being just one example. Many times a group of believers unite in prayer, and God answers.

Although the way often seems dark or even impossible, all things are possible with God, if we are faithful. Jesus said, "as thou hast believed, so be it done unto you."

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

***"The Task Ahead of Me is
Never as Great as the Power Behind Me"***

Fanning a Flickering Zeal

by Elder Jason S. Solomon
Cumming, Georgia

"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion" (Psalm 71:1).

How real is Christ to you?

When you read the Scriptures and the life of Jesus, does He seem real to you? I often feel that we go through the motions of being believers without zeal because of this very thing. Job suffered mightily in his life, but he looked to the future and said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27). Unlike Job, many, if not most of us, have not suffered such tremendous tribulations. However, each and every genuine Christian has an advantage over Job. We have the indwelling Holy Spirit. Despite this difference, many Christians today lack Job's zeal. Many factors affect this lukewarmness. Some things to be wary of are perceived self-reliance, self-righteousness, and complacency.

Perceived Self-Reliance

In our society especially, we treasure our personal independence. The American ideal is a hard working, independent, no-nonsense type of person. People often think of the cowboy spirit when they consider this idea. Further, it is common to hear someone who has worked hard and met with significant material success described as a "self-made man." Taken to its extreme, this premise leads to "Social Darwinism," a philosophy which is loosely based on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Social Darwinism describes the means by which someone reaches a certain social standing in terms of

wealth, position, and fame. Basing their ideas on the premise of "survival of the fittest," Social Darwinists believe that the cream always rises to the top. While certainly we should give of our best, we should give it to the Master, not the world. Jesus called for us to lay up treasures in heaven, not in the world where moth and dust doth corrupt.

Finally, when Jesus gives his instruction to the Churches of Asia in Revelation, He specifically chastises the church of Laodicea saying,

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:15-18).

Worldly wealth is at the center of a great deal of this perceived self-reliance. If we believe that we have enough money for any eventuality, then we stop looking to others for aid (starting with God). When we cease to rely on God, we have no zeal for Him because we forget that we need Him desperately.

Self-Righteousness

Similar to self-reliance is the notion of self-righteousness. One of the major themes of Jesus' earthly ministry was dedicated to calling out and responding to self-righteousness in the people, especially the Pharisees who felt that they could satisfy the law. To these Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the

weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

Jesus perceived that the Pharisees did not acknowledge the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith which lead to true righteousness. Rather the Pharisees focused on outward signs of righteousness along with public shows of knowledge. Supreme know-it-alls, the Pharisees were "bible-thumpers" in the worst sense of the word. They quoted Old Testament Scripture and traditions as one and the same without acknowledging the grace of the testament of God throughout the history of Israel.

It is easy to be a Pharisee. It is easy to think that we are always right and that our traditions are without fault. Traditions can be a helpful instrument to teach essential truths. For instance, we traditionally meet together on Sundays. We traditionally sing songs as part of the worship service, and we traditionally study God's word on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. When traditions begin to take the place of God's Word as the source of Truth, then we are led away from the Scriptures, the only thing we know to hold absolute truth. In such instances, we quickly lose the ability to perceive truth in the right manner. Traditions then become part if not the whole of our doctrine, and we lose the zeal for Truth.

Complacency

Many churches today are swooning because of internal and external apathy and complacency concerning the things of God. People are often either too busy or too lazy to give place to God in their lives. This great sin of omission destroys local congregations and undermines the work of countless

faithful Christians who have come before. When people lose interest in the vital work of the church because their worldly pursuits call them away, they are cheating themselves, their families, and society.

We rob ourselves when we fail to serve the church, because we are commanded to do so. When we do not arise and serve Him every day, then we do not enjoy His kingdom. Outside of the kingdom, we cannot enjoy His presence. The longer we remain out of His presence, the harder it is to find our way back. The parable of the prodigal son teaches that the son who wasted his inheritance did make it back, but not without putting himself through trials and tribulations of his own making.

We rob our families when we do not demand church attendance and Godly principles in our homes. *While God does not necessarily quicken all the earthly children of the faithful, it is clear that we are to raise them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord regardless.* Who among us would want to rob our children of the depth of knowledge that can be gained from a lifetime of study. However, we do just that when we fail to teach our children about God and His Word from an early age.

I am not speaking of regeneration,

but rather conversion. We are regenerated only once, but we are converted continually away from our sins to God. While a parent or teacher or preacher cannot regenerate a single person, we have a duty to work for the conversion of all away from sin and sadness, away from rebellion against their Creator. Some will listen and others will not, but wouldn't you want the benefit of the doubt?

We rob our society of the same salt and light we should share with our families when we lose our zeal for God. Paul was greatly concerned that those in the church did not fully understand the breadth of their new faith in God. It extends to all things, and its doctrines should be applied to all matters large and small. Paul said to the Colossians, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). When we are complacent about how we apply God's Truth, then we do not exhibit His image and holiness.

In this Present World

As Christians, we often look to eternal heaven for our hope, and this is good. Only when this life is over will we experience God face to face, and that will be a moment that will outshine anything we

can now experience. Even so, we can miss out on the blessings of this life if we look only to the end for blessing without zeal for the work of the present.

