

The SWORD and TRUMPET



“Blow ye the Trumpet and warn the People.”

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.”

“Take the Sword of the Spirit which is The Word of God.”

Founded in 1929 by Geo. R. Brunk I

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THE SWORD AND TRUMPET GUIDELINES monthly magazine is a faith ministry directed by a Board representing various constituencies of the Mennonite Church. It is committed to defending, proclaiming, and promoting the whole Gospel of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It emphasizes neglected truth and contends for “the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” This publication exposes and opposes doctrinal error which compromises that faith and leads to apostasy.

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IN THIS ISSUE

1. Person of the Month: John S. Hess	1
2. Wealth That Grips the Heart	2
3. From the Editor’s Desk: Send or Give	4
4. The Sunday School Lessons	6
5. Newslines	11
6. Unlimited Power	14
7. Counseling From the Word: Look Carefully How You Walk	16
8. The Call to Holiness	18
9. Sermon of the Month: The Joy of Following Jesus	20
10. Spanking Controversy Complicates Child Rearing	25
11. Let Your No Be No	28
12. Arguing or Friendly Exchange	30
13. The Supreme Goal in Parent/Youth Relationships	32
14. Song of the Month: “Day Is Dying in the West”	34
15. Resting in Him	36
16. Beginning Issues: Noah and the Animals on the Ark	37
17. Masculine Spirituality	39
18. Two of a Kind	41

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Two of a Kind

They took the road less traveled and more dangerous.

by E. Michael and Sharon Rusten

Michael Sattler was a Catholic priest in southern Germany in the 1520s, and Margaretha had a lay position in the Catholic Church. Boldly breaking their vows of celibacy to marry, they were of one mind regarding their faith in God and their love for each other.

As if this weren't scandal enough, their convictions led them to join the Anabaptists, a fledgling religious movement the ecclesiastical and magisterial powers deemed dangerous.

The Anabaptists believed that obedience to God was primary, and obedience to the state was secondary. This view attracted the Sattlers, and they also committed to the group's principle of seeking careful counsel of fellow believers before acting. Adult baptism and strict nonresistance also attracted the Sattlers. These views were considered extreme at the time, but Michael and Margaretha consistently made choices against the norm.

When Michael became an Anabaptist leader, he saw a great need for structure within the movement, which was full of life and spirit but lacked direction and organization. It needed written guidelines in order to preserve freedom, set boundaries, and protect themselves against fanatics who might lead the group astray. On February 24, 1527, in Schleithem, Germany, Michael Sattler brought together a small group of Anabaptist leaders who wrote and adopted seven articles of faith, which they called the "Brotherly Union." They now had an organized church.

Michael went to Rottenburg, where officials seized the "Brotherly Union" papers, as well as other Anabaptist plans. Nineteen people, including Michael and Margaretha, were arrested and tried for

violating Catholic doctrine and practice such as baptism, the Eucharist, unction, and veneration of the saints. Michael was also charged with leaving his monastery, marrying, and promoting a nonresistant approach toward the Turks.

In court Michael refuted all the charges except the last, for he did believe in a nonresistant approach to the Turks. He questioned the authorities regarding their persecution of other Christians. "The Turk knows nothing about the Christian faith; he is a Turk according to the flesh. But you want to be considered Christians, boast of being Christ's, and still persecute his pious witnesses. You are Turks according to the spirit."

He insisted that the Anabaptists had done nothing against the Bible and requested a debate with the Catholic leaders. Sattler asserted that if he and the other Anabaptists could be proved in error, they would gladly accept their punishment. "But if we are not shown to be in error, I hope to God that you will accept teaching and be converted." The court did not take kindly to the suggestion of his "teaching" them and returned with the sentence: "Michael Sattler shall be committed to the hangman, who shall take him to the square and there first cut out his tongue, then chain him to a wagon, tear his body twice with hot tongs there and five times more before the gate, then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic."

As the executioner tied Michael to a ladder, Michael prayed with slurred speech, "Almighty, eternal God, Thou art the way and the truth; because I have not been shown to be in error, I will with Thy help on this day testify to the truth and

(continued on page 38)

Person of the Month:

John S. Hess

(1884-1968)



John S. Hess was born to Peter B. and Mary Stoner Hess on September 19, 1884, at Lititz, Pennsylvania. He was one of three sons.

John was blessed with the privilege of attending college, which was somewhat unusual for his time.

In 1905, while attending meetings under A.D. Wenger, John Hess was converted to Christ. He was 21 years of age.

In 1908, at the age of 24, he married Florence Brubaker. God blessed their home with the births of four daughters and three sons.

Ten years later, John was seriously ill with the infamous Spanish influenza of 1918. God used this illness for good as Hess made new commitments to the Lord.

Brother Hess became a successful truck farmer but in 1919 he also became an ordained minister at the Hess Church in the Hammer Creek District of Lancaster Conference.

In 1925, at the age of 41, John was appointed to the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions of Lancaster Conference and two years later became a member of the Property Committee. He was also an assistant field worker for many years. Hess's focus was definitely on evangelizing the lost. Therefore, another minister was ordained at Hess Church so that Brother John could have freedom to do more evangelistic work.

Brother Hess was responsible for over 200 series of revival meetings. Some of these meetings resulted in the establishing of new churches at such places as Meckville, Cocalico, Miners Village, Coatesville, and Sunnyside. He preached throughout Lancaster Conference as well as other areas. John Hess was a man of tall stature. He had a lisp in his speech but that did not hinder his effective preaching. His preaching was not "cut and dried" but was filled with emotion, evidencing his love and concern for his unsaved hearers. His home was open to those of his converts who were in need. He also was a faithful prayer warrior.

In 1957 tragedy struck the Hess home. Florence, John's wife of forty-nine years, went home to be with her Lord. In 1963 God again blessed John with another faithful "helper," Ruth Clugston. The family size increased to twelve with the addition of three stepdaughters and two stepsons.

Brother Hess is remembered as one of the best-known Mennonite evangelists of his time. He desired that other men would sense the call to evangelistic work and follow in his footsteps. His concern for the salvation of the lost was with him until he died.

John S. Hess was stricken with leukemia. He went home to be with his Lord October 3, 1968, in Lititz, Pennsylvania. His funeral service was held at Hess Church where he had been a member.

—Gail L. Emerson

Wealth That Grips the Heart

by Lyle Musser

I believe very strongly that the Conservative Mennonite Church of today needs a message of rebuke for her lavish living and selfish spending of excess wealth. The facts are these: In the excess of food we tend to overeat. In the excess of leisure, we tend to get lazy. In the excess of money, we tend to overspend. In the excess of material wealth and pleasure, we tend to get spiritually weak.

In Luke 12:13-21 Jesus warns of the cancer of covetousness. This cancer sets in not because of wealth itself, but this cancer sets in when our wealth begins to grip our hearts. The passage is as follows:

And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

The word *covetousness* in verse 15 comes from two original words. The first word means "more in quantity" and the second means "to have or to hold." Covetousness at

its roots means the desire to have more. The word *consisteth* is a word that demonstrates how a person exists. The word *abundance* means excess, or enough to spare. The word *posseseth* also comes from two original words. The first means under and the second means to reign or rule over. This captures the idea that possessions are those things that are placed under our control.

I believe the overarching idea of verse 15 speaks directly to the fallacy of gaining social status by having greater material wealth. When our social status is defined only by how much we own, we have erred. This social status is developed when different classes of people are identified by how much they own. This social classification is putting pressure on some of you brothers to make more—and that is covetousness. This social classification is what causes the rich to demonstrate that they have more, therefore boosting their status. The wealthy are to be reprimanded for placing themselves in a class above the less wealthy. The less wealthy are to be reprimanded for allowing this social pressure to give way to covetousness—the desire for more. Covetousness is the driving force of this whole structure of social status gained by material wealth.

This social pressure does exist in our world today. Even sadder is the fact that this social pressure exists from within our Mennonite community and it is not serving us well. I believe that the social pressure to gain wealth comes in a greater degree from our own Mennonite community than it does from the world—that is sad. We are to be brothers in Christ, not competitors in the game of "more." All the chitchat about money and wealth in our circles shows me that our money has begun to grip our hearts. All of the fancier things, the better things, the "recreational" things, and the more valuable things, are creating a "morish" desire

PAGE 2

SWORD AND TRUMPET

among us as conservative Mennonites.

