

Made Free

by Elder McKinley Wright (93 years old)
Jacksonville, Florida

“The truth shall make you free.” That is what Jesus told the Jews who had acknowledged Him as being Messiah (John 8:31-32). But for truth to have this effect, they had to meet certain qualifications. They had already met one of them. They had acknowledged His Messiahship (verse 30). Any Jews who hadn't acknowledged Him as such might have heard the words, but they knew that the words did not pertain to them. Having acknowledged Him, now the main qualification that they had to meet was to continue in His word. That idea is what this article is about. We, because we are spiritual Jews (Romans 2:28-29), have the promise in these words handed down to us

But we do not automatically continue in His word. We must persevere (keep working at it even (especially) when the going becomes difficult). This lesson is not about being born again. The only connection to the New Birth is that no one will be made free unless the person has already been born again

Freedom is not something tangible. It is all in a person's mind. If the person doesn't feel free he/she is in bondage. On the other hand, even if the person is in bondage physically, if he/she is content, he/she will not feel bound. There are two distinct ways of life, Capitalism and Communism. We who are under Capitalism think that we are free, and that those in the Communist society are under bondage to their government. But many in this country, of all ethnic groups, think that the government owes them a living. So these individuals feel like they are in bondage. The truth is that both systems have their good points and their bad points. And what one person thinks of as pleasing, another person thinks of it as being unpleasant. Jesus was say-

ing that understanding the truth would lead to happiness in our lives.

Back when I worked for a living, I worked with a man who belonged to a different religious order. One day during lunch, we were discussing religion. During the conversation, he said that he wished that he could believe the things that I believe. He knew that we read the same Bible. But when he read it, he saw it as teaching things that are different from what I saw it as teaching. He wished that he could see it like I do, but he just couldn't get around some of the things that he saw. The difference was because of a difference in our ideas of a person's place in the scheme of things. During the conversation, he used the expression “mortal fear.” He said that he spent his life in mortal fear that his foot would slip and he would do something that would destroy his standing with God, and that he would then die before he could get himself re-established. He couldn't enjoy his standing with God, even though for the moment he thought it was adequate. He believed that he had a part in establishing the relationship, and instinctively knew that if he could get it for himself, he could lose it. He was in bondage, and needed to know the truth in order to be set free.

Jesus had been teaching in Galilee. In Galilee He would move from place to place accompanied by a group of disciples. Most of the “congregations” would consist of these who traveled with Him, as well as others from the local community. The verse just before the cited scripture said that as He taught, many believed on Him. This means that in their minds they acknowledged Him as Messiah (we need to remember that Jesus taught mostly Jews), and that what He said was from God. He addressed these words to those who had become believers. He

admonished them to “continue” in His word. A person cannot continue in a condition unless he/she is already in it. He promised them a reward for doing so. If they would continue in His word, they would be made free. Of course that promise implies that if they failed to continue in His word they would lose their freedom.

Some people believe that this being made free is the same as being born again, but the two expressions are not the same. The New Birth is an action performed by God, specifically the Holy Spirit (John 3:7-8). The individual cannot help in this situation. Until a person has been born again, that person's attitude toward God is enmity (Romans 8:7). Before being born again, if God is “for” something, the person is automatically against it. The individuals in this lesson had believed in Jesus. Their enmity had been removed, proving that they had already been born again. But they still must continue in His word in order to be free. If they stop continuing in His word, they will lose that freedom. So their being free is not the same as their being born again. I was born quite a few years ago. That birth made me the son of my earthly father. I might behave so badly that he would disown me. Because of my misbehavior, he might turn his back on me completely, but until I die I, shall still be his son. My relationship with my heavenly father is closer than my relationship with my earthly father, so that relationship can never be destroyed (Romans 8:31-39). Therefore, this freedom which we can lose played no part in our New Birth. Its consequences pertain only to our natural lifetimes.

There are individuals who can be called “disciples.” Anyone who has made a commitment to Jesus, no matter how weak that commitment was at

its beginning, or how weak it became due to the slothfulness of the individual, can think of himself as a "disciple" unless the individual renounces his discipleship by changing his mind or by his slothfulness.

But in this lesson, Jesus mentions another category, "Disciples Indeed." One becomes a "disciple indeed" by continuing in Christ's Word. A person cannot continue in Christ's word without reading it regularly. As we read it, we must keep our minds on what we are reading, not just looking at the words, but in listening to what they say. We should read all of it, not just the parts that say again those things that we already believe. When we read something that seems to not fit in with the things that we thought we knew, we should study the Scriptures asking God to show us how they fit together. All of the Bible is God's word! He

doesn't say something in one place, then contradict that truth in another place. It all fits together. If it seems to not fit, there is something that we believe that is not true. We might need to change some of our preconceived ideas, but if we expand our knowledge of God, of Christ and of God's dealings with His children, our freedom will be enhanced.

Knowing the truth is the most important thing in the life of a disciple. The word "and" in a sentence means that there are two ideas that are connected. The first one causes the second. The word "and" will probably be between them. If the word "and" is the first word in a sentence, it means that this sentence is connected to the previous sentence in the same way. Then, the previous sentence is the cause and this sentence is the result. In this verse (John 8:32) the word "and" is

used twice, the first one being the first word in a new sentence. This means that there are three ideas that are connected. The first idea is that when a disciple continues in Christ's word, he/she becomes a "disciple indeed." This continuing in His word will cause the person to know the truth. Then, this knowledge of the truth will make the person free (bring assurance). In this verse the word "shall" is used in connection with the second and third ideas, indicating that the results indicated are sure to come to pass. This is Christ's promise. We can depend on its fulfillment.

A person's commitment must be followed by continuing. If this condition is met, the individual will grow in knowledge, leading to joy in God's service. Let's persevere!

Grow in Knowledge

1. "And this day shall be unto you for a _____; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations;..."
2. "And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of _____:...."
3. "To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to _____ incense before the Lord;..."
4. "...and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for _____."
5. "And thou shalt take the atonement _____ of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls."
6. "And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the _____ of Amalek from under heaven."
7. "Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this _____ hath done, be told for a memorial of her."
8. "And when he looked on him, he was afraid and said, What is it Lord? And he said unto him, Thy _____ and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."
9. "Speak unto the children of Israel saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of _____ an holy convocation."
10. "And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by _____ unto the Lord."



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For Sermons and Prayer Requests

We All Died In Adam!

by Elder Arthur B. Walden
(deceased)

I want us to study the doctrine of original sin and what original sin is. As we turn to the Roman letter, Paul is giving us a great doctrinal truth that so few of God's children see and comprehend. Romans 5:12 says, "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."

Paul is talking here about Adam. Adam is the one man by which sin entered into the world. "And death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." Now Paul is teaching that in the sin of Adam, death came not only upon Adam, but upon all his family, and we are Adam multiplied. There has been death in the world ever since Adam sinned against the law of God. Every generation that ever lived since Adam, has experienced death. The oldest man in the Bible lived to be 969 years old, but the Bible, says; "And he died". So, the penalty of the wages of sin is death.