Paul wrote many words exhorting good works here and now. He wrote these words to encourage the young minister, Titus, who was charged with continuing the building of the Church:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

Seeing then the purpose of our present life to live soberly, righteously and with godliness, we should zealously seek Him wherever we are and no matter what our duties may be. Whether we are parents or children, teachers or students, leader or follower, we should be ever vigilant to glorify that same Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith, laying aside all worldly temptations and obstacles that hinder our service.

God's Rosebud

A new minister was walking with an older, more seasoned minister in the garden one day. Feeling a bit insecure about what God had for him to do, he was asking the older preacher for some advice. The older preacher walked up to a rosebush and handed the young preacher a rosebud and told him to open it without tearing off any petals.

The young preacher looked in disbelief at the older preacher and was trying to figure out what a rosebud could possibly have to do with his wanting to know the will of God for his life and ministry. But because of his great re-

spect for the older preacher, he proceeded to try to unfold the rose, while keeping every petal intact. It wasn't long before he realized how impossible this was to do.

Noticing the younger preacher's inability to unfold the rosebud without tearing it, the older preacher began to recite the following poem...

*It is only a tiny rosebud,
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
With these clumsy hands of mine.
The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I.*

*GOD opens this flower so easily,
But in my hands they die.
If I cannot unfold a rosebud,
This flower of God's design,
Then how can I have the wisdom
To unfold this life of mine?
So I'll trust in God for leading
Each moment of my day.
I will look to God for guidance
In each step of the way.
The path that lies before me,
Only my Lord knows.
I'll trust God to unfold the moments,
Just as He unfolds the rose.*

The Depravity of Man

by Elder Lee Price
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Last month we examined some of the truths of God concerning His sovereignty, which include three characteristics. God is omnipotent or all-powerful. God is omniscient or all-knowing. God is omnipresent or always everywhere. Men may have a great deal of power and knowledge and also have a far reaching influence, though they cannot be omnipresent. They may also use this ability for evil ends, but God's sovereignty is totally consistent with His righteousness. It may be truthfully stated for this reason that God is totally inerrant or flawless. Because He is inerrant, He needs no changes and does not change. We looked at other Scriptures which teach the truth of God's dependability. God is faithful in all things; and for that reason, we can depend on Him no matter what. Most of the previous statements which have just been made about God can also be made about His Word or the Bible. Only God is sovereign, but His Word is also righteous, inerrant and dependable.

God's Word is as dependable as God Himself. Think of this in a way that is commonly known. Whatever one might say about a man, if his word is no good, he is not considered trustworthy. A late minister friend of mine commonly said that if a man's word was no good, neither was his signature. A person's signature is only a record that he has given his word. The dependability of God's Word shows that God is dependable!

There are some promises in the Scriptures that are obviously true by what we see in the world around us. There are other promises which are shown to be kept in the Scriptures themselves. God made a promise to Noah in Genesis 8:21-22. "And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again

curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." God promised that He would never destroy the earth again as He did during the days of Noah. In this He promised never to flood the whole earth again. There have always been floods, and we will probably always have them, but we have never had another worldwide flood. He also made other promises. Has there always been seedtime or springtime? Has there always been harvest or autumn? Has there always been summer? Has there always been winter? Have we always had days and nights? The answer is yes, and shows the reliability of God's Word.

Notice the promise of God concerning Jesus in Isaiah 7:14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Imanuel." Notice the fulfillment in Matthew 1:22-25. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS." God made a promise around 700 years before Christ. He kept His word and brought it about exactly as He promised.

In the previous Scriptures, we have seen that God's Word said some things would happen. In each instance, God

was shown true to His Word. That should give us the assurance that God's word is inerrant. We may well note that there are other promises of God which have not been fulfilled, such as the final resurrection. We can rest assured they will because God has been faithful in the past. He will be just as faithful in bringing to pass those promises in the future as He has those which have already been fulfilled. Remember that God and His Word are reliable!

God is sovereign or superior to all in every way. He is righteous, faithful and totally inerrant or without flaws. We can use these and other superlatives to describe God, but what can we say about man and his relationship to God? More importantly; what does God's Word say about man or mankind?

I believe it is safe to say that we can know (even by what we see in the world around us) that man is far beneath the superior level of God. Men kill each other, steal from each other and do all kinds of wicked deeds, which are far beneath the righteousness of God. Mankind in general is constantly striving for improvement. We may safely say that man may improve himself in some areas, but God is not impressed with our gains in technology and other areas. Some of it has simply led to more sin.

The word of God teaches that man is a sinful creature. Notice the wording of Romans 3:23. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." I recognize that the previous Scripture deals with past tense, but please notice the wording in I John 1 :8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." These portions of the Word of God tell us that every human being not only **was**, but also is a sinner.

Think about this question for a moment: Has man always been sinful, or

did he become sinful at some period of time? The answer is that man became sinful. How do we know this? What do the Scriptures say about the subject? Remember that God has the final word, and the Scriptures are the authority we have from Him.

God created man on the sixth and final day of creation. Everything that God made was good. In Genesis 1:2,7 we find: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." We see from this passage that man exists because he was created by God. Notice what God said about all of His creation, including man, in Genesis 1:31. "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." God said by this that man was very good as was the rest of His creation, so we need to answer an important question. How did man become sinful?