The Musser paraphrase of verse 15 goes like this: "Beware of the desire to have more because a man's identity is not defined by the amount of property or goods under his control. A man's life is not in the things he possesses now. Only the physical life of the here and now can be defined by the possessions that a man has. You need to beware of this vice. Many men define themselves among their peers by the possessions that they hold, but this can never define them in the sight of God because God looks at the life of the soul and spirit. This warning against covetousness is really for the one who has less and is looking at someone who has more. When he tries to identify himself with that other person (who has more) by getting more himself, he is covetous, which means he has interpreted the purpose of life incorrectly. The existence of man cannot be identified by the possessions that he has."

Jesus continues by giving a parable of a rich man who had a plentiful crop. After assessing the great harvest he was to reap, this rich man had a discussion with himself. The discussion went like this:

Question: "What should I do because I do not have enough space to collect and store my crops?"

Answer: "I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones so that I have enough place to collect and store my crops."

We should note at this point that his question was perfectly legitimate. It was a commonsense question that needed an answer. His plan of building bigger barns to accommodate the need of storing his crops was also legitimate. The discussion continued:

"I will collect my crops and my goods, and I will say to my soul, since I have much excess for many years, I will refrain from work and take it easy. I will eat, drink, and be merry, thus bringing happiness to my soul."

The first hint of a problem comes in the end of verse 18. We notice a progression from verse 17 to verse 18 that indicates what was going on in this man's mind. In verse 17, the man referred to his harvest

only as his "fruits," but in verse 18 they are now his "fruits, and his goods." We can see that this man's wealth was beginning to grip his heart. The great value of the crop had affected this man's thought process. He allowed his wealth to begin to define him. He began to value his crops beyond their worth. This man tried to do the impossible—he tried to define life by the amount of material things he had. His identity as a person was tangled up with his material things. Jesus had said earlier that the life of the here and now can be defined by material things, but that the life of the soul and the spirit cannot be defined by man's possessions.

In verse 20 we hear God's words of condemnation for this man. He said: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? The word *fool* used by God to describe this man is a strong word meaning mindless, stupid, ignorant, egotistic, rash, and unbelieving. The reason for this strong description is because this man's wealth had taken the throne of his heart to the point that his identity was wrapped up in his material possessions. This man had prepared well, but in the wrong area of life. He had prepared wealth of possessions but not wealth of soul. It is as if God is saying, "Since you have not honored me in your soul, I will take back your soul. Your soul is set on your own pleasure, not on my glory. You are not doing what you were created to do, so therefore I have no need of you on my earth."

Throughout this passage there is an interesting contrast of opinion between this man and God. The first contrast is that the man referred to his material wealth as "fruits, and goods," but God referred to them as "things."

The second contrast is seen in two opinions of who this man really was. I believe he thought of himself as a wise guy for he "thought within himself" and then said, "This will I do." God's contrasting opinion was "thou fool."

In verse 21 we come to the simple lesson from this parable. Jesus began the lesson

(continued on page 5)

From the Editor's Desk



Paul M. Emerson

GUEST EDITORIAL

Send or Give

*“Send them away . . . for they have nothing to eat.
[Jesus] answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat” (Mark 6:36, 37).*

by Mark D. Avery

“Lord, give me something to offer them.” Who has not prayed like that? The challenge of ministering to a family hurting over a recently diagnosed disease required more than I had to offer. This was crunch time, as far as ministry was concerned. My words would not be enough, but, somehow, if God would use me, they could be helped.

The disciples faced an overwhelming task. Their ministry was emotionally exhausting, and they had tried to take a break. Instead, the crowd followed, and Jesus continued His teaching. His compassion motivated Him to heal the sick and minister to all of their needs.

The day had passed. Sunset approached. The disciples inventoried their supplies and concluded that the people needed to go home. The scarce provisions were adequate for only one; how could they offer them to a crowd of 5000 men, plus women and children? “Send them away,” they urged the Master.

Jesus had another idea: “*You* give them something to eat.”

That was a simple but impossible instruction. Food was unavailable, and

they certainly could not afford the expense of buying enough to feed this multitude.

“Where will we buy that much food? And what will we use for money?” the disciples responded. Five loaves and two fish were all they had to offer. One lunch, but how could that feed so many?

Soon the questions were answered with action. The people ate all they needed—all of them ate—and twelve basketfuls remained. They had more left over than they had when they started.

What challenges you about this story? I am challenged that my attitude may be similar to that of the disciples: “Send them away. I can’t help them.” But Jesus still has another idea, a better one, one that works.

Of course, if my attempts at ministry are centered around what I can do, my attempts fail. I have reason to think, “Send them away.”

Yet when I rely on the strength of Christ, when His wisdom and power are at work in my life, I have reason to expect success. The challenge is not so much what I will do, but what I will allow Christ to do.

This story suggests that Christians need to reevaluate, perhaps change, priorities.

PAGE 4

SWORD AND TRUMPET

Too often we see only the human impossibility. How sad that those closest to Christ did not see hope for a better solution than “send them away.”

People around us today need what only Jesus can give them. Yet unless our lives demonstrate something better than what they have, they will never know. Is our tendency to “send them away,” or do we seek to “give . . . them to eat”?

Resolutions are past for this year. Most are broken or forgotten by now. Genuine commitment still works. Why not make a commitment that you will live so that you can give something of relevant value to the people around you? ■

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WEALTH THAT GRIPS . . . cont'd.

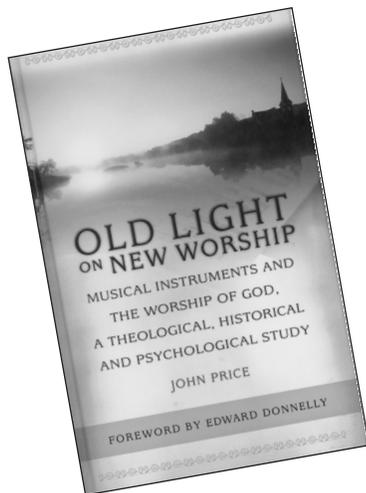
by saying “So is he.” In other words, Jesus is asking His listeners to examine themselves to see if they are like this rich man. This man had “laid up treasure for himself, but was not rich toward God.” The words *laying up treasure* come from a root word meaning to place, appoint, or to set forth in front of you. It carries the idea that you are committed to it and that you find purpose in it. This man had set his riches before him to the point that his material wealth had blinded his eyes to his spiritual needs. He was “not rich toward God.” He did not find wealth, riches, and purpose in God. This man was a fool, and Jesus said, “So also is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” How would Jesus describe you?? ■

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS



A Devotional Commentary



by David L. Burkholder

JUNE 1, 2008

Christ as Son of God

Hebrews 1:1-12

The lessons for June are taken from the Book of Hebrews, giving us various portraits of Christ. Reading, and rereading Hebrews will help your understanding of Christ and His work. Today's lesson, Christ as Son of God, establishes His identity, His authority, and provides the foundation for His various functions on God's behalf for mankind.

God is a communicating God. Throughout the ages He has used various methods to communicate to man. In the Old Testament era it was either direct communication or through the medium of prophets. But now, in this age, He has spoken more clearly and specifically through the life and ministry of His only begotten Son. This Son, whom we know as Jesus the Christ, will eventually, and eternally, inherit all things, both by right of Sonship and of achievement.

The Son was cocreator with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As such He understands the workings of creation and continues to uphold all things by the power of His Word. As the only begotten Son of God He reflects the very image and glory of God, expressing in Himself the complete character and qualities of God the Father. Through His life as man He communicated God's character and will for mankind to the human race.

As the perfect, sinless sacrifice He purged man's sins by the offering of Himself to God on man's behalf. He made satisfaction for man's sins by His death on the cross and obtained eternal redemption for mankind by His resurrection from death. Then He "sat down on the right hand of the majesty [God the Father] on high," where He now intercedes with the Father on man's behalf (see

Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:24). In the future He will reign and rule, wielding as the symbol of His kingdom a scepter of righteousness.

Part of the (unnamed) author's argument here in Chapter 1 is Christ's superiority over the angels. He is eternal. They were created. He possesses all power and authority. They are limited to servitude. He is man's Redeemer. They are God's servants to man. He is worshiped by man and angels. They worship only God. He will reign and rule forever. They will serve Him forever. Angels are important and useful creatures, but they pale in comparison to the incomparable glory, majesty, and power of the very Son of God.

The main thing that separates the Son of God from man is His eternal character. Though man will live forever he is mortal, he had a beginning. The Son of God always existed and will never cease to exist. Though the material elements created by God the Son will one day perish (see Isaiah 34:4; 2 Peter 3:10), He is eternal, He will remain. In contrast to the aging, deteriorating earth, "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail [cease]."