The only way that anyone will ever understand what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross is to know the result of what Adam did in the garden of Eden.

We find that God created Adam and made him good, very good, and Adam was created in a state of innocence. There was no sin in Adam, whatsoever. Adam was neither a fit subject for heaven, nor a fit subject for hell; but rather, a fit subject for the garden of Eden, where God blessed him to live. God told him to dress the garden and keep it, and I believe Adam would have lived forever, had Adam obeyed God.

We find now in the third chapter of Genesis how the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said unto the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the gar-

den?" (Genesis 3:1). Now I want you to notice the cunningness of the serpent, Satan. He begins to put doubt in the mind of Eve. Satan is still belittling the word of God. He put doubt into the mind of this woman, Eve, that God had given Adam for a helpmate, and for companion.

The Scripture tells us in the book of Timothy, concerning Eve, and Adam: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:14). You know, the serpent continues to deceive people today.

"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" (Genesis 3:2, 3).

If man had not sinned, there wouldn't be any evil for us to know about. If Adam had not sinned against God, there would be no evil. Can you imagine a world without evil? I can. There is one to come for God's children, that better country; that world to come, that glorious place we call Heaven! We look forward to the eternal Heaven for there will be no sin and no evil there.

The serpent said to the woman, "Ye shall not surely die." The serpent was lying. He was calling God a liar, and it seems today that some people had much rather believe a lie than the truth.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies and hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Timothy 4:12).

There are men today who tell God's children that multitudes whom God loves will spend eternity in hell because they will not accept Jesus Christ

as their personal Saviour. You cannot find that in the word of God. You may interpret the Bible to say that, but you are perverting the word of God. The word of God says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). That is not a lie. That is the truth of the Bible. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27, 28).

Notice the difference in Genesis 3 between the truth of God and the lie of the serpent. One word! One word changed the whole thing. Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die", and God said, "Ye shall surely die." Who are you going to believe? I'm going to believe God!

"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" (Genesis 3:6). I don't find anywhere in the Bible that she had to twist Adam's arm, or that she had to throw him on the ground and hold him and make him eat. She didn't threaten his life and say, "You've got to eat this." NO! Adam didn't resist it. You see Eve was deceived, but Adam did it willingly. Adam wasn't deceived. He did it because he wanted to. Man loves sin. Man loves the way of the world. Man does not love God by nature. Man is described in Romans 3 by nature (See Romans 3:9-17). "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18). He doesn't see God. He does not fear God. He does not hear God. He does not love God!

Adam transgressed. God's law was transgressed. I believe today the word of God teaches that Adam sinned and

Adam died. Not only did Adam die, but we died in Adam. Because of what Adam did, we all died. That is the law of sin and death. Adam was separated from God by sinning. Adam had been created in a state of innocence and now Adam had become guilty before God. He had transgressed that law of God. "The soul that sinneth, it shall

die." So Adam transgressed God's law, and through the transgression of Adam, we all died! In Ephesians 2:1, we read: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sin." When did we die in trespasses and in sin? WHEN ADAM SINNED!! True. We all died in sin. We all were separated from God! Those that are dead

in sin must be born of the Spirit of God in order to be children of God, and to be born spiritually, and to be alive in God's family.

The lesson of original sin is a great lesson, if we can understand what Adam did in the garden, and what Jesus Christ did on the cross.

Let Gratitude Be Your Attitude

Every day of your life is a gift from God. Don't squander it. Don't waste it by being angry with anyone. Don't let it slip away by feeling sorry for yourself. Be grateful for this precious gift of life and spend it by being as happy and as thankful as you possibly can. Let your mind dwell on the good things which have happened to you. Let gratitude be your attitude. Think of your assets and don't let anyone else spoil your day for you. Enjoy every day of your life to the fullest. Realize that you can add to the joy each day by making someone else happy.

The kind of prayer that helps you get into a peaceful, grateful attitude might be something like this: Heavenly Father, help me to be grateful for being

alive right now. Help me to realize that no matter what my problems may be, where there is life, there is hope. Help me to think positively and to realize that thousands of miracles are happening every day. Help me to pray, and help me to remember the times when prayer brought me peace. Let me be a better listener and not be self-centered. Help me to realize that if I get my mind occupied by helping and cheering up other people, I will be healthier than if I were always checking my own pulse. Help me to look for the good in everyone I meet. Let me realize that I cannot change anybody's way of thinking. Only by doing the best I can and setting a good example may I influence someone to change their behavior. Help me

to understand that other people have as much a right to their opinions as I do to mine. Let me love myself as I am. Make me realize when I am not serving Thee, I am not fulfilling my purpose on this earth. I should be thankful for my body and all you have given me. Help me to remember there is a purpose for every person being different. Let me realize that You, my Father, are with me always, to guide and comfort me. Let me open my heart and my pores and let Your love flow in. Let me accept the peace that You can bring, and help me to understand that You have a plan and purpose to everything that happens.

CAN YOU HELP?

There are many ways you can help spread the truth of Salvation By Grace. **We need your prayers.** God is blessing this endeavor abundantly. Without His strength and guidance, we could not continue. Please pray for us. If you are able to help financially, that will be greatly appreciated. It takes the united support of many individuals and Churches to meet our monthly expenses. To those who are already helping, THANK YOU! We need **more articles**, both personal testimonies and scriptural articles. Please send us some material to consider for publication. Do you have friends who would enjoy the magazine? Please send us **names and addresses** for us to share THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH with them. Are you **distributing the magazine in your Community?** This is a wonderful way to share the truth with children of God in your community.

Let all join together to spread the truth of Salvation By Grace! We look forward to hearing from you!

The Bible will keep you away from sin; And sin will keep you away from the Bible!
(Quote from Neal Hendrix, Waycross, Georgia)

What Is Time To God?

by Elder Phillip Nicholls
Blackshear, Georgia

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (II Peter 3:8).

Some people use this verse regularly to try to teach that each day of the six days of creation was a thousand years each, or more. In order to understand this verse, we must keep it in context, and look at the wording carefully.

First, we must notice the small word "as" that is used in the verse. It does not state "one day with the Lord is a thousand years, and a thousand years is one day," but it states "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Peter, inspired by God uses the word "as," which is teaching that the subjects (one day and a thousand years) are compared to one another, and that the subjects are not the same.

Secondly, we must see that he said "is with the Lord." That is to say, from God's sight or position, a day or

a thousand years are as one another. Even though a day has a much smaller amount of time than a thousand years has, it still doesn't affect how God sees it. There is no time with God.

Thirdly, if with the Lord a day was a thousand years, then every thousand years God would be a day old. We know that God doesn't age because He has always been and always will be. Time deals only with earthly things. Again there is no time with God.