When God made man, He gave him some commandments. Of those commandments, He only gave man one commandment, which told him to refrain from something. That commandment is found in Genesis 2:16-17. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Did man break this commandment? The answer is yes. We find the answer in the Scriptures of Genesis 3:1-7. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened,

and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." This is the origin of sin, and we see that it happened toward the very beginning of man's existence.

There is another question we must answer. What was the result of Adam's sinning? God told Adam what the result would be, before he sinned, which was death. Look again at Genesis 2:17. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In what way or ways did man die when he sinned? He died to the innocence he knew in the Garden of Eden. This is why Adam and Eve realized they were naked and sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. They also died from the bliss of the Garden of Eden. Notice the scriptures in Genesis 3:24. "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Most importantly, man died in trespasses and sins. In Ephesians 2:1, we find, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin."

We may sometimes get the idea that this applied to Adam, but does not apply to us today. After all, we did not eat of the forbidden fruit. While we did not eat of it, we should remember the words in I John 1:8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." How then did we become sinners? The Scriptures tell us in Romans 5:12, "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." We are sinners because Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden. As our representative, when

Adam fell, all mankind fell with him. The whole human family fell into sin at one time by nature and/or practice. We cannot say that stillborn babies are sinners by practice, and so we must conclude they are sinners by nature. But, as difficult as it may seem, all who live even a short time are sinners by practice. The result of sin is the same for everyone, which is death.

What is the meaning of "death in trespasses and sins?" Death means "separation," and this is consistent with physical death. When someone dies physically there is no communication between the living and the dead, and the two are truly separated. The same applies with God and man. Fallen man is like a dead loved one. A deceased loved one cannot, will not, and has no desire to reach out to the living. Please note that I make that statement with no disrespect for the dead. Since man is dead in trespasses and sins, he has no ability or desire to approach a Holy God. There is a great gap that cannot or will not be bridged by man. We need now to answer another important question. Can man change or overcome this condition of being dead in trespasses and sin? To get our answer we need to go to the final authority, which is the Scriptures. Notice the words in Jeremiah 13:23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Since the Ethiopian cannot change his skin or the leopard cannot change his spots, then man in sin cannot change himself. Notice also the Scripture in Isaiah 64:6. "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." First of all, the Scripture says we are all as an unclean thing, meaning we all are sinful. Next it says that our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. What value is there in filthy rags? Because they must be thrown away, they are worth nothing. It also says we fade as a leaf, which is something dead which falls from a live plant. It finally says our iniquities are like the wind which car-

ries a leaf further and further away from the tree. God is life, and is compared to the tree. Man is dead by nature and is compared to the fallen leaf. As wind carries a leaf away from the tree from which it fell, our sins take us further and further away from God. It is obvious from these Scriptures that man cannot overcome his sinful condition, or death resulting from sin.

It seems that man is in a very bad predicament, and he is. It also seems there is no hope for fallen man. Within himself, there is none, but there is hope. That hope is found in the grace of God, and nowhere else. The Bible teaches that salvation is by the grace of God, and by His grace alone. We will look into the Scriptures to see this, but think about one fact for a moment. God uses some very common language in His Word for comparison to help us better understand His truth. One of those common words is death. Can one who is dead physically rise up from the dead; or does he rather need one who is the source of life to raise him from the dead? The obvious answer is that He cannot rise physically by his own power. We may conclude that those dead in trespasses and sins can only be raised to life by the source of life, which is God.

The Scriptures plainly teach that salvation is by the grace of God. Notice the instruction in Romans 5:15, "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." This says that even though we were dead by nature, we were justified by the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ. Notice also the Scripture in Titus 3:7. "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Here the Scriptures teach once again that we are justified by the grace of God in spite of our lost and ruined condition. It also says that by grace, instead of being banished from God because of sin, we are even heirs of God. Grace

saved us from sin, and also gave us hope for something we would never even consider in our sinful condition, outside of the grace of God. We may say that God's grace did something for us we could not do for ourselves!

We have briefly examined the subject of salvation by the grace of God, and seen that we are nothing without it. This should make us realize more than ever the need we have for God. Think about what the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:10: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not, I but the grace of God which was with me." He said that whatever good he was or did, it was by the grace of God. We must also say that any good in us came from God's grace.

I said earlier in this message that man has no desire or ability to approach God within himself. While this is true, I know and you know that there are those who do approach God. How can they do it? **The fact is the are no longer dead in trespasses and sins.** What made the difference? The answer is, the grace of God has touched them and given them spiritual life. Ephesians 2:1-5 says, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)." The people in the Church at Ephesus were once in trespasses and sins, but they no longer were because God had quickened them. The word quickened is translated from a Greek word which means to be made alive. Though they were dead in trespasses and sins, they were not dead in every

way. They were alive physically, and this is brought out in verses two and three, which tell of the evil they did in their past. They had no spiritual life, but God loved them just the same. The Spirit of God came to them when they could not and would not come to Him. He did it because He is rich in mercy and because of His great love.

Those who have been quickened or born again can come to God, but those who have not been quickened cannot. Notice the contrast in I Corinthians 2:14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This is referring to the natural man. Anything natural has not been altered. For example, a tree may be considered natural, but a board is not, because it has been cut from the tree. Crude oil is natural, but gasoline is not, because it is refined from crude oil. Wool on a sheep is natural, but a wool sweater is not, because it has been cut from the sheep and changed in a variety of ways. By these examples, we can say that the natural man is one who has not been altered by the grace of God or quickened. He is still dead in trespasses and sins.