The purpose of this lesson is to establish the identity and character of Christ as foundational to the various roles in which we see Him function in subsequent lessons: Intercessor, Redeemer, Leader, and Example. Truly He is majestic, powerful, and capable. He is set apart by His superiority over men and angels. He is to be respected and worshiped as the only Son of God.

For thought and discussion

1. What do verses 1 and 2 tell us about God's concern for mankind?
2. Be sure you have a good understanding of the person and work of Christ: Son of God, Creator, Redeemer, Intercessor, etc.

PAGE 6

SWORD AND TRUMPET

3. Look briefly at the character and work of angels; note especially how that contrasts with the superior character and work of the Son of God.
4. Let your mind run as you contemplate the eternality of God. And remember that one glorious day you, too, will share that eternal character. Are you prepared?
5. Allow this lesson to stir your thinking about the great eternal plan of God and the extent of His mercy toward fallen, helpless man.

JUNE 8, 2008

Christ as Intercessor

Hebrews 7:20-28

An intercessor is one who pleads the case of another, who stands between the judge and the accused. In the Old Testament economy it was the priest who stood between man and God and offered sacrifices to God as appeasement for man's transgressions. In the New Testament economy, Christ, the eternal Son of God, fulfills that role. This lesson shows His superiority to human priests and thus His greater ability to fulfill that function. (A reading of Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15; 5:1-10; and all of Chapter 7 will give you helpful background for this lesson.)

We note in the opening verses of our lesson text that it was God the Father who established and verified His Son Jesus as priest on oath. (See Psalm 110:4.) In other words, God, who could not change, established the unchangeable priesthood of His Son. The unchangeableness of His priesthood was due to His eternal character, His position as Son of God, and His understanding and ability as the God-man.

Melchisedec was "priest of the most high God," "king of righteousness," and "king of Salem [Jerusalem], which is king of peace." He was without established human lineage or priesthood succession (7:1-3). As such he foreshadowed Christ and His roles, with the exception that Christ had an unending

priesthood. His was not limited to human lifespan as was Melchisedec or the priests under the Levitical system. Christ in His priesthood was the surety, or guarantor, of a better Covenant (than the Mosaic).

The recipients of the Hebrew letter were Jewish Christians who understood both the old Levitical priesthood system and the new system of which Christ was priest. Under the Levitical system there was a succession of priests because of death. But because of the eternal nature of Christ, His term of priesthood continues unending. As such He is able to provide eternal salvation for all who come to Him in faith for the remission of their sins. He is able to save completely and eternally. Not only does He save, having provided the sacrifice which satisfied God's justice, but He also continues to mediate between man and God, serving continually as priestly intercessor.

The last three verses of our text describe the moral character of our great High Priest. He is holy, without spot or blemish or taint of evil. He is guileless, innocent of evil or malicious thought or intent. Unfiled, morally pure. Separate from sinners, free from any potential contamination. Higher than the heavens, in celestial glory. All this in contrast to the Levitical priests who needed to offer for their own sins, were subject to the limitations and temptations of humanity, and who served only within temporal limits.

The superiority of Christ's priesthood is seen in contrast to the limitations of the priesthood under the Law. Now, as the result of God's oath, we have a Priest-intercessor who is holy, infallible, enduring, and sensitive to our most inconspicuous needs. He is the eternal Son of God. He sits at the Father's right hand, making continual intercession for the saints. We are His beneficiaries.

For thought and discussion

1. Be sure you understand the role and function of the priest in God's plan.
2. Who was Melchisedec, and why was Christ compared to him? (See first part of Chapter 7.)

3. List the factors in which Christ in His priestly role was superior to the Levitical priests. What makes Christ and His role unique?
4. Study the intercessory role of Christ. Then determine to live more carefully to ease His burden on your behalf. But be sure to thank Him for what He does for you.
5. Thank God again for His great and simple plan of salvation and for providing an understanding and kind Mediator.

JUNE 15, 2008

Christ as Redeemer

Hebrews 9:11-18; 10:12-18

The concept of redemption is that of buying back, or paying a price to restore something to its rightful owner. The dictionary explains it this way: “to set free by paying a ransom.” In the Christian realm it “connotes deliverance from the enslavement of sin and release to a new freedom. . . . Man is redeemed from sin to a new life in Christ. The death of Christ is the redemptive price. His atoning sacrifice the ransom paid for man’s deliverance” (*Zondervan*).

In 1 Corinthians 6:20 we are told that we “are bought with a price.” In Colossians 1:14 we are reminded of the means of the deliverance Christ provides: “In whom we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins.” So the Christian, once estranged from God through sin, has been bought back to God by the blood of Christ. His was the perfect sacrifice—pure, sinless, efficacious.

Our passages tell us that Christ’s high-priestly function provided a much better situation than that experienced under the Old Covenant sacrificial system. No longer would it be necessary to offer the “blood of goats and calves,” because the blood of a perfect sacrifice had been presented to God on man’s behalf. Christ’s sacrifice “obtained eternal redemption for us.” It provided what the blood of animals was not

able to provide—soul satisfaction, freedom from the guilt of sin, and unending fellowship with God.

Interestingly, His death was not only effective for present and future redemption—it also reached back to provide redemption for those who experienced the type of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice through the shedding of animal blood under the Old Covenant. Through Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice, men of faith of all ages, all races, all nationalities may receive the “promise of eternal inheritance.”

Verse 22 tells us that “without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin].” (See also Leviticus 17:11.) Therefore, for the ratification of the New Covenant there must have been “of necessity the death of the testator.” Christ’s death therefore sealed the covenant and made it effective for all who choose to enter into the New Covenant relationship.

The intervening verses between our two text passages (read them) further expound on various facets of the sacrifice of Christ and its superiority over the animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant. In contrast to the offering of daily sacrifices by the priests, Christ offered one sacrifice and withdrew into heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father. There He waits until the culmination of time and the last enemy, death, is destroyed. However, as He waits, He is still active on man’s behalf, interceding with the Father as advocate for man.

Christ’s offering provides eternal salvation for mankind. God’s Holy Spirit attests to the saving nature of Christ’s sacrifice, witnessing to the heart of man the effectiveness and value of God’s laws. The acceptance of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice blots out man’s sins from God’s remembrance. He will hold them against us no longer. Therefore, in this New Covenant economy there is no longer needed an offering for sin. That has been taken care of for all men of all time by the redemptive offering of Christ’s blood on Calvary’s cross. That offering fully satisfied God, and it fully satisfies man.

For thought and discussion

1. In your study, notice the play on the Old Testament sacrificial system as fulfilled by Christ's sacrifice. Note also the contrasts between the two.
2. What did Christ's sacrifice provide for man that the animal sacrifices did not?
3. A recognition of the price of our redemption from sin should do what for us?
4. Notice the use and effectiveness of blood under both covenants. Why such prominence given to blood? What constituted its effectiveness?
5. Is it possible to please God today by practicing the Old Covenant ceremonial laws? Does that provide satisfaction and peace with God? Why, or why not?
6. Have you thanked God today for the simplicity of the gospel and the easy access to eternal salvation? Do it if you haven't.

JUNE 22, 2008

Christ, Our Example

Hebrews 12:1-13

The primary themes of this lesson are encouragement and steadfastness, using Jesus as our example. The writer has just concluded the 11th chapter in which he gives the example of many heroes of faith of bygone eras and their steadfastness in the face of persecution and death. All of this is intended to inspire the reader to faithful endurance in his life of faith. Others have been faithful under oppression and adversity; so can we.

The Christian life is here described as a race, complete with a gallery of witnesses, a specific goal, and an encouraging coach. Jesus, our encourager, has run the course Himself, came through victorious, and won the victor's crown. We are encouraged to remember Him when we feel overwhelmed or become discouraged in the race. To run well we are admonished to lay aside all hindrances and run with single-minded purpose. We are reminded that we have not yet

encountered difficulties of the magnitude which Jesus faced and overcame.

The writer then uses the example of sonship to prove that whatever difficulties we encounter is not punishment but polishing—intended for our strengthening, not our defeat. Just as our human fathers have corrected our misbehavior through disciplined correction, so our heavenly Father allows trials and difficulties to confront us for the strengthening and molding of character.

Rather than becoming dismayed when experiencing disciplinary correction through trials or difficulties, we should rather rejoice, for that is a seal of sonship and a sign of our Father's love. Conversely, if we are without spiritual chastisement, then we are not sons. It's that simple. The child of God will experience the cleansing, purifying effect of corrective discipline for the purpose of molding him into the likeness of Christ. Note verse 10: "that we might be partakers of his holiness." Holiness requires discipline.