We also find this same lesson in Psalm 90:4, as it states "for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." We know it would not make any sense to say that a thousand years is yesterday, but when we see the statement, "but as yesterday," we understand that he is making a comparison. We see again in this part of the Scripture that in the Lord's sight a thousand years is no longer than yesterday. The next statement in Psalm

90:4 states that a thousand years is "as a watch in the night." Here, we see that a thousand years is being compared to a night watch. The night watch was the space of time that the night watchman was on duty. God is not contradicting Himself by saying that a thousand years was first, a day; then, yesterday; and then again it was a "watch." We see that He was only comparing them to one another, and that what each had in common was that in God's mind each is the same, for there is no time with God.

If we study the context of II Peter 3:8, we find that there were some that were doing wrong and were saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Brother Peter told them that whether it was a day, a month, or years, that God was coming in judgement, and He was just giving them space to repent. The time doesn't matter with God. Peter doesn't want them or us ignorant of this.

Answers to Grow in Knowledge

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Memorial - Exodus 12:14 | 6. Remembrance - Exodus 17:4 |
| 2. Israel - Exodus 28:12 | 7. Woman - Matthew 26:13 |
| 3. Offer - Numbers 16:40 | 8. Prayers - Acts 10:4 |
| 4. Ever - Joshua 4:7 | 9. Trumpets - Leviticus 23:24 |
| 5. Monday - Exodus 30:16 | 10. Fire - Leviticus 24:7 |

"...beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." II Peter 3:17

Forgiveness

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

For our study this month, we will consider the subject of FORGIVENESS. Space will not permit an exhaustive study of this most important lesson, so please use this section as a starting point, then take your Bible and concordance and keep on studying. Most importantly, put it into practice.

We will consider two major areas of forgiveness: man forgiving man; and then God forgiving man. The second area of study (God forgiving man), will be sub-divided into two sections: unconditional eternal forgiveness; and then conditional forgiveness we can experience as we live here in this world. We might call these two sections fundamental and practical.

Please pray for God to bless us all to study, and then be doers of His holy word.

PERSONAL FORGIVENESS (MAN FORGIVING MAN)

Hatred, animosity, malice and anger are sins which have destroyed the lives of many people of God. Too often, a person feels offended by something a brother says or does, and immediately trouble begins to brew. The offended brother's pride begins to eat away like a cancer. Anger swells within until there are actually feelings of hatred and malice. Fellowship ceases! Friendship is destroyed. And Satan has devoured another lamb through his cunning craftiness. This scene is repeated daily in many walks of life. But the saddest case of all is when we see it in the church!

The people of God in the church are to be examples to the whole world. When we lower our standards and yield to temptation of the devil, we bring shame and reproach upon the cause of Christ! When we have anger in our hearts, we give "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." Beside all this, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother,

he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) Brethren, if we think we love God, but we hate our brethren, we deceive ourselves!

But thanks be unto God that we have something we can do to keep from hating anyone or feeling malice and anger! **FORGIVE!** No matter what someone has done or said to offend us, God has given us the ability to FORGIVE! Not only has God given us the ability to forgive, but **HE COMMANDS THAT WE ARE TO FORGIVE!**

Listen to God commanding us to FORGIVE as we read in Ephesians and Colossians:

Ephesians 4:32 "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Colossians 3:13 "Forbearing one another, and **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER**, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye!"

In both these verses, we are told to FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER! If we hold or feel malice toward someone, it is because **we have not forgiven** them for something they have done, or something we THINK they have done! FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Listen to that! We have an example and pattern! We are to **FORGIVE** like we have been **FORGIVEN!** God has FORGIVEN us of so much and has FORGIVEN us in so many ways that we should be ready and willing to FORGIVE OTHERS.

When we are unmerciful and unwilling to FORGIVE others, we will find the wrath of God coming upon us in an horrible way! Please turn in your Bible, and carefully read Matthew chapter 18. Jesus Christ is here teaching the great importance of us as God's people always manifesting a **FORGIVING**

SPIRIT! He begins by warning against offending even the least of our brethren. Next, Jesus tells us in this chapter what to do when a brother offends us. Then, He tells us how often to forgive. And finally, in verses 23-35, He tells us about God's wrath coming upon us if we are not willing to FORGIVE! Study this chapter carefully!

Most of Matthew 18 deals with personal offenses and how to respond to offenses. (See vs. 6-9, 15-17, 21-35). Christ says in verse 6, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." We are made to understand the seriousness and gravity of offending a little one.

Coming on down to verse 15 of the 18th chapter of Matthew, we find the **Scriptural procedure to follow when offences and personal conflicts arise in the church:**

15. "Moreover if thy **BROTHER** shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

16. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

17. And if he neglect to hear them, TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Brethren, how long has it been since you have seen that procedure followed which is given here by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? "Ignore the problem, hide the problem, cover up the problem, but do not bring the problem before the church!" That is today's modern philosophy, and **it is completely contrary to the way of God!**

After Christ Jesus told what must be done if a brother would not be recon-

ciled and live in peace, we then read about a question which Peter asked Jesus. Listen to Matthew 18:21,22:

21. "Then came Peter to him, and said, "Lord, how oft shall my brother **sin against me**, and I forgive him? till seven times?"

22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven! "

When someone asks to be forgiven for a personal trespass, we are under command from Christ to FORGIVE! If you curse me, slap me, and say all manner of evil against me, but then truly repent and ask for forgiveness, I commit a great sin if I am not willing to truly FORGIVE and make amends and have fellowship. As often as one asks for forgiveness of personal trespasses, FORGIVE HIM! Christ Jesus taught this again as we read in Luke 17:3,4:

3. "Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, **REBUKE HIM: AND IF HE REPENT, FORGIVE HIM!**

4. And if he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I **REPENT: THOU SHALT FORGIVE HIM!**"

Some people retort, "I'll forgive him, but I will not forget it" Brethren, **THAT IS NOT TRUE FORGIVENESS!** Forgive means to lay aside, omit, and put away! Ill-will and bad feelings cannot continue toward someone if we have forgiven him!

Some people respond, "If you had been treated like I have, you would know that I cannot forgive such a trespass against me!" Brethren, **NO ONE HAS EVER** been trespassed against more than Jesus Christ. He was reviled, rebuked, jeered, sneered, spit upon, scorned, mocked, forsaken, hung on a cross, and every other manner of reproach imaginable came upon Christ Jesus. What did He do? As He hung there upon Calvary, Jesus said, **"FATHER, FORGIVE THEM:** for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34).