Those who have spiritual life can draw near to God. Notice the exhortation in James 4:8. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." This not only tells us we can draw nigh or near to God, but exhorts us to do it. When we see people desiring the presence of God or anything about Him, that is the evidence of them having spiritual life. When we see someone doing good works in the eyes of God, that is the evidence of spiritual life. If someone comes to Jesus or even believes in Him, that is also the evidence of spiritual life. This is brought out in John 1:12-13. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

God." The Apostle John said first there were some who received Christ. He also said those who received Him, including those who even believed on His name, were given power to become the sons of God. He then said that neither being born of blood, the will of the flesh, nor

the will of man qualified them to receive Christ. What did qualify them to receive Him was their having been born of God prior to their receiving Him or believing on His name.

May we remember that God and His Word are both reliable, and His Word is

the final source of truth. May we remember also that we all are by nature dead in trespasses and sins and that we will be sinners as long as we live in this present life. May we praise God with every fiber of our being because He has done for us what we could not do for ourselves in saving us by His grace.

Grow in Knowledge

1. "And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their _____, wherein they were strangers."

2. "Are we not counted of him _____? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money."

3. "For their _____ were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle."

4. "And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and _____ have the day of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

5. "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and _____ with me."

6. "And the Beerothites _____ to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day."

7. "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a _____, and there is none abiding."

8. "Thy statutes have been my _____ in the house of my pilgrimage."

9. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were _____ of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

10. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, _____ from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

We Want The Original America!

☆ We want the America of which George Washington said, "It is impossible to govern without God and the Bible."

☆ We want the America of which Abraham Lincoln said, "The only assurance of our nation's safety is to lay our foundation in morality and Christianity."

☆ We want the America of which our founding fathers said, "When the importance of religion is diminished...so is the effectiveness of government."

☆ We want the America of which the 1844 Supreme Court said, "the Bible and especially New Testament should be read and taught as divine revelation in the schools...otherwise, where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly or so perfectly as from the New Testament."

Are You Giving the Devil A Place?

by Pastor Roger Sumner
Waycross, Georgia

(Please prayerfully read chapters 4-6 of Ephesians)

"Neither give place to the Devil" (Ephesians 4:27)

I want you to notice that in this letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul tells the Ephesians how they should deport themselves in this world. In fact, after he makes the statement: "Neither give place to the Devil," he begins to show them how to keep from giving the Devil a place! This would be a very good time to scan through the letter to the Ephesians. You read things like this: "Husbands love your wives", "wives submit to your husbands", "children obey your parents", "servants obey your masters", "forgive one another", "let him who stole steal no more but let him work with his hands". The list would be quite long if I were to list each one, but you get the idea. Paul is talking to us about the way we live. Each of the instructions he gives, if followed, will keep the devil in a defeated state in that area of our lives.

We use the verses at the end of this book to teach about Spiritual Warfare. Actually, to me, this entire book is a book about preventing war.

You see, if I deal with anger quickly and don't allow it to make me do something stupid, then the Devil is defeated.

If I used to steal, but I get forgiven and then quit stealing, then the Devil is defeated.

If I quit talking trash about people and about myself, and begin to speak the truth in love so that I and those around me are edified, strengthened and built up, then the Devil is defeated.

If I listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and obey him, then the Devil is defeated.

If I let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking,

be put away from me, and I don't allow malice to direct my thoughts, words and actions, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to be kind one to another, to be tenderhearted, forgiving others, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven me, then the Devil is defeated.

If I walk in love and learn to love others as Christ loved me, then the Devil is defeated.

If I refuse to be involved in fornication, and all sexual immorality; if I learn not to be covetous; if I don't allow myself to look at pornography; if I don't tell or listen to nasty jokes or jokes that hurt other people, but instead learn to be thankful for all the blessings of God, then the Devil is defeated.

If I find the wisdom that God gives us freely and learn to walk in His wisdom, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to make good use of the time God has given me, then the Devil is defeated.

If I find and understand God's will and purpose for my life so that I can walk in confidence before the Lord, then the Devil is defeated.

If I refuse to be drunk with wine but rather choose to be filled with the Holy Spirit, then the Devil is defeated.

If I can learn to speak to myself and to others in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to submit to those whom God has put over me, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to love my wife, to honor her and help her, then the Devil is defeated.

If I love my children and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord, then the Devil is defeated.

If I honor my father and mother (including all the fathers and mothers that God has given me in the body of Christ), then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to obey and respect my employer and learn to treat my employees well, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to walk humbly before God and to walk before my fellow man with uprightness, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to honor others and to be respectful to those whom God has placed in governmental authority, then the Devil is defeated.

If I learn to bless with my mouth and to refrain my tongue from evil speaking, then the Devil is defeated in my life.

Then, when I read Ephesians 6:11-18, I have already put on the armour of God. I have covered my life, I have covered my wife and my children, my employers and employees, I have covered my fellow Christians and my government, and the Devil loses.