Normally we do not enjoy discipline in the natural or spiritual realm. However, the effects of discipline on our natural lives or on our spiritual produces a better, more complete and effective person. The reward of spiritual discipline is righteousness and peace. The challenge is to look beyond any immediate chastening for the resulting benefits which it brings.

Therefore, never give up. Take heart, struggle on. Walk a straight path, pressing unerringly toward the goal. And along the way, be an encourager and an example to others walking the path of life. Just as Christ serves as an example of a disciplined life so we, too, can serve as examples to our fellowmen. We are not lone travelers on the way to our heavenly goal. We walk in company with others and have both Jesus and saints of bygone eras to challenge and inspire us onward by their exemplary lives.

So while chastening may seem grievous for the present, we have the joyful prospect of eternal glory to look forward to after we have passed the test here below. Let's remember to look to Jesus as our great

example and coach. And “run with patience the race that is set before us.”

For thought and discussion

1. What is it about the lives of saints of old that challenges and inspires us to faithful living? Are there modern-day saints who have been an inspiration to you? Why not tell them so?
2. What are some hindrances to running life’s race, and why does it often seem so difficult to lay them aside?
3. Have you ever felt like giving up? What inspired you to continue on? Would this be good for class discussion?
4. In what ways can we be an encourager to others in the race of life? Discuss.
5. Perhaps you can recount some spiritual discipline that has made you a better person and more effective disciple. Thank God for His disciplining action in your life.

JUNE 29, 2008

The Christlike Life

Hebrews 13:1-16

This passage, with the exception of several verses, deviates from the quarter’s general theme “Portraits of Christ,” and focuses more on exhortations for the Christian life to those who have accepted Christ’s proffered salvation and are attempting to follow His example in holy living. In last Sunday’s lesson we were challenged to look to Jesus as our example in struggle. Today it is the holiness of life He calls us to that challenges and inspires our actions and motivations.

This passage can be easily divided into two broad categories. The first six verses deal with social duties; the last section focuses on the religious realm. We are creatures of earth but our goal is heaven. And while the religious realm should perhaps be our primary focus, we cannot ignore the social relationships which engage us while on earth.

Brotherly love is the hallmark of the follower of Christ. He emphasized the importance of this principle in John 13:35 where He established it as the identifying mark of His followers. But love is not to be confined to the brotherhood—it is to reach out in hospitality to strangers as well. True love will also emphasize with and minister to those in bonds and those suffering adversity.

Moral purity is an essential trait of the follower of Christ. Unchastity will be judged. It is contrary to the principles of a holy God. Covetousness, the unwholesome desire for gain, is also inconsistent with the principle of trust. We are to be content and trusting. God will provide our every need (see Philippians 4:11). We need fear neither want nor man while under God’s care.

On the spiritual side of life we are encouraged to remember favorably those who have taught spiritual truths and modeled Christian living for us. We are also to remember that these truths, and their author Jesus Christ, are unchanging. Along with this encouragement goes a warning against false doctrine and, for these first-century Christians, a warning against mixing Old Testament religious practices with New Testament principles of the heart. The two are not compatible.

Jesus’ personal sacrifice for the sins of mankind was outside the scope of accepted Jewish ritual and practice and is thus referred to here as being “outside the gate.” Those who choose to accept His sacrifice and follow His way are encouraged also to go “outside the camp” and to accept the stigma attached to Him. Our goal is the heavenly city, not earthly acceptance. We should care little how men view us in this life.

Because of our bright future we are encouraged to “offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually.” We can never thank Him enough for what He has provided for our future. We should have continual praise on our lips for God’s goodness to us. In addition to the sacrifice of praise, we are also encouraged to sacrifice time and material goods for the sake of Christ and the

benefit of needy souls. God is pleased with those who model His character in their daily living.

For thought and discussion

1. List some factors which should motivate us for holy living. Maybe have some class discussion on this.
2. Spend some time thinking on the Christian attributes found in this passage. How can we better integrate them into our lives? Which one do you struggle

with most?

3. How can we best guard against “strange doctrines” in our day? What are some which seduce men away from the simple truth of the gospel?
4. It seems we hear little about “the reproach of Christ” in our day. Why is that so?
5. What are some practical ways we can model God’s goodness in our daily living and interactions? Discuss with your class. ■

Newslines . . .

by Hans Mast

incidents events occurrences facts illustrations episodes committees vignettes proceedings problems
experiences crises adventures transactions meetings tragedies scoops reports conferences happenings
bulletins questions reports affairs dramas encounters personages actions tidings et cetera

True Christianity: The Story of Jacob DeShazer (1912-2008)

Mitsuo Fuchida writes:

I must admit I was more excited than usual as I awoke that morning. . . . The sunrise in the east was magnificent above the white clouds as I led 360 planes towards Hawaii at an altitude of 3,000 meters. I knew my objective: to surprise and cripple the American naval force in the Pacific. . . . Viewing the entire American Pacific Fleet peacefully at anchor in the inlet below, I smiled as I reached for the mike and ordered, “All squadrons, plunge in to attack!”

In a military camp in California, a young soldier on KP duty heard the news of Pearl Harbor via radio and angrily hurled a potato at the wall yelling, “Jap, just wait and see what we’ll do to you!” His name was Jacob DeShazer.

Only a month later, he volunteered for a secret mission with Colonel Jimmy Doolittle’s squadron. The mission was a surprise raid on Tokyo. Jacob’s plane was called “Bat Out of Hell.” The plan was for the bombers to fly off a carrier 800 miles from the Japanese coast, bomb Tokyo, and then land in friendly Chinese territory. After Jacob (who was the bombardier) released his bombs over Japan, his B-25 headed for China. Bad weather, low fuel, and no radio signal to guide him to his base made so that Jacob’s entire crew had to eject over some unknown spot on the Chinese mainland. They were captured by

Japanese troops and held as war criminals.

The Japanese treated them with incredible cruelty, torturing them, starving them, and finally shooting his three crew mates. Only the impassioned prayers of Jacob's mother kept him alive. In the middle of the night in the U. S., God awoke Jacob's mother with a burden and she pled with God for her son's salvation. It was day in Japan as Jacob was sitting in his cell seething with hatred toward his Japanese guards.

Jacob writes:

My thoughts turned toward what I heard about Christianity changing hatred between human beings into real brotherly love and I was gripped with a strange longing to examine the Christian's Bible to see if I could find the secret.

I begged my captors to get a Bible for me. At last, in the month of May, 1944, a guard brought me the book, but told me I could have it only for three weeks.

I eagerly began to read its pages. Chapter after chapter gripped my heart. In due time I came to the books of the prophets and found that their every writing seemed focused on a divine Redeemer from sin, One who was to be sent from heaven to be born in the form of a human babe. Their writings so fascinated me that I read them again and again until I had earnestly studied them through six times. Then I went on into the New Testament and there read of the birth of Jesus Christ, the One who actually fulfilled the very prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, and the other Old Testament writers.

On June 8, 1944, the words in Romans 10:9 stood out boldly before my eyes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

That very moment, God gave me grace to confess my sins to Him and He forgave me all my sins and saved me for Jesus' sake.

How my heart rejoiced in my newness of spiritual life, even though my body was suffering so terribly from the physical beatings and lack of food! But suddenly I discovered that God had given me new spiritual eyes and that when I looked at the enemy officers and guards who had starved and beaten my companions and me so cruelly, I found my bitter hatred for them changed to loving pity.

I realized that these people did not know anything about my Savior and that if Christ is not in a heart, it is natural to be cruel. I read in my Bible that while those who crucified Jesus had beaten Him and spit upon Him before He was nailed to the cross, on the cross He tenderly prayed in His moment of excruciating suffering, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

And now, from the depths of my heart, I too prayed for God to forgive my torturers, and I determined by the aid of Christ to do my best to acquaint these people with the message of salvation that they might become as other believing Christians.

With His love controlling my heart, the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians took on a living meaning: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in truth; beareth all things, believeth all things. Love never faileth."

Christianity Today writes:

One day after the exercise period, DeShazer's guard hurried him toward his cell, shoved him inside, slamming the door on DeShazer's foot. Instead of opening the door, the guard kicked the prisoner's foot with his hobnailed boots.

DeShazer desperately pushed the door until he could free his foot. His mind

blazed with rage.

However, Jesus' words came to him: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you."

Nursing his foot, DeShazer wished for a while that his mind would go blank; instead, all the Scripture God had helped him memorize flooded into his mind. Calming down, he decided, *God commanded me to love. What a wonderful world it would be if we would all try to love one another. I'll try.*

The next morning was the test. DeShazer greeted the guard respectfully in Japanese.

The guard gave him a puzzled look and said nothing.