Now, please carefully read Matthew 18:23-35! These verses tell clearly that we are debtors to God in a tremendous way. They describe the fact that no matter how much we have to FORGIVE anyone, it is nothing compared

to how much God has forgiven us. But sometimes, even after God has forgiven us of so much, we are guilty of then demanding justice rather than showing mercy toward our brethren. **In personal trespasses**, we have the ability, and duty, and privilege of FORGIVING repeatedly. A failure to do so will result in God's wrath coming upon us! Oh, brethren, let us FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us! We should have compassion on our brethren even as God had pity on us! Let us FORGIVE and FORGET all wrongdoings toward us! Let us every one FORGIVE **"from our hearts!"** (See Matthew 18:35). Let malice, anger, hatred, and ill will cease from ever again being named among us! Let us be UNITED IN BROTHERLY LOVE as we earnestly contend for the TRUTH! "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1).

HAVE YOU EVER NEEDED TO BE FORGIVEN? Have you ever said something and were later sorry? Have you ever done something which made you feel guilty? Are you so sinless and perfect that **YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE FORGIVEN OF THINGS EVERY DAY?**

Jesus Christ says for us to pray, "Father...**forgive us** our debts, **as we forgive** our debtors!" (Matthew 6:9,12). If we pray that, we are asking God **to forgive us as we forgive others!** We are ten thousand talents in debt to God and have not a penny to pay! We need FORGIVENESS **every day** from God! When we see ourselves as we are so deeply indebted to God, how can we hold some debt against a brother who has offended us?

When we fail to FORGIVE our brother when he asks forgiveness, we have failed to do it unto the Lord Jesus Christ, For Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me!" (Matthew 25:45). Nothing we bring to the Lord in service or consecration or worship is acceptable in God's sight if we hold anger in our hearts for a brother. If there is someone you have not forgiven, FORGIVE THEM NOW and beg God to forgive you for allowing the devil to ruin your life for so long!

Remember the words Stephen prayed for his enemies as they killed him. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" (Acts 7:60). Jesus said, "Ye many have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, **LOVE** your enemies, **bless** them that curse you, **do good** to them that hate you, and **pray** for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:43,44).

Lord, help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Help us to FORGIVE anyone who has offended us, and **help us to FORGIVE now, for we need FORGIVENESS NOW from Thee!**

FORGIVENESS Fundamental and Practical

The subject of FORGIVENESS is one of the most comforting doctrines in all the Bible. We are taught to FORGIVE one another even as God has FORGIVEN us! We have divided our study of FORGIVENESS into two major sections: man forgiving man, and God forgiving man.

In our previous study, we concentrated upon us forgiving one another. Certainly, if we realize how much wrong we do each day which needs to be forgiven, we will always be ready and willing to forgive our brothers and sisters in Christ. Please study more about personal forgiveness and be a "DOER" by **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER!**

Now, let us consider the subject of God forgiving us as His people. **DO WE NEED TO BE FORGIVEN?** Sometimes Satan deceives people into thinking or believing that their lives are pretty pure and clean. But the scriptures teach us about our wretched and sinful condition. Listen to these verses which show that we all have sinned and need FORGIVENESS FROM GOD!

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God!" (Romans 3:23). Paul quotes from Psalm 53 as we read now in Romans 3:10-12: "As it is written, There is **none righteous, no, not one!** There is none that understandeth, **there is none that seeketh after God.** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofit-

able; **there is none that doeth good, no, not one!**"

Isaiah saw his own wretchedness and the vileness of all the family of God as we hear him say: "WOE IS ME! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." (See Isaiah 6:5). When Isaiah saw the King, the Lord of Hosts, THEN he could see his own imperfection and sin so keenly. As long as we measure ourselves by ourselves and compare ourselves among ourselves, we will have a false security and feeling of accomplishment. But when we measure ourselves by the PLUMBLINE (Amos 7:7-9), the MEASURE - the RULE (II Corinthians 10:12-18), THE MIRROR OF GOD'S HOLY WORD (James 1:22-25), or when we compare ourselves to our GREAT EXAMPLE, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (I Peter 2:21), we must all confess that we have missed the mark and fallen short! We all, when seeing PERFECTION, begin to feel that we are indeed the least of all saints and the greatest of all sinners! Isaiah expresses our feelings in Isaiah 64:6, when he says, "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!" Oh, brethren, **DO WE NEED FORGIVENESS?**

"**All** we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned **every one** to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of **us all!**" (Isaiah 53:6). Are there some of the people of God who are "good enough" to go to heaven? Are there some of the people of God who have walked worthy of being with God because of their own righteousnesses? **NO!** There is **NONE GOOD, NO, NOT ONE!** We are all covered with SIN within and without! "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us!" (I John 1:8). This **SIN**, that we all have, **SEPARATES US FROM GOD!** UNLESS SIN IS FORGIVEN and PUT AWAY BY GOD, we can never be with Him to rejoice in His Beauty, Glory, Majesty and PERFECTION!

That brings us to a very important

question. HOW ARE WE FORGIVEN OF our sins by God? To understand the true answers to this question, God must bless us to "RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH!" Please pray for God's special blessings now as we look at two different phases of FORGIVENESS by God!

FUNDAMENTAL FORGIVENESS

First of all, the word of God plainly shows that there is FORGIVENESS that is **accomplished** or **completed**. **There is a FORGIVENESS which has already been fulfilled, as God has already FORGIVEN** us (His people) for our sins! This is a fundamental forgiveness that makes us justified before God! This FORGIVENESS which we will first consider took place at Calvary when the iniquity of us all (all the elect family of God) was placed upon Christ Jesus. At that point, the debt was PAID! At that point, Christ accomplished what He came to this earth to do: **HE SAVED HIS PEOPLE** (the elect family of God) **FROM THEIR SINS!** This is an unconditional FORGIVENESS which we did nothing to obtain! We did not ask for this FORGIVENESS! We did not, and do not, deserve this FORGIVENESS. This FORGIVENESS of our sins came wholly and completely by the AMAZING GRACE of GOD!

Let us now turn to just a few of the scriptures which show this **unconditional forgiveness** which has **already been accomplished!** Let us see and REMEMBER that **WE ARE FORGIVEN!** Let us ever be mindful of the sufferings of Jesus Christ at Calvary and that He there "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself!" (Hebrews 9:26). Those that were set apart, or chosen by God the Father, were redeemed by God the Son at Calvary! All the sins of all the elect family of God were placed upon Christ Jesus in that darkest of hours. And we, BY HIS STRIPES, are now FORGIVEN! (See Hebrews 10:14). WE ARE HEALED! WE ARE JUSTIFIED! WE ARE BOUGHT with the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

In Matthew 26:28, we read the words of Jesus Christ as He instituted the Lord's Supper and said, this is my blood of the new testament, which is

shed for many for the remission of sins! Thanks be unto God that by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, our SINS were FORGIVEN, and at that point AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST." (Psalm 103:12). His blood was shed FOR MANY!" How many? As many as the Father had given HIM before the foundation of the world! (See Ephesians 1:4-6). It is a world of people so great that no man can number out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation! (See Revelation 5:9; 7:9; etc.) Brethren, Jesus Christ did not try to put away sin; He did not offer to put away our sins; HE PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of HIMSELF, and thereby He accomplished what He came to do: HE SAVED HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS! WE NEEDED FORGIVENESS! Praise God for His AMAZING GRACE IN FORGIVING US!