But if I give in to anger; if I refuse to obey the Spirit; if I dishonor the Lord by walking in ways I should not walk; then I can verbally rebuke the Devil all day, I can supposedly bind him and loose him, I can say I cast him out, but he doesn't have to do one thing that I say. Sin is his domain. Rebellion is his domain. Anger and bitterness are his domain. Complaining and backbiting are his domain. They are his territory and you can't run him out of his territory!

But you can take away the "place". Through the blood of Jesus, I can be forgiven; and through repentance I can take away the place that I have given to

the Devil, and the Devil has to leave.

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king” (I Samuel 15:23).

Rebellion is defiance; refusal to obey; refusal to comply with authority.

Stubbornness is stiffness; refusal to heed advice; denial of the truth.

Rebellion defies truth. Stubbornness denies truth.

King Saul lost the anointing, and it was replaced by an evil spirit. The troubling thing is, Saul was completely unaware of this transition. Saul had been a very humble man, but he became defensive and jealous. He sought to kill the very man upon whom the anointing was given. My question is: can this happen to me? Of course the answer

is yes; and so I must give the greater diligence to order my steps and NOT give the Devil a place.

Jesus made this comment about himself: “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30). In another place, He stated that I don’t do anything except the Father tells me to, and I don’t say anything except the Father tells me to (my interpretation of John 5:30). I shudder to think how often I act without even considering the Father’s will. Even so, every such act is an act of rebellion, and it invites, at least on some level, the influence of spirits other than the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to “walk in the Spirit” so that we do not fulfill the desires of our own flesh.

Understanding this principle, it is

easy to see why our government officials can do such utterly contradictory things. It is troubling but understandable to see the direction our government is going, calling evil good and good evil.

But we have the opportunity to exercise our right to vote. We can vote these guys out. It is imperative that we do so. Until we do, we can rebuke devils and cast them out of our government, but they don’t have to go. Wickedness is their domain. We can fall on our faces, and call upon the Lord. We can repent. He has promised to heal our land.

Still, we can keep the Devil out of our homes, off our families, out of our businesses, out of the churches and ministries. He will try to usurp, but when we rebuke him, he has to go because he finds no “place” in us.

The Wooden Bowl

I guarantee you will remember the tale of the Wooden Bowl tomorrow, a week from now, a month from now, a year from now.

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. 'We must do something about father,' said the son.

'I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor.'

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, 'What

are you making?' Just as sweetly, the boy responded, 'Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up.' The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

Author Unknown

Faith To Believe

(A teachable moment from the life of John the Baptist)

by Bro. Richard Cerniglia
Waycross, Georgia

The 11th chapter of Matthew has much to teach us concerning trusting and believing in Jesus. Let's go back and look at the teachable moment that was provided to Jesus when John the Baptist sent messengers to inquire as to whether Jesus was in fact the one who was to come. We read in Matthew 11:1-4; *"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"*

Isn't this interesting. The same man who in John 1:29 when seeing Jesus coming unto him said, *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."* is now doubting that Jesus is *"he that should come"*. How did our Lord and Savior react to this question from John the Baptist, the one who had been *"the voice crying in the wilderness"*? He answered the question with what John already knew. He told John's disciples to *"shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them"*.

You see, John knew that Jesus had been doing all these things. One might ask, so what was the problem? Like most every other Jew of the day, John was likely looking for a Messiah who would restore Israel to sovereignty and set up Christ's earthly Kingdom. Instead, what did John get? Well, he was thrown into prison while standing up for righteousness in protesting the marriage of Herod and Herodias (the wife

of Herod's brother, Philip). To add insult to injury, this Christ was only teaching and healing. Where was the evidence that Jesus would overthrow the ruling parties or banish the Roman occupiers in setting up His new kingdom; and why was God leaving John in this prison? Yes, it is easy to see why John's faith might have been shaken.

Jesus recognized this, and concluded His statement to John's disciples by saying, *"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."* John's problem with Jesus was not a result of what Jesus was doing, but that John lacked the faith to just believe Jesus was really the Christ. (Was Jesus who He said He was?) As we move into Matthew 11:7, Jesus turns to the multitudes who undoubtedly heard this exchange between Jesus and John's disciples, and begins to teach them the true implications of what had transpired. Jesus said concerning John:

*"What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding **HE THAT IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE.**"*

Here, Jesus lays out very clearly that John is not an unfaithful or unprofitable servant. This man was chosen of God for an important task! He was prophesied of by the prophets! He himself was more than a prophet! Jesus went

so far as to say that there is none born that was greater than John the Baptist! Yet Jesus stated that he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John! This indeed was a powerful, teachable moment for the multitudes.

What is the Kingdom of Heaven, or as it is also known, the Kingdom of God? The scripture states in Romans 14:17: *"The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy ghost"*. Jesus also gave us a clue about the Kingdom when he said in Matthew 8:11: *"And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven"*.

You see, John the Baptist, the multitudes, and even the disciples of Jesus did not comprehend that the Kingdom of Heaven was not an earthly kingdom. It is a spiritual kingdom, where through Faith and Obedience, we get to sit down at the Table of God in fellowship through Jesus and with Jesus, along with all the others who are with God. This reward we have now, before we are called home to eternity. It is basically a powerful and personal fellowship with God the Father and Christ His son while we live here on this earth. Jesus is illustrating to the multitudes and through the corridor of time to us, that as great as John the Baptist was, and as much as he had done for God, and as close as he had been to God in the past, that at this time in John's life even someone who had just the basic faith and obedience it takes to enter the Kingdom was greater than John.