Every morning, the prisoner offered friendly greetings and received no response. Then one morning the guard walked straight to DeShazer's cell, and spoke to him through the door. He was smiling. DeShazer asked about his family. From that time on, the guard treated him with respect and kindness, once even brought him a boiled sweet potato. Another time, the guard slipped DeShazer figs and candy. [...]

Like the prophet Daniel, he knelt and prayed diligently.

On August 6, 1945, the day the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, DeShazer woke up about 7 a.m. and was impressed to pray for peace. At 2 p.m., the Holy Spirit told the prisoner, "You don't need to pray any more. The victory is won." DeShazer thought this was a better way to receive world news than waiting for a radio report. Immediately, his thoughts turned to his captors. Wondering what would happen to the Japanese people, God gave him the answer: he was to eventually return to Japan and teach them about his Savior.

Mitsuo Fuchida writes:

I was in Hiroshima the day before the atom bomb was dropped. . . . Fortunately, I received a long distance call from my Navy Headquarters, asking me to return to Tokyo.

With the end of the war . . . I returned to my home village near Osaka and began farming, but it was a discouraging life. I became more and more unhappy. . . .

As I got off the train one day in Tokyo's Shibuya Station, I saw an American distributing literature. When I passed him, he handed me a pamphlet entitled "I Was a Prisoner of Japan" [by Jacob DeShazer]. Involved right then with the trials on atrocities committed against war prisoners, I took it.

What I read was the fascinating episode which eventually changed my life. . . . His story, printed in pamphlet form, was something I could not explain.

Neither could I forget it. The peaceful motivation I had read about was exactly what I was seeking. Since the American had found it in the Bible, I decided to purchase one myself, despite my traditionally Buddhist heritage.

In the ensuing weeks, I read this book eagerly. I came to the climactic drama—the Crucifixion. I read in Luke 23:34 the prayer of Jesus Christ at His death: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." I was impressed that I was certainly one of those for whom He had prayed. The many men I had killed had been slaughtered in the name of patriotism, for I did not understand the love which Christ wishes to implant within every heart.

Right at that moment, I seemed to meet Jesus for the first time. I understood the meaning of His death as a substitute for my wickedness, and so in prayer, I requested Him to forgive my sins and change me from a bitter, disillusioned ex-pilot into a well-balanced Christian with purpose in living.

That date, April 14, 1950—became the second "day to remember" of my life. On

that day, I became a new person. My complete view on life was changed by the intervention of the Christ I had always hated and ignored before.

As an evangelist, I have traveled across Japan and the Orient introducing others to the One Who changed my life. . . .

Though my country has the highest literacy rate in the world, education has not brought salvation. Peace and freedom—both national and personal—come only through an encounter with Jesus Christ.

I would give anything to retract my actions of twenty-nine years ago at Pearl Harbor, but it is impossible. Instead, I now work at striking the deathblow to the basic hatred which infests the human heart and causes such tragedies. And that hatred cannot be uprooted without assistance from Jesus Christ.

DeShazer and Fuchida—a bombardier of Doolittle’s squadron and the flight leader for the attack on Pearl Harbor—met and became good friends, traveling around Japan preaching together.

Christianity Today concludes:

In 1959 a dream came true for DeShazer when he moved to Nagoya to establish a Christian church in the city he had bombed. Because of one shared Bible, the man who first came to Japan in “Bat Out of Hell” returned on the wings of a dove to spread the “peace that passeth understanding” in that country for the next thirty years.

Mitsuo Fuchida died in 1976. Jacob DeShazer died on March 15, 2008.

—Sources: “From Pearl Harbor to Calvary” by Mitsuo Fuchida (<http://tinyurl.com/29kqpd>), “I Was a Prisoner of Japan” by Jacob DeShazer (<http://tinyurl.com/2xqz7q>), “From Bombs to Something More Powerful” by Elsie Larson in *Christianity Today* (<http://tinyurl.com/yu9oql>), “I Am the Praying Mother of Jacob DeShazer” in *Missionary Tidings* (<http://tinyurl.com/2wbppw>), *Wikipedia*



Unlimited Power!

by Merle Gingerich

On a recent Sunday morning our community was hit with a severe ice storm. Trees were uprooted and large branches broke under the weight of the ice. It brought down power lines and left thousands of residents in the dark. The following day stores were filled with customers purchasing chain-saw supplies and generators. Throughout the storm our family received an uninterrupted supply of electricity. Others were not as fortunate, some having to wait as much as five days until power was restored. As one lineman put it, “We

have no trouble producing the electricity; the problem is getting it distributed.”

As I write this article our community is experiencing a different kind of storm. This storm is not exclusive to our community, but its icy grip is reaching into every community across the globe. This storm is a careless indifference to spiritual things. It uproots families, breaks relationships, and leaves children and spouses scattered and strewn across the landscape. Some of the hurts and the damage caused by this storm are very

evident, while others may be somewhat hidden from view for a time. This storm moves along relentlessly, targeting community after community and leaving a path of destruction. When spiritual apathy sets in, hearts grow cold and become powerless.

Similar to the electric company facing a problem with distribution of power, God's people are encountering power failures. Spiritual power comes from God. His power is without limitations. The distribution of that power lies in our relationship with Him. A materialistic and pleasure-driven society has caused many to forget God. This spirit of self-seeking has invaded men's hearts and many have become careless and have neglected their spiritual connection.

The psalmist tells us that a man who delights in the law of God, who resists evil, who separates himself from sinful relationships, is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He grows, matures, and becomes strong and fruitful. His roots reach down into the stream giving him necessary nutrients. The psalmist continues his analogy by describing the devastation of the ungodly. They are driven by the wind, uprooted, and broken apart. What is the cause of their demise? They were careless, unconcerned about spiritual matters, and became disconnected.

When the storms of temptations and trials press upon us our connection is vital. We will prevail not because of who we are, what we are, or where we are, but because God is our source of power. It gives us all the resources we need if we stay connected to it. Our relationship with God is the grid through which His power is made available to those who call upon His name. It is a relationship we must maintain through prayer and supplication. We must walk in obedience to His commands, completely committed to His will and purpose for our lives; then we will have strength to withstand any storm. We will have power to go forth in

victory, power to face those who defy the armies of God, power to respond in meekness and humility in the face of ridicule, power to face death because our kingdom is not of this world, power because we know we are in the hands of Almighty God.

Isaiah ponders the majesty and power of God in Chapter 40:12, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

In the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:7 Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Now that is power! Unlimited power!

As you evaluate your own life's experience, have you contributed to the landscape in your home, your church, and your community in its becoming barren and wasteful, due to spiritual neglect and indifference? Has the storm knocked out your power? Has your life become a hopeless mess of broken branches and tangled wires, leaving you with feelings of despair and loneliness? There is hope!

God wants to untangle those broken relationships. He wants to cut away those unsightly sin scars. He wants to clean up your life and restore the relationship. Have you been without power long enough? Do you want to reconnect? The Apostle Paul found that power on the road to Damascus. Later, when writing to the church at Philippi, he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). You, too, can experience that life-changing power by calling upon the name of Jesus! ■

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Counseling From the Word

Look Carefully How You Walk

by Jeremy Lelek

The Apostle Paul exhorts the people of Ephesus to “look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:15-21, ESV). These words offer profound wisdom for Christians since they point to the wonder of worship in the midst of darkness and temptation (see Ephesians 5:1-15).

Paul begins his discourse with, “Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.” In essence he is offering a warning to the believer as he moves moment by moment throughout this fallen world. Or more specifically, moment by moment through particular struggles in this world such as addiction, anxiety, anger, or even a difficult marriage. Paul is urging the believer to be careful not to walk as the unwise or the fool. What is walking in foolishness? Psalm 53:1 says, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” In other words, Christians must be very careful not to live life, day by day, moment by moment as the atheist (e.g., fool) who proclaims in his heart God does not exist (after all, this is mankind’s propensity). Rather, he or she, no matter the circumstance, is called to

learn the beauty of living perpetually with God in mind. Why? Paul writes, “Because the days are evil.” Temptation to wander from God and towards our own fallen perspective of reality is pervasive, especially when difficulty ensues. Falling prey to sin within the heart is a constant temptation that must be resisted in the life of the Christian. Paul, offering divine counsel, informs this process by highlighting a significant initial step in this battle in that one must refuse to exist as if there were no God, and therefore placing self as the central reference point of all things.