Let us now look at Colossians 2:3-15, where we read again that God has FORGIVEN us all our trespasses: they are nailed to the CROSS, and we bear them NO MORE! "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, **HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES:** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross!" (Colossians 2:13-15). What has God already done, without any aid or decision from you? **HE HAS FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES!** And then we read again in chapter three of this Colossian letter, in verse 13: "FORBEARING ONE ANOTHER, AND **FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER** ...even as **Christ FORGAVE YOU!** So also do ye!" This forgiveness from God is an accomplished, completed, unconditional, and irreversible act of God! (See also Isaiah 43:25; 44:21; 22; Ephesians 4:32; Psalm 85:2; etc.) This is a fundamental forgiveness where GOD has justified all of His chosen people who shall be with Him forevermore when this time world ends!

PRACTICAL FORGIVENESS

That brings us to another question as we study FORGIVENESS further. "Why ARE THERE SO MANY PLACES which tell us to do something TO BE

FORGIVEN if we have already been FORGIVEN?" Well, we have already been FORGIVEN fundamentally, and that assures our eternal security. But while we live here in this life, we are to repent and confess our sins in order to have communion and fellowship with God NOW! This practical FORGIVENESS is conditional! Let us now look at some verses of Scripture which show that **we** must do something in order to be FORGIVEN by God NOW to have FELLOWSHIP with Him! **This FORGIVENESS of sins** relieves us from a feeling of guilt.

In the example prayer which Christ Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He told them to ask God the Father for FORGIVENESS. Christ was speaking about this **practical forgiveness** from God when He told them to pray, "And FORGIVE us our debts, as we FORGIVE our debtors." (Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4). We are to be found praying to the Father, asking Him to "FORGIVE US OUR SINS." Fundamentally, our sins were forgiven at Calvary. That justified us for being with God in the eternal Heaven. Now, we need FORGIVENESS in a practical sense in order to have peace and fellowship with God **here in the Kingdom of Heaven!** This practical cleansing and FORGIVENESS comes from God **when we are truly repentant and have a broken and contrite spirit!**

Some of you may have witnessed a young child come running to his parent crying about accidentally breaking a window. The child is weeping and manifesting much grief and sorrow over the incident. Then, when the parent sees the broken heart of the child, we see the parent comfort and love the

child.

In the Church, similar scenes were often witnessed. A member of the body would have strayed from the strait and narrow way. Then, that child of God's heart was broken, and the member would stand before the congregation in the presence of God, and weep as confession would be made. What always follows those scenes when a child of God humbles himself under the mighty hand of God? They are LIFTED UP, COMFORTED, and STRENGTHENED by God and by the Church! As we read in 1 John 1:8,9, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS,** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This FORGIVING AND CLEANSING which is **conditional** upon us CONFESSING our sins, is different from the FORGIVING and CLEANSING which took place at Calvary! This practical FORGIVENESS which comes when we confess our sins does not qualify us for the Eternal Heaven when we leave this world. This practical forgiveness has to do with a righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost which we have NOW in the Kingdom of God!

We must CONFESS OUR SINS, we must ASK GOD for FORGIVENESS, AND we now will look at two verses of scripture which show that we MUST FORGIVE OTHERS if we are to have this practical FORGIVENESS from God. Please listen closely to Mark 11:25,26: "And when ye stand praying, **FORGIVE,** if ye have ought against any: **THAT YOUR FATHER ALSO WHICH IS IN HEAVEN MAY FOR-**

GIVE YOU YOUR TRESPASSES!

26. But if ye do not FORGIVE, neither will your Father which is in heaven FORGIVE YOUR TRESPASSES!"

Do you see that this practical FORGIVENESS from God is conditional upon us FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER? DO WE NEED GOD TO FORGIVE US? Then it is absolutely necessary that we FORGIVE **everyone else** who has committed personal trespasses against us! We must confess our sins! We must ask God for FORGIVENESS.

If you want the most glorious and abundant life ever experienced, DO WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS, and GOD WILL FORGIVE YOUR SINS and HEAL YOUR LIFE!

Fundamentally, you were FORGIVEN YOUR SINS at Calvary! If you love God, it is because God first loved you and HE HAS FORGIVEN YOU OF YOUR SINS! That means that you will be with God in the eternal Heaven! And NOW you can enter the Kingdom of Heaven and live the abundant life in Christ if you **CONFESS YOUR SINS, FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER,** and beg God to FORGIVE you for your sins.

May God help us to see that the people of God have been FORGIVEN, but we need to be forgiven each day. May God help us all to see that there are two applications or phases of God's FORGIVENESS: One is fundamental, the other practical! One is unconditional, the other conditional! One is eternal, the other temporal!

May God help us to rightly DIVIDE THE WORD OF TRUTH-AS WE REJOICE IN THE DOCTRINE OF FORGIVENESS

**"Confess your faults one to another,
and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.
The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
James 5:16**

Keep Thy Heart

By Bro. David Durrence
Waycross, Georgia

As we consider the written word of God, we understand that God often warns us to consider how we use the different parts of our body to sin. We are warned to consider how we use our hands and feet; and our eyes and ears, and even our mouth for **“the tongue is a little member and boasteth great things, behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity”** (James 3:5-6). God also warns us about our hearts. The natural heart, the organ that pumps blood through our bodies, is not the heart under consideration. Rather, the word of God is speaking about the heart which is the seat of our understanding, emotions, courage, passions, and the like. From the heart of man comes all our actions and reactions to life. The heart is so important to our lives and what we do with our lives, that it appears in the word of God more than 900 times! This is the heart that we will focus on in this lesson.

To begin this study, I would like to list some scriptures found in the book of Proverbs and try to explain them. (Proverbs 4:20-27), **“[20] My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.**

[21] Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. [22] For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. [23] Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. [24] Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. [25] Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. [26] Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. [27] Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

As the wise man Solomon pins the

inspired word of God, he writes “My son”. As a father who loves his child might address his son, whom he loves, with these words, God says to His children, “My son, attend to my words.” God is saying to us that these words are very important to us and we need to pay attention to them and follow them. The word of God is just as important for God’s children today as it has ever been, and we need to “incline” our ear unto what God says to hear.

In verse 21, God tells us to **“let them (the words of God) not depart from thine eyes; and keep them (the words of God) in the midst of thine heart”**. We must daily be in the word of God, keeping the words of God always before our eyes and in our minds, and keeping them in the midst of our heart, which is our inner man, where lies the seat of all our emotions and thoughts, and which determines our actions.

Verse 22 tells us why it is so important to us to do what God tells us in the previous verse: **“For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”** God tells us in His word both how to physically care for our natural bodies, and our spiritual . By keeping God’s word, we can live both physically healthy, and we can live the abundant life which is spiritual, **“for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”** (Romans 14:17).