Remember, though the Kingdom of God had not yet come in its fullness (because Christ had yet to purchase His possession with His blood, and the Old Jerusalem was not yet destroyed),

God's children could still enter the Kingdom. This is because Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; and no man goes to the father except by Jesus, and Jesus was there with them. So just as today we are in the Kingdom sometimes and out of the Kingdom others, the same was true for John then. Because he had let doubt creep into his heart when he pondered the question "are thou He that should come?", John the Baptist was not in the Kingdom. Was this a permanent position in his life? Not at all! Just

like us, there were times when his faith was unshakable, and there were times when he had little faith; and there were times when John had that fellowship in the spirit, and there were times when he didn't.

It is a wonderful blessing to be allowed entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, to have that close personal fellowship with God the Father and with Jesus His son. Don't ever take that lightly, expecting past righteousness to keep you in close fellowship with God. As

John learned and as Jesus expounded to the multitudes in Matthew chapter 11, we must do things, God's way, going to Jesus, trusting in Him, taking up His yoke, learning of Him, and pressing onward to the heights of the kingdom, knowing that then we will receive rest unto our souls. Remember John the Baptist in his moment of unbelief, **FOR HE WHO IS LEAST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS GREATER THAN HE.**

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. pilgrimage - Exodus 6:4 | 4. evil - Genesis 47:9 | 7. shadow - I Chronicles 29:15 |
| 2. strangers - Genesis 31:15 | 5. sojourners - Leviticus 25:23 | 8. songs - Psalms 119:54 |
| 3. riches - Genesis 36:7 | 6. fled - II Samuel 4:3 | 9. persuaded - Hebrews 11:13 |
| | | 10. abstain - I Peter 2:11 |

THINGS I'VE LEARNED

I've learned that, no matter what happens, how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles four things: a rainy day, the elderly, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I've learned that making a 'living' is not the same thing as making a 'life.'

I've learned that life sometimes

gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back sometimes.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But, if you focus on your family, your friends, the needs of others, your work and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open

heart, I usually make the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone.

People love that human touch -- holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.

**Without God our week would be:
Sinday, Mournday, Tearsday,
Wasteday, Thirstday, Fightday, Shatterday.**

Serving Others, Doing Good

by Sis. Karen Varnedoe
Brunswick, Georgia

The blessing from serving others and doing good can never be measured. Neil Clark Wauen, in his book, *God Said It, Don't Sweat It*, said, "The apostle Paul constantly reminds us that the healthiest goal we can have is to do good. Paul also says time after time doing good involves focusing on the needs and problems of other people."

In our busy medical practice, we work with people from all walks of life, and we do our best to help people who are physically hurting. We do a service

that we hope leads to a better quality of life by focusing on the physical aspect. But we also have the opportunity to service the spiritual aspect of life by telling others about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and doing good to those with whom we come in contact. Whether it be a kind word, a gentle smile, or a thoughtful act, we are able to function at our best by serving others and doing good. John Wesley once wrote:

*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."*

Life isn't about serving and doing good for ourselves, it's about looking inside the hearts of other people and seeking ways to be of service. When we do this we enable our own abilities to reach new heights.

Malachi 3:3 says: 'He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.'

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study, and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God.

One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining Silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and

let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot. Then she thought again about the verse that says: 'He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.'

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the sil-

ver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, 'How do you know when the silver is fully refined?'

He smiled at her and answered, 'Oh, that's easy -- when I see my image in it.'

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

*You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments that stand out,
the moments when you have really lived,
are the moments when you have done things in a spirit of love. Henry Drummond*



*When you look back at the way God has helped you before,
it should build and strengthen your faith
to trust Him for today's battles. R.B. Ouellette*

PHYSICAL POSITIONS IN PRAYING

There is no magical or commanded physical position to be in when praying. One can commune with God in prayer standing, kneeling, lying down, or even hanging on a cross! There are Scriptures which speak of people praying from variety of positions:

On their faces before God

“And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them” (Numbers 20:6).

“And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so” (Jos. 5:14,15).

“And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD” (II Chronicles 20:18).

“And he went a little further, and **fell on his face, and prayed**, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

Bowing heads before the Lord

And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren” (Genesis 24:26,27).

“And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had

looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped” (Exodus 4:31).

“And the people bowed the head and worshipped” (Exodus 12:27).

“And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped” (Exodus 34:8).

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).

Standing before the Lord

“And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven” (I Kings 8:22).

“And **when ye stand praying**, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25).

KNEELING BEFORE THE LORD

Kneel *fervently*, as Solomon did at the dedication of the Temple (II Chronicles 6:13).

Kneel *continually*, as Daniel did, three times a day (Dan. 6:10).

Kneel *worshipfully*, as the Psalmist urges (Psalm 95:6).

Kneel *submissively*, as Christ did at the Garden of Gethsemene (Luke 22:41).

Kneel *earnestly*, as the leper did when he besought Christ for cleansing (Mark 1:40).

Kneel *intercessingly* as Paul did for the saints at Ephesus and Stephen did for his enemies (Ephesians 3:14 and Acts 7:60).