Paul reiterates this theme again when he writes, “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” So, he points the believer from the foolishness of his own heart to the supreme will of God (again in the context of the here and now, moment by moment). So, what is God’s will in the daily life of the Christian? Paul goes on to explain, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.” Paul warns, do not pacify your day with foolish patterns of living. Here he cites drunkenness, but for the counselee, he or she can refer to his or her own particular struggle, vice, or idol. To what does he or she turn when the pressures of a fallen world come crashing in? Instead of turning to such self-made patterns, Paul points the believer to God. He articulates that in each experience of one’s day, the believer must consistently learn to ask, “What is God’s will here?” This prompts a person into God’s presence in every minute, every second, of the day.

However, in order to live as if God is

PAGE 16

SWORD AND TRUMPET

present in every moment and situation a person *must* be filled with the precious Holy Spirit. Here, Paul is referring to a continual filling that must take place, and he offers the means to such “being filled.” He recommends, “addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In one word, Paul is urging the Christian to walk in a continual frame of worship as he or she moves throughout the various struggles of the day. Specifically, he urges them to sing and make melody within their hearts as well as offer up prayers of thanksgiving to God.

Sin and depravity create a very self-centered, narrow-minded existence for the human being. It is in the midst of temptation, that such narrow-mindedness is exhibited most. As a husband is seeking to control his anger against his wife, this narrow-mindedness will become most evident as his wife does something he does not like. For the person seeking to overcome anxiety, this self-centered frame of mind will become most noticeable in contexts where one’s anxiety is most provoked. Paul’s instruction here offers *the* solution for such narrow-minded—“I am the center of the universe” kind of living. He says, in the midst of falling prey to your own depravity in this evil world (e.g., living as an unbeliever or as if there were no God in a particular moment) worship the living God. Fix your mind upon His glory and goodness, and do so very intentionally by singing a song of praise unto the Lord. Music is very powerful, and Paul understood its purpose to bring focus upon God over and above one’s own agenda. Additionally, Paul urges the believer to pray prayers of thanksgiving: thanksgiving for the blessings of God, and thanksgiving even for the struggle one may face at a particular point during the day. Such a prayer alters one’s preoccupation with self to that of a holy and good God. In so doing (e.g., singing and praying prayers of thanksgiving), a person is literally open-

ing his or her heart to be filled, in a magnificent way, with the very Holy Spirit of God. It is at this time that the believer’s mind, desires, perceptions, feelings, thinking, and behavior can be transformed in a matter of minutes. A person’s anger may subside as the glory of God’s kindness is illuminated. One’s anxiety is diminished as God’s sovereign power is acknowledged and adored. The offense by a spouse that seemed to capture every ounce of space within one’s heart is minimized as it is forced to stand in comparison with the mercy of Jehovah God. Indeed, when a person enters into worship, and is filled with the Spirit, God’s fruit is radically borne within the heart, and the believer is empowered to honor the living God (regardless of the circumstance).

Some translations of this passage begin with “Be very careful, then, how you live not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity” (NIV). This is great wording because it basically says, “Every situation encountered in life (i.e., marriage conflict, temptation with addiction, anger, anxiety, fear, sex, pride, and self-preoccupation) is actually an opportunity to enter into the presence of Almighty God, and do what mankind was created to do, worship Him. Specifically, one could go as far as saying, “Thank You, Lord, for this struggle for it has once again prompted me to fix my mind upon You as I enter a time of worship. Had I not encountered this struggle today, it is likely I would have failed to fix my mind so intently upon Your majesty.” Every temptation and struggle becomes a wonderful context for worship. Without the particular struggle, a person might go throughout the day aimlessly living as if God did not exist. But with each struggle, he is reminded of His constant need for God’s strength and grace.

Though it may seem difficult, to view intense struggle through this lens offers hope and joy because it is a reminder of the privilege believers have to commune with God at all times. Not only that, it serves to illustrate experientially the power of God’s Spirit to crush the agenda of the flesh and

to equip the saint to glorify God in moments it is beyond his or her ability to do so.

Counselor Recommendations

1. Have your counselee read Ephesians 5:15. Identify moments and areas in his or her life where he or she may have lived as if God did not exist. What has he thought or done in a moment of struggle that he would have done differently if he knew God was in the room?

2. Ask your counselee to read Ephesians 5:18. What futile patterns has your counselee adopted to cope with particular stresses and temptations in life? Paul emphasizes drunkenness; what is your counselee's particular self-focused coping pattern?

3. Discuss being filled with the Spirit. Read Galatians 5:19-22. Which list reflects most accurately his or her response to the current presenting issue?

4. Read Ephesians 5:19. Instruct your counselee to utilize worship music within the midst of struggle. For example, instead of yell at his/her spouse, guide your counselee to go to a separate room, get on his/her knees, turn on a worship CD, and

fix his/her mind upon the Lord. Ask God to expose the evil within his/her heart that is motivating the temptation towards sin.

5. Read Ephesians 5:20. Ask your counselee to begin an ongoing list of thanksgiving to God. List all blessings. Consider how one's struggle is God's way of prompting the believer to Himself. Use this list in moments of weakness, and pray to God aloud regarding the blessings listed.

Counselor's Prayer

Holy Lord and ever-present God, how often we as Christians operate in our lives in ways that reflect atheism more than faith. How frequently we "forget" You in moments of trial when the agendas of our own hearts seek to rule as supreme. Help us to fill our hearts with You when most susceptible to our sins. Remind us of Paul's words to live wisely with You constantly in view. Not a moment of our day transpires that You are not present. Help us to always remember this truth, and to live our lives accordingly. Thank You for Your presence, and Your eagerness to fill us in our times of greatest need. We offer this prayer in the blessed name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ■



The Call to Holiness

by J. Otis Yoder

Do you think that believing in Jesus Christ should make any difference in how a person lives? Second Corinthians 5:17 reminds us that all of life is affected when one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ. The basic motivation of life has changed. A believer accepts a new framework for thought and action.

Under the Old Covenant, when God set Israel apart to be a people peculiar unto Himself, He said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Since Jesus Christ died to forgive our sins, are the requirements any

less? Of course not. **THE CALL TO HOLINESS** is clearly presented to believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7.

This Scripture text contains **IMPERATIVES** of life we are bound to accept, which will nurture holy living.

ABOUND IN GOD'S WILL is the first imperative which calls to a life of holiness. The focus here is on pleasing God. That is a complete change from the old life. Before, it was pleasing yourself, making sure everything came out to your advantage. Not anymore. No, the

Apostle says now we are to please God.

The Thessalonians had turned from idols to serve the true and living God. Now the focus was on pleasing God. They were to abound in God's will. They were to grow, expand, and increase in their knowledge of God's will and in their joy in doing it.

When the focus is on pleasing God, it must of necessity be on the commandments of the Lord Jesus. When we become believers we do not have the freedom to ignore His commands. We are to be circumscribed in our conduct by the commandments of Jesus Christ. You and I can't disobey the Lord without consequences. It doesn't matter what we profess—how you and I live is the proof of our profession.

Paul says we must abound in God's will through obedience. Some people think it means there is a great restriction being laid upon them. No, you have the whole field of God's pleasure before you. So please God by abounding in God's will. That is the first imperative calling us to holiness.

ABSTAIN FROM EVIL is the negative side of the call to holiness. A believer in Jesus Christ has no option. You shall by the very nature of your claim abstain from evil. In this text the Apostle Paul is zeroing in on the sexual sins. Examine the thirteen lists in his various letters and you'll find that sexual sins rank high.

First, he says, "Abstain from fornication. . . ." Fornication is illicit sexual relationships outside of marriage. Nowhere does the Bible teach that one can be free in sexual relationships as the modern ethicists, sociologists, and anthropologists suggest. The Bible condemns fornication and all illicit sexual relations, homosexual or heterosexual. It is all an abomination to God.

Abstaining from evil includes the lust of sensuality. The Apostle Paul urges the Thessalonian believers not to lust in sensuality because this is the way the other

Gentiles do. I believe this text includes the nudity and immodesty prevalent today. Unfortunately even in some churches this sin is tolerated!

Abstain from evil is the second imperative that is laid upon us in this call to holiness. You can't claim holiness and continue to live in wickedness. God won't tolerate sin in your life.

ADOPT GOD'S STANDARD is the positive imperative for holy living. How long are you going to continue in the wickedness that He abhors and still claim to be a child of God? You'd better get on with it now because the will of God is your holiness, your sanctification. When you deliberately defy the will of God, you are under His judgment, not His mercy. Keep that in mind.

Verse 7 is a call to holiness, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." The Greek word for holiness is a positive verb. God will cause you to be holy. He will do the cleansing. He will do the cleansing, to be sure, because the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. But you must yield yourself to Him. You must confess that His will is your sanctification and His call is to the life of holiness.