Verse 23 is extremely important to us because it instructs us to **“Keep thy heart with all diligence”**, then God tells us why it is so important, because **“ for out of it (your heart) are the issues of life.”** To keep our hearts is to Guard our inner man, to watch over our very soul. We must watch over our heart, which is our soul, our inner man, as though it is precious gold. In fact, our heart is far more precious than the

abundance of king’s gold. **“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”** (Matthew 16:26).

For **out of our hearts** are the **issues of life**. What are the issues of your life? Everything that comes forth from your life are the issues of life. To help you get a grasp on the magnitude of this statement, we will list just a few: think; remember; know; discern; see; hate; fear; weakness; discouragement; grieve; pride; lust; love; pray; rejoice; meditate; sing; give; deceive; humility; repent; believe; be faithful; be upright; idolatry; wisdom; hard hearted; seek God; love God. Whether it is good or bad, whatever you think or do, they are the issues of your life, and they all proceed out of your heart! Can evil come out of the heart of a child? We all know the answer, for we have all experienced these things in our own selves. Our Lord, Jesus Christ, has taken all our sins away and made us sinless, in an eternal sense, but while we live and breathe and have our being here on earth, we must keep God’s word ever before us and guard our hearts, lest we also be overtaken in a fault .

The heart is the very center of the human life. I believe that the “heart” encompasses both “Spirit” and “Soul,” and drives our every thought and action. Therefore, the activities of the heart drive our behavior. Let’s consider ourselves for a moment. Which category do you fit into?

Ungodly attitude/ behavior

fear of man
vengeance
pride
lover of self
covetousness
hatred
anger
rebellion
anxiety / fear

Godly attitudes/ behavior

- Fear of God
- Entrusting it to God
- Humility
- Lover of Others
- Generosity
- Love
- Peace/ Forgiveness
- Submission
- Peace / Contentment

If you find yourself in any of the "Un-godly" category, I pray that you will strive to seek out God's instructions in these weaknesses and believe the promises of God concerning them, and keep thy heart. God's word tells

us in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also". Sometimes we put too much value in carnal things, and too little value in Spiritual things. God has given us a promise that if we will seek Him, come out from among the captivity of the world and if we will follow Him, He will cleanse us from all sin and "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my

judgments, and do them. [28] And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:26-28)

Therefore brethren [25] Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. [26] Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. [27] Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Proverbs 4:25-27).

Acceptable Words

by Elder Edward McIntyre
Fitzgerald, Georgia

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." (Psalm 19:14).

The words of our mouth usually reflect the meditation of our heart. In Psalm 19:14, the Psalmist stated "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." His prayer was that the very inward thoughts and the expression of his mouth would be pleasing unto the Lord, Whom he recognized as being worthy of living in a manner to

please, as he recognized God as being his strength and his redeemer.

We live in a world today marked by hypocrisy and deceit. Oft times, the words of man do not reflect the wicked and sinful meditations of the hearts. The Lord is not and cannot be pleased. Strife and deceit occur. This injures the person who harbors bad thoughts, and tries to make their speech smooth when the heart is set on bad thoughts. Not only is the person injured, but those around them are subject to be injured.

May we truly strive to make our heart

meditations acceptable in the sight of God. Let's strive to match our words to our thoughts in a very spiritual manner to please God every day we live. When we do this, the Lord is pleased, because of our recognition of Him as our strength and our redeemer. Thus the fellowship of the body of believers is strengthened in unity, and we will grow spiritually. Our thoughts, words and walk (manner of living) will reflect our faith in an ALMIGHTY GOD.

May each of us remember Psalm 19:14, and use it as a GUIDE to our thoughts and words.

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES: Please send us a personal testimony about a special way God has blessed your life! Tell others about how great things He hath done for you!

"Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth." Psalm 119:88

Press On!

By Bro. Brooks Strickland
Quitman, Georgia

“...Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark....” (Philippians 3:13-14).

These are the words of Paul in Philippians 3:13, 14 when he is stressing the importance of us not looking back, forgetting the things which are behind us, and focusing on what is ahead. Verse 14 states, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” As Christians, God has called us to move forward in our walk with Him no matter what events, trials, or setbacks we experience. Many of God’s dear saints all through scripture had trials or even judgments that they have had to endure and move on to the next phase of life no matter how hard it may have been.

One of the best examples of this is in II Samuel 12:14-24. This is where King David, after he had sinned by laying with Bathsheba, was told by Nathan that the child that she was to bear would die. The next verse says the Lord struck the child and it became very sick. David then besought God for the child, and he fasted, and lay all night upon the earth. The elders of his house went to raise him up but he would not arise, and he would not eat with them. When the child died on the seventh day, the elders feared to tell David of his death. David saw that they whispered, and scripture says he perceived that the child was dead. David asked them if indeed the child had died, and they told him yes. From what you have read at this point beginning in verse 14 through verse 19, how do you think David will react? How would you react? Verse 20 says, “Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped.” David, by the grace of God has just done what we as Christians have so much trouble doing almost always. He immediately arose from a problem of his past and “pressed on” to the future. I believe it

is noteworthy that he “pressed on” as soon as he learned the child was dead. Though the Lord declared that the child would die, it makes more sense that David laid in the earth and fasted for the child while he was still alive than it would have if he had continued to lay there after it had died. After the child was dead, it was more apparent to David than ever that there was absolutely nothing he could do to save the child. David did the wisest thing he could have done by rising from the earth and moving on to the next thing at that point. How many times have we lain on the earth and continued to focus on a problem that we could no longer fix. I believe that many times we continue to lay there even after we, like David, realize there is nothing more we can do.

After David arose and went into the house of the Lord, he went into his own house and ate. I believe David did so well at “pressing on” that it puzzled his servants. They asked him, “What is this thing that thou hast done? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.” David responded by saying, “But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.” I believe that as a result of not dwelling on the past, but rather pressing forward to whatever God had for David to do next, God gave David the wisdom to rationalize and realize that there was absolutely no point in remaining down on the earth, whether it be to continue praying or mourning.

Are you still dwelling on something that there is no point? If you “press on” and forget those things which are behind, God will give you the strength and wisdom as he did David to continue getting past whatever you have had to experience. Also I believe the Lord gave David the peaceful thought that though the child would not return to him, he would go to the child one day! This was God’s way to comfort David as he was choosing to serve the

Lord by “pressing on.” The Lord does this for us when we press forward as he has commanded us, and forget the things that are behind us.

I believe at this point the best part of the passage is still to come. After David explained this to his servants, verse 24 says he comforted Bathsheba his wife and he went in unto her and lay with her and she bare him a son, and called his name Solomon and the Lord loved him. David had another child! You can never replace a child that has died, but more children can be a blessing when one has been lost. The Lord ultimately, after blessing him with wisdom and comfort for “pressing on” through what was a hard time for him, gave him another son: the greatest of all his children! What if David had laid there for a long time after the child had died? Even if he still would have had Solomon, he could have easily prolonged the birth of Solomon.