Kneel *seeking* God's power as Peter did for Tabitha (Acts 9:40).

See also I Kings 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Isaiah

45:23; Acts 20:36; 21:5.

SECRET PRAYING

There are many examples in the Scriptures of people praying audibly in the presence of other people, and people joining together in prayer meetings.

But it is important for us to remember that **one of the most important ways to draw nigh to God is in fervent, private, secret prayer!** Some-one said that audible, public prayers are like the leaves on the tree, and private secret prayers are like the roots on a tree. Without those roots, the leaves will soon be of no value, and will wither up as useless.

Please remember some of these important Scriptures relative to “secret prayer.”

Matthew 6:5-7 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

*** See also Acts 10:9, 30; I Kings 17:19,20; I Samuel 15:11; Deuteronomy 9:25.

REMEMBER that Jesus often prayed **alone!** (See Mark 1:35; 6:46, 47; Luke 5:15, 16; Luke 6:12; Luke 22:41, 42. But also remember that **Jesus prayed publicly!!!** Matthew 11:25; Luke 3:21; John 11:41; John 17:1.

SEVEN DAYS WITHOUT GOD MAKES ONE WEAK!

Bible Reading Calendar for November

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Jer. 29,30	Titus 1
2	Jer. 31,32	Titus 2
3	Jer. 33,34,35	Titus 3
4	Jer. 36,37	Philem.
5	Jer. 38,39	Heb. 1
6	Jer. 40,41,42	Heb. 2
7	Jer. 43,44,45	Heb. 3
8	Jer. 46,47,48	Heb. 4
9	Jer. 49,50	Heb. 5
10	Jer. 51,52	Heb. 6
11	Lam. 1,2	Heb. 7
12	Lam. 3,4,5	Heb. 8
13	Ezek. 1,2,3	Heb. 9
14	Ezek. 4,5,6	Heb. 10:1-23
15	Ezek. 7,8,9	Heb. 10:24-39

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Ezek. 10,11,12	Heb. 11:1-19
17	Ezek. 13,14,15	Heb. 11:20-40
18	Ezek. 16	Heb. 12
19	Ezek. 17,18,19	Heb. 13
20	Ezek. 20,21	Jas. 1
21	Ezek. 22,23	Jas. 2
22	Ezek. 24,25,26	Jas. 3
23	Ezek. 27,28	Jas. 4
24	Ezek. 29,30,31	Jas. 5
25	Ezek. 32,33	I Peter 1
26	Ezek. 34,35	I Peter 2
27	Ezek. 36,37	I Peter 3
28	Ezek. 38,39	I Peter 4
29	Ezek. 40	I Peter 5
30	Ezek. 41,42	II Peter 1

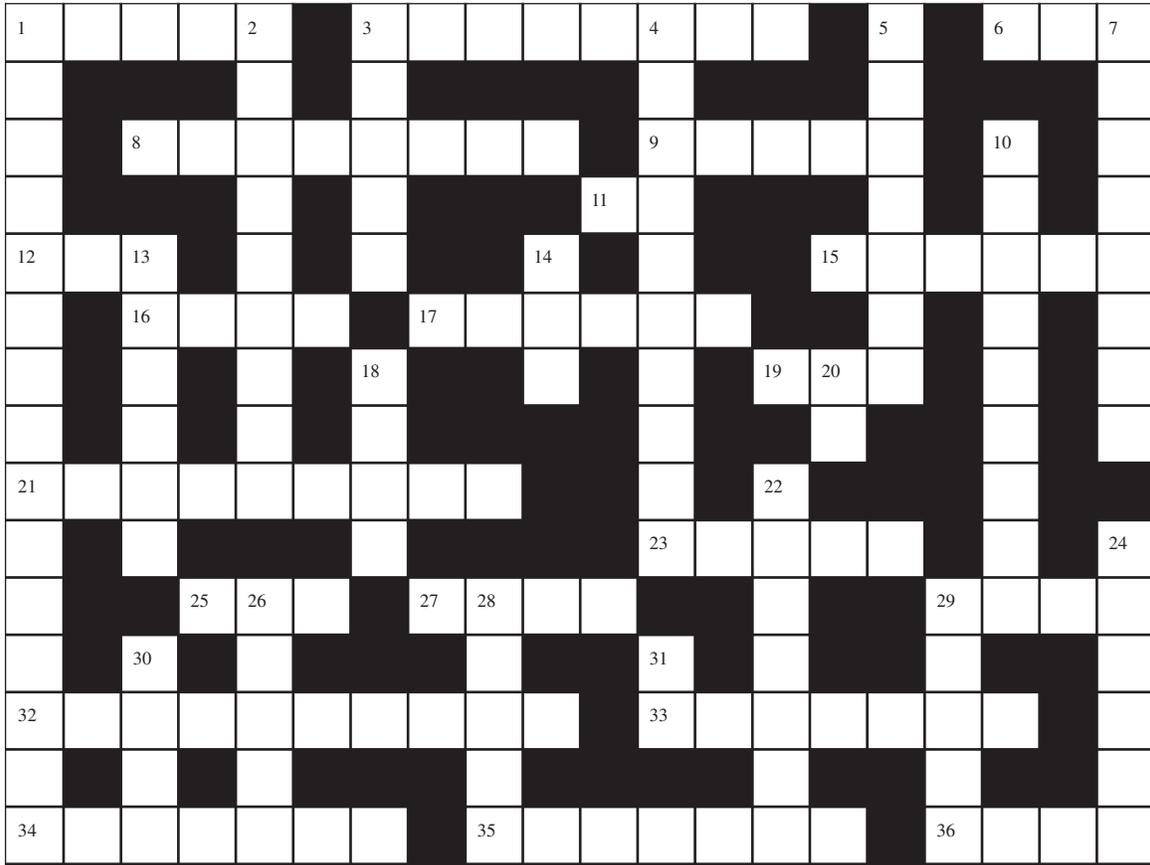
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
OCTOBER 09**