Don't be misled by those teachers who tell you you can do whatever you like. Would He have given us the Bible if He had not intended for us to follow His instructions? His standard is a standard of holiness. How much tolerance do you think God will allow? That is the wrong question. The right question is, How can I please the Lord? His will is our sanctification.

So the call to holiness issues to us in three imperatives: one, abound in God's will; two, abstain from evil; three, adopt God's standard. That is the only route that will bring you to the goal of holiness. ■

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Sermon of the Month



Each month we will feature a Biblical sermon in this column. We would like to emphasize expository preaching and ask our readers to submit good expository sermons for consideration. Please send typewritten copies by “snail mail” or email to: Editor, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803; swandtrump@verizon.net.

The Joy of Following Jesus

by Harold S. Martin

A Bible Helps Booklet No. 374

To follow Jesus is one of the major goals for every Christian. Many times in the New Testament we are admonished *to follow Jesus*.

Jesus said to a man who wanted first to bury his father, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead” (Matthew 8:22). And to the fishermen from Galilee, Jesus said, *Follow me*, and “I will make you to become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). To the tax collector, Levi, Jesus said, “Follow me.” And he arose and followed him (Matthew 9:9). At another time Jesus said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). The word *follow* means “to take as a guide”—and so when Jesus said, “Follow me,” He was saying, “*Accept me as your guide! Those things that I count important, you should find important.*”

Following Jesus means *thinking* His thoughts, *loving* what He loves, *hating* what He hates, and *having the same desires and goals* that He expressed. Those seeking to follow Jesus will eagerly try to follow in His footsteps. To follow Jesus means that we will seek to follow His example in our daily living, and let Him be our guide in all that we do. That means that we will accept the authority of Scripture, the way

of salvation through Jesus alone, the concept of separation from the world, the necessity of forgiveness, and the nature of the hereafter.

1. The Authority of the Scriptures

Following Jesus means that we will accept His views about the Scriptures. One of the most convincing aspects of the Bible’s trustworthiness is found in the testimony of Jesus. The Sadducees (Matthew 22:23-32) tried to trap Jesus and referred to Deuteronomy 25:5. They did not believe in the resurrection, and they made up a hypothetical story about a widow who had seven husbands. All seven of the men died, and so they said, “Therefore, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?” (Matthew 22:28). Jesus quoted Exodus 3:6, where Scripture says, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” and said that those words were “spoken unto you by God” (Matthew 22:31b).

Furthermore, Jesus spoke about the creation of Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4), the Flood that destroyed the world in Noah’s time (Luke 17:27), and the miracles performed by Elijah (Luke 4:25)—and gave no hint that these events *might not be true*

PAGE 20

SWORD AND TRUMPET

happenings. Jesus referred to the *fish* that swallowed Jonah (Matthew 12:40), the *life* of David (Matthew 12:3), the *glory* of Solomon (Matthew 6:29), the *destruction* of Sodom and Gomorrah (Luke 17:28-30), and the *provision of manna from heaven* in the wilderness (John 6:31)—and in all this record of Jesus' words there is not even the slightest hint (at any time) that the Scriptures may be inaccurate at any point.

Also, Jesus pre-authenticated *the New Testament*. In John 16:12, Jesus expressly declared that He was leaving many things unrevealed, but in the next verse He promised that this revelation would be completed after the Spirit came.

It is true that the apostles might forget what Jesus had said, but Jesus assured them that they would not be left to their own fallible memories, but that the Holy Spirit would bring to mind all that He had said to them (John 14:26).

The attitude of Jesus toward the Scriptures was that they were indeed without error. And when we discover what Jesus thought about the Scriptures—that is what we are to think about them. There are many convincing lines of proof for the absolute accuracy of the Bible, but the crowning proof of all evidences, is the testimony of Jesus Himself.

To Jesus Christ, the Scriptures were the infallible Word of God, of which not one word could be broken (John 10:35)—and thus the Bible is *the final court* beyond which there is no appeal. To follow Jesus is to believe in the absolute accuracy of the Bible and to use the Scriptures as a weapon when meeting the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11).

2. The Way of Salvation Through Jesus Alone

The second aspect of following Jesus is related to the concept of salvation. Jesus said, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), and so when Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "This day is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19:9), He implied that Zac-

chaeus was a sinner in deep need of salvation. The word *salvation* refers to the entire work by which God rescues us from our sinful state, and transforms us into new creatures with new goals in life.

One of the most widely rejected teachings of the Bible is that of the total depravity of every human being. Jesus said (Mark 7:21-23), "*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*"

There are loathsome things within the unregenerate human heart, all deeply ingrained on the inside, ever since the Fall in Genesis 3.

In spite of all the 21st-century statements about the goodness of man—the fact is, that we have all been born with a bias toward sin, which was transmitted from our parents at conception (Psalm 51:5).

And because sin is universal (Romans 3:23), salvation is the supreme need of every human soul—and nothing but genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is the solution.

Many people react negatively to the words of Acts 4:12 where the apostles said that there is no other name than that of Jesus to call upon for salvation. Yet that is the specific teaching of Jesus Himself, when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). There are some ethical values in the great world religions. We admire the *Muslim's* faithfulness in prayer, the *Hindu's* dedication to meditation, and the *Jew's* strictness in keeping the Sabbath, but none of these ethical standards has any saving value, because all promote salvation through human self-effort.

No other religious teacher could atone for the sins of the whole human race, for no other teacher lived a perfect life, and died and arose from the dead, and then returned to God to prepare a heavenly home for His followers. God offered Jesus as the only

channel by which we can have an eternal relationship with Him. To follow Jesus is to believe that receiving Him into the human heart is the only way of salvation.

3. The Concept of Separation From the World

The New Testament speaks of Jesus as an eternal high priest who is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26).

Jesus walked a path of separation from the world. He passed through the world, and lived in the world, but He did not partake of its illicit affairs. Jesus associated with sinful people for the purpose of reaching them and winning them for the kingdom of God, but He did not partake of their evil ways. And Jesus prayed for us, when He prayed, “The world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14).

The doctrine of separation from the world is scoffed at in most churches today, but the Bible from beginning to end stresses the importance of “coming out from” the world system.

In Romans 12:2, we read, “Be not conformed to this world.” In 2 Corinthians 6:17 we are instructed to “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” In James 4:4, we are told that he who is “a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

From beginning to end there is a similar emphasis. Every writer seems to strike the same note. Jesus and the apostles all say essentially the same thing. We are to be separate, and not to conform to the *greed* and *pride* and *vanity* and *immodesty* and *self-centeredness* of those who follow *the world’s* human-centered way of life.

The “world” from which we are to separate is the whole value-system which dominates society and is contrary to the ways of God. The Scripture breaks “worldliness” into three component parts (1 John 2:16, 17):

Sensualism—*the lust of the flesh*

Materialism—*the lust of the eyes*

Egotism—*the pride of life.*

The world, which we are not to love, basically ignores God and operates by ungodly standards. As the hymn writer implies—“This vile world” is not a “friend to grace, to help us on to God.” It seeks to *dominate* our personalities, and to *mold* our thoughts, and to *get us* to try and find happiness apart from God.

Many of us have to admit that the lives of most church members really are not very much different from the world about us. We hang around church buildings a little more. We abstain from a few things. But we simply are not that different! One of the reasons we are ineffective in winning others to Christ is that *we are so much like the people around us* that we have very little to which we can call them! The fact is, most churches would have to admit that *what we have isn’t that much different from what outsiders already have.*

We must refuse to be guided by the world’s standards of right and wrong. We must determine not to swim with the tide. We must resist the urge to follow the crowd. Our model is Jesus—Who is **holy, harmless, undefiled, and (the Bible says) separate from sinners.**

4. The Necessity of Forgiveness

Jesus said, as recorded in Matthew 6:14, 15, “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not (others), neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” And in Luke 6:37, He says, “Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”

The word *forgive* means to dismiss, to acquit, and to loose another from a debt or an injustice. Forgiveness also implies **giving up** a feeling of resentment and anger—and **restoring** a feeling of favor and affection.

Jesus insists that the human being who will not forgive his fellowman will not be forgiven of God! In essence, Jesus says, “*How dare you ask God to forgive your sins, when you refuse forgiveness to a brother who may have offended you?*” We owe God

a debt of gratitude for the forgiveness of **our** sins, and thus we must show great mercy to those who sin against us.

Jesus laid great stress on the importance of forgiveness. In Matthew 18, Jesus gives instructions about the steps to be taken in securing reconciliation when personal injuries occur. It *begins with* a private session to talk things over. It *is to be followed by* taking one or two others along if reconciliation could not be accomplished in the private session. If the matter still cannot be settled, then *it is to be shared with the church* (with the local body).

In the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples, we pray, “*Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*” We ask God to forgive us only to the extent that we are willing to forgive others. A man once said to John Wesley, “*You know, Mr. Wesley, I never forgive.*” To which Mr. Wesley said, “Then, sir, I hope that *you* never sin.”

Some will say, “But no one knows how much I have been wronged and how deeply I have been hurt.” But has anyone wronged us *more* than we have wronged God? Just as there is no limit to God’s forgiveness of *our* sins, so there should be no limit to our willingness to forgive those who have wronged us.

And just as God blots out our sins like a thick cloud (Isaiah 44:22), so, when we have accepted the apology of another, and have said, “I forgive you”—then the matter should be laid aside, and must not be brought up again. Forgiveness should be extended to those who hurt us even if they don’t ask forgiveness. Jesus set the example in Luke 23:34.

Christians who seek to follow Jesus will be quick to forgive, and slow to get offended, toward those who trespass against them.

5. The Nature of the Hereafter

Jesus believed in an existence beyond this life, both for saints and for sinners.

Jesus spoke often of **the joy and blessedness** of the redeemed, and of **the unhappy fate of those who die in a lost**

condition.

Some believe that death will “end it all.” They don’t care to investigate options about life hereafter. But Jesus says that an hour is coming **when all in their graves** will “hear his voice and shall come forth”—some to “the resurrection of life,” and others to “the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28, 29).

Some people have wondered whether Heaven and Hell should be thought of as literal places. The various descriptions of Hell (a lake of fire, outer darkness, a garbage dump) suggest to some minds that these are figures of something unpleasant, but are not necessarily descriptions of a real place. There are several descriptions of Heaven, which lead some to believe that Heaven is not a literal place. Yet Jesus spoke of Heaven as a “place.” He said, “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2, 3). He also spoke of Hell as a “place.” He told about the man in Hell who wanted his brothers warned, “lest they also come unto this place of torment” (Luke 16:28).

Jesus had a lot to say about Heaven. To those who suffer on earth for righteousness’ sake, He said, “Your reward is great in heaven” (Luke 6:23).

Whatever else is true about Heaven, it is a place where God’s people will be immensely rewarded. When Jesus said that He is going to prepare a place for us, He promised to come back and take us with Him “that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3).

Jesus also taught much about the grim reality of Hell. He described it as **a place of fire**. At the end of the age, the angels will *separate “the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 13:49, 50).

Jesus described Hell also as **a place of darkness**. There will be those who will be bound hand and foot and *cast into the “outer darkness, [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Matthew 22:13).

Jesus also spoke of Hell as **a loathsome**

place. Jesus said it would be better for us to enter life crippled (without a hand or an eye), than to be thrown into Hell *where the "worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"* (Mark 9:44). These sayings of Jesus do not require any comment. Those are fearful words.

Even if Jesus were using figurative language in these passages—still the description of Hell as a place **where the fire never goes out** needs a great deal of serious reflection. To believe in Jesus as our sin-bearing Substitute—is the only way to be saved for eternity. But Jesus is not only our Redeemer and Saviour. He is also our Model in life and our Pattern for daily living. The instruction in 1 John 2:6 is very clear: *"He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."*

The girl who operated the telephone switchboard in an office building occasionally got a call from a man who asked her what time it was. She answered and he quickly hung up. This went on for a number of months, and finally the girl asked the man *who* he was, and *why* he called so often to ask for the correct time. He said that he was the man responsible for blowing the whistle at the nearby factory, and he wanted to sound the whistle at the correct

time. "It's a funny thing," the girl said, "I always set my clock by your whistle."

That is what happens many times among Christians. We set our standards by what we see in the lives of other people, or by what seems reasonable to the human mind—and it gradually leads us farther away from God's perfect standard. We need to "set our lives" by the example which Jesus set—and make Him our model for daily conduct. We must accept His truth, and walk in His way. The theme, "Following Jesus," should challenge all of us to demonstrate the same attitudes that Jesus manifested when He walked among human beings here on earth.

We should pray like the brother in one of our African churches. He said, *"Dear Lord, You be the needle and I'll be the thread. You go first and I'll follow wherever You lead!"* That's the kind of commitment the Lord Jesus is looking for.

One unknown writer compiled the following statements:

"You call me Master and *obey* me not;
You call me noble and *serve* me not;
You call me wise and *follow* me not;
If I condemn you—blame me not!" ■

—Reprinted by permission from *Bible Helps Newsletter*, Jan. 2008.

How to Change Your Pastor's Preaching

by Troy Moore

John Livingston, of Scotland, and some men from his congregation spent the night in prayer. They earnestly sought God's blessing upon them. The next day 500 souls were saved under Livingston's preaching.

When Jonathan Edwards preached his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," he was nearsighted and held his manuscript close to his eyes. Deep conviction came, and some of the people grasped hold of the pillars of the sanctuary. Their conviction was so deep they felt like they were slipping into hell.

The secret of that sermon's power is known only to a few. Some of the church people had become alarmed, lest while God was blessing other places with great revivals, He should in anger pass them by. So they met in the evening preceding the preaching of that marvelous sermon and spent the whole night in agonizing prayer.

—From an unpublished collection of illustrations compiled by Troy Moore.

—Reprinted with permission from *The Church Herald & Holiness Banner*, January 2008.

Spanking Controversy Complicates Child Rearing

by Dr. Shelton Smith

For a number of years reaching back into the 1960s, the liberal social engineers have fought battle after battle in their attempts to eliminate all biblically based discipline of children and to depose parents of their God-given rights.

Prominent among those liberal activists are psychologists, physicians, and educators. In 1946, Dr. Benjamin Spock published *The Common Sense of Baby and Child Care*. Its popularity soared. The book became the accepted manual of child discipline. As a result, the child-rearing landscape changed forever. Millions of parents gave their allegiance for the next fifty years. Dr. Spock was the authority everybody noted and quoted. In the process, parents lost control of their offspring. The tried and tested methods of biblical discipline were abandoned for Spock's untested, liberal theories.

In very short order, disorder had become the norm. Children were running wild. Parents were being legally restrained from taking action. Parental rights quickly disappeared. Children's rights became the focus.

Physicians and educators became the watchdogs for the government. Any bruise on a child became the subject of inquiry and investigation by social workers who were invested with almost unlimited power.

The spanking of children has been one of the primary issues in this whole struggle. The child advocacy establishment describes all corporal punishment as "beating."

Spankings are dubbed as "parental

violence" against children. Their phony mantra is "violence breeds violence." By this they mean that if you "hit a child, that child will thereby be taught to hit others."

The obvious implication is that parents are teaching their children to be violent. It is the liberal explanation for why young people go out into the streets and commit acts of violence.

You should know, however, that in the pre-Spock era, child abuse was minimal in our society, violence in schools was virtually nonexistent, and young people were typically into mischief (not crime).

Now after more than a half century of this liberal indoctrination and social engineering, schools must have metal detectors at the doors and policemen in the halls. The juvenile justice system is overcrowded with literally millions of young thugs who have committed crimes of all kinds.

It is our contention that the current catastrophic situation would change if—

1. Parents were permitted and encouraged rightly to discipline their children, including the use of spanking, and
2. The paddle and the full authority to use it were back in the hands of every classroom teacher in the nation.

Furthermore, the Spock philosophy discounts two very practical considerations that none of us should forget.

1. If a child is never conquered, he does not learn to control himself.
2. If a child does not feel a measure of pain for his own misdeeds, he has no

concept of the pain he causes others when he violates them.

PARENTAL SPANKING TARGETED BY BAN

A [current] proposal in the Massachusetts House of Representatives to ban “corporal punishment” would turn good parents into criminals, according to a family advocacy group leader who battled the same idea earlier [last] year in California.

“This bill equates loving, corrective discipline with hateful, harmful abuse,” said Randy Thomasson, the president of the Campaign for Children and Families. “Just as California’s proposed spanking ban was stopped cold, [Representative Jay] Kaufman’s bill should be rejected by lawmakers who respect the sanctity of the home.

“Why are Democrat politicians like Jay Kaufman so intolerant of parents who occasionally spank?” Thomasson asked. “Do they have something against good, responsible parents who teach their children to respect authority? This bill would turn most parents into suspected child abusers.”

. . . House Bill 3922 . . . states that “it shall be unlawful” for a parent to provide corporal punishment to their own children. Specifically, it bans “the willful infliction of physical pain,” even temporary pain to a child’s buttocks.

“This punish-you-if-you-spank-your-children bill is intrusive, unenforceable, and a blatant violation of parental rights,” Thomasson said. “What’s next, jail time for parents who raise their voices