Are things on which we are dwelling prolonging the next chapter of our lives? Or even worse, is our dwelling on things from past experiences that we cannot change causing us to completely miss out on opportunities to serve the Lord in ways we never have before? In my bible, this whole passage is contained in two side by side columns. The left column contains the grim side of the passage, David being told the child would die, the child getting sick, David fasting, laying in the earth praying, and the child dying. The last words in this column are, “then David arose from the earth and washed....” The next column begins with each of the steps he took at moving on and how things gradually got better. The action that David took that separates the columns, as well as the sequence of events in David’s life, is that David arose from the earth. How much better would our situation be if we would arise, leave the problems of the past behind, and “press on” to the next step in our walk with the Lord? PRESS ON!

Stewardship

by Bro. Terry Leach
Blackshear, Georgia

(Continued from last month)

I am honored to have this opportunity to share my thoughts and beliefs on the subject of stewardship, but I am more so humbled because I have made many mistakes in my service to God; Mostly out of ignorance, or complacency, or utter laziness, and sometimes by putting my wants ahead of what I knew would be profitable to The Kingdom of God, and to others, and even to myself. Nevertheless, God has been loving and so very gracious in His dealings with me. Even so, I have, and do suffer for my mistakes.

When I was asked to speak about Stewardship, it was a bit intimidating to me on several fronts; mainly because I feel like most all the men that would be there, including my son, know more truth from God's word than I do! And I didn't especially want them to know that. "It's better to let people think you are a fool, than to speak and remove all doubt!" Also, it was intimidating because my life might not be the best example to look at in regards to marital advice. But, I thought about it, and if it is true you can learn from your mistakes, maybe I did have some advice that could be worthwhile.

I do believe a Godly wife is among the greatest blessings a man can receive. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life" (Proverbs 31:10-12). A good wife brings a great reward of help and joy, but to whom much is given, much is required to maintain the gift. When a man is given a wife, he enters into a greater responsibility calling for extra special care in stewardship. How you maintain your duties will now affect not only you, but your family as well. "And

they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

Now that's a good thought! Praise God! A man should do his best to never take God's gift of a wife and family for granted, staying faithful in good stewardship not just for his own sake, but for the sake of his whole family. I believe God can tend to be forgiving when we neglect proper stewardship by cleaning up or in taking care of an old car...but I fear not so much if we fail in dealings with "His" children of which we have stewardship over. "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

One of the most frightening truths in God's word to me is this: "The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (Numbers 14:18). My daily prayers of repentance include the plea that neither my children, or grandchildren, nor anyone else would suffer because of my mistakes, because of my disobedience, and because of my unbelief.

I am sure many men and woman reminded my son of Scriptures regarding how to be a good steward of the wife God was giving him, (especially men and woman from the wife to be blood lines!) but I would like to mention a couple of verses that I wish I had known and remembered in times passed. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them [wives] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter

3:7).

There is so much in that verse! I would love to hear what God would have to say through my pastor on just that one verse, but there is one key statement in there, which I guess I knew, but must have forgotten.

I have been a single parent of three children since around 1988. The children were ages 5, 3, and 1 year old when my wife left, even though I begged her not to go. (That's a long story, but it's not really relevant.) She never gave me a reason why she left other than, "It's not you..." She just said she had changed from who she used to be. My wife was not only a very good wife for a time, but she was a very strong woman in mind and in spirit. She was highly educated and made a very good salary, doubling what I was making. So with three children taking all of what I brought home just to keep them in child care, we mutually decided I would stay home and become "Mr. Mom". We were trying to do what was best for the family financially, and especially for the children. We didn't want strangers raising the kids. We were trying to do the wise thing.

I won't try to get into all the scripture which I now know that tells me how unwise that move was. I'll just use this one for now: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

There is much I wish I had known, but, referring back to the verse in 1 Peter, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel..."

As I mentioned, my wife was very strong in every sense, so I made the mistake of forgetting that my wife was

"the weaker vessel", and I fear I allowed her to endure more responsibility than she was intended to endure.

Another verse I should have known: "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9).

God's word instructs us, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). I don't think I loved my wife like Christ loves the church. I know I loved her more than I loved myself, and I don't think that is a bad thing, but I loved her to the point I was willing to do most anything I could to please her. Now even that is not a bad thing, but if I had loved her like Christ loves the church, I would have loved her enough to have not allowed her to be the chief bread winner for the family even though that is what she wanted. I should have loved her enough to let

her be the one to stay home and raise the children. Oh how much I loved and enjoyed every moment of caring for all three of them, but I acted more like her helper rather than her being my helper. Looking back, I can see I was selfish and inconsiderate to her by not being the primary supplier for the household. By not doing so, I not only wronged my wife and family, I denied the faith. "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

People often ask me, why did the marriage break up? Who was at fault? I use to say, "It was not my fault! I gave her no cause to leave!" Well, it was my fault! I don't take the blame for the choices she made after she left, and I did my best to get her to stay and rely on God to fix it, but I guess it was "too late". If I had known, and

remembered, and followed more of God's word on how to be a good steward of the wife God gave me, I believe I would still be reaping the blessings and joy of a Godly companion. Nevertheless, God is so good and so forgiving! I have repented of my mistakes, and I have tried to live and teach the children God gave me charge over a life devoted to His service ever since. In His mercy, God has forgiven me my sins and this family has been blessed beyond measure. I can never praise Him enough!

My words of advice to my son, and to the husband's of my daughters, and to any husband and father, is this: Take extra care to be a good steward of all you are given, the small as well as the great, rejoicing in the helper you have been blessed with, and God only knows the even greater blessings you and your family could enjoy!

The Beauty of Life!

by Elder Don McWilliams
(deceased)

Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26).

The spring time of the calendar year is once again with us. As usual, our thoughts turn to the coming forth of dormant plants and trees. Flowers begin to bloom as once again the cold ground becomes warm from the rays of the sun.

It has always seemed so fitting and symbolic that God chose the spring of the year for us to celebrate the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In the crucifixion, the penalty of sin was paid by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. As He lay in the tomb, dead or dormant for three days, lifeless in regards

to human flesh, even in this death He became as us in His flesh. However, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that lifeless body was again empowered from on high. Jesus said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:17,18). Death could not hold Him. The atonement had been consummated by His blood and God had been propitiated. Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, openly proved what He said He would do by taking up His life again.

In this present life, we can also find life in death. Paul says in Ephesians 2:1, "You hath he quickened (made alive) who were dead in trespasses and sins:" Although we, in our flesh, are dead to the spiritual things of God's

kingdom when He so chooses in His own particular appointed time, He, by the same Holy Spirit, gives us life. We recall again that Jesus said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:26). We are in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and adoption of the Father.