1	R	E	2	C	O	M	P	E	N	S	3	E	4	R	E	C	E	I	5	V	E	T	6	H	
	I		L								Y		E						I				E		
7	G	O	E	T	H				8	S	L	E	E	P			9	C	H	I	L	D		I	
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10	T	O	N	G		11	U	E		12	E	13	T	E	R	N	A	L						H	
	E		S			P			14	M		H			T		L		15	S	16	W	E	E	T
17	O	N	E			18	O	P	E	N	E	19	D					20	S		H				
	U					N			R			R				21	P	R	E	C	I		22	S	
23	S	K	I	N					C		24	S	A	Y				L		C				T	
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	E		27	A			H			28	M		29	H	A	N	D		30	P			31	W	E
	S		G		R				32	H	I	S		R					L					N	
33	S	H	A	D	O	W					G			34	D	E	35	N	I	E	D			G	
			I		N						H			E			O		A					T	
36	C	O	N	V	E	R	S	A	T	I	O	N			T			37	D	E	A	T	H		

Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they _____ even as I." 3. "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I _____ that God is no respecter of persons:" 6. "For as many as are _____ by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." 8. "And of his fullness have all we _____, and grace for grace." 9. "But as many as received him, to them gave he _____ to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" 11. "For there is _____ respect of persons with God." 12. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, _____ knowing whither he went." 15. "_____ not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." 16. "Now will sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful _____:" 17. "But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may _____ the Lord:" 19. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; _____ of God." 21. "For the Lord knoweth the way of the _____: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." 23. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to _____ man to profit withal." 25. "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 _____ the more." 27. "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch _____." 29. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not _____ as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." 32. "And there are diversities of _____, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 33. "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a _____ people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." 34. "And the doors shall be shut in the _____, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;" 35. "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither _____ nor sleep." 36. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had _____ testimony, that he pleased God."



DOWN

1. "And there are differences of _____, but the same Lord." 2. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more _____ sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." 3. "For ye are bought with a _____: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 4. "But without faith it is _____ to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." 5. "And that _____, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." 7. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God _____ in you? 10. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with _____ and godly fear:" 13. "But he that is married careth for the _____ that are of the world, how he may please his wife." 14. "There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please _____ husband." 18. "What? _____ ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" 20. "But unto every one of _____ is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." 22. "Beloved, _____ not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false profits are gone out into the world." 24. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of _____, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." 26. "And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a _____ upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction." 28. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the _____ of the living God." 29. "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus _____ thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." 30. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall _____ the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." 31. "For our God _____ a consuming fire."

Be Gossip Free!

by Sis. Christy Bond
Patterson, Georgia

God has shown me a lot more recently about the tongue. **GOSSIP** (I can make myself THINK I'm not gossiping when I really am) whether spoken between close friends or even with a spouse, **is EVIL!** The natural man **CRAVES** gossip. We can fall deeper and deeper into that craving for gossip until all we are doing is gossiping!!! We don't have to share every wrong that has been done to us on a daily basis with our friends or with our spouse.

A lot of times we want to run to our spouse or a friend and "get sympathy" or just "vent" when someone has done us wrong. Satan's wording makes gossip seem alright. We think we **HAVE** to "just" **VENT** sometimes. If it's such a must, go talk to **GOD** about the problem. God has shown me the error in my way; now if I can just correct the problem!

Part of being **humble** is to know someone has done you wrong, but not to speak of it. Just like God commands us in alms giving to not let the left hand know what the right hand is doing, I feel that same principle is important when someone does you wrong. When we gossip about the "wrong-doing" to our spouse (or friend), then that may stir up anger in our spouse or friend towards that other person. Instead, go to the source if it's bad enough to talk about, and let that person know there is a problem. Many times when we actually begin to go talk to someone who has offended us, we'll realize that we should just forgive and forget, and not even address the problem. When we take a step back and think about it, we realize it wasn't really a big deal anyway.

Communication **IS** the key to a

good relationship, whether friendship or marriage. So, how do I know what I can and can't talk about? Use the Philippians 4:8 test!!! Whatsoever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report: think on these things. Speak of these things **ONLY**. If we only speak of those things, then "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:7). I want to do so much better about this, even with my husband! I want to be an uplifting wife that brings nothing but **JOY** and the **PEACE OF GOD** to my home! May God help me to do this as I know it will be hard to stop **ALL** gossip with my husband and my closest friends!

(Read Proverbs chapters 15 and 16 and the book of James, especially chapter 3, for more scriptures on this subject!)



Our love to God is measured by our everyday Fellowship with others and the love it displays.

Andrew Murray