Although many people seem to be spiritually dead for a period in life, yet whenever that springtime of spiritual resurrection comes from the Father, we will be as a flower in spring, bringing forth the sweet fragrance of the Spirit to those about us.

Thank God for giving us hope of life eternal through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

"..... think on these things." (Philippians 4:8).

Bible Reading Calendar for July

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Job 19,20	Acts 9:23-43
2	Job 21,22	Acts 10:1-23
3	Job 23,24,25	Acts 10:24-48
4	Job 26,27,28	Acts 11
5	Job 29,30	Acts 12
6	Job 31,32	Acts 13:1-23
7	Job 33,34	Acts 13: 24-52
8	Job 35,36,37	Acts 14
9	Job 38,39	Acts 15:1-21
10	Job 40,41,42	Acts 15:22-41
11	Psalms 1,2,3	Acts 16:1-15
12	Psalms 4,5,6	Acts 16:16-40
13	Psalms 7,8,9	Acts 17:1-15
14	Psalms 10,11,12	Acts 17:16-34
15	Psalms 13-16	Acts 18

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Psalms 17,18	Acts 19:1-20
17	Psalms 19,20,21	Acts 19:21-41
18	Psalms 22,23,24	Acts 20:1-16
19	Psalms 25,26,27	Acts 20:17-38
20	Psalms 28,29,30	Acts 21:1-14
21	Psalms 31,32,33	Acts 21:15-40
22	Psalms 34,35	Acts 22
23	Psalms 36,37	Acts 23:1-11
24	Psalms 38,39,40	Acts 23:12-35
25	Psalms 41,42,43	Acts 24
26	Psalms 44,45,46	Acts 25
27	Psalms 47,48,49	Acts 26
28	Psalms 50,51,52	Acts 27:1-25
29	Psalms 53,54,55	Acts 27:26-44
30	Psalms 56,57,58	Acts 28:1-15
31	Psalms 59,60,61	Acts 28:16-31

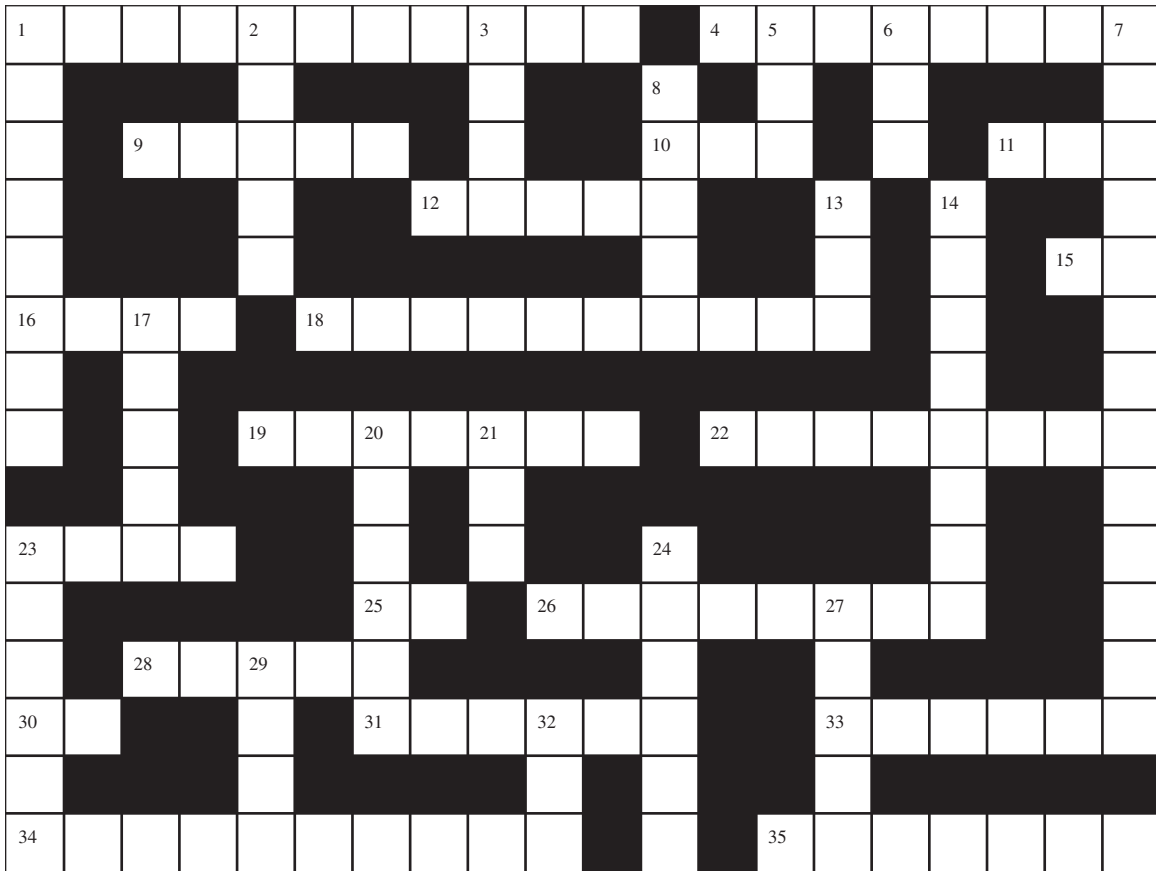
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
JUNE 2014**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be _____." 4. "Behold, how good and how _____ it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." 9. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with _____:..." 10. "Lord, lay _____ this sin to their charge." 11. "If God be for us, who _____ be against us?" 12. "The king's _____ is in the hand of the Lord,..." 15. "...seek and _____ shall find;..." 16. "...The Son of man _____ be lifted up?..." 18. "Take heed to _____:..." 19. "...this is the _____ that overcometh the world, even our faith." 22. "...all things are _____ to him that believeth." 23. "...be sure your sin will _____ you out." 25. "..._____ thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him;..." 26. "Moreover, if thy brother shall _____ against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and he alone:..." 28. "...Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have _____;..." 30. "...if _____ shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." 31. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the _____ of grace,..." 33. "Knock and it shall be _____ unto you." 34. "...the goodness of God leadeth thee to _____." 35. "And though after my skin worms _____ this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."



DOWN

1. "...he was despised, And we _____ him not." 2. "So _____ we the wall;...For the people had a mind to work." 3. "...having no _____, and without God in the world." 5. "_____ us make man in our image, after our likeness;..." 6. "_____ and it shall be given you;..." 7. "And be ye kind one to another, _____, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." 8. "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, _____ seven times:.but until seventy times seven!" 13. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth _____ brother, he is a liar:..." 14. "But with the _____ blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" 17. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till _____ times?" 20. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as _____ forgave you, so also do ye!" 21. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of _____." 23. "_____, forgive them; for they know not what they do." 24. "...and if he _____, forgive him." 27. "Faith without works is dead, being _____." 29. "...for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath _____, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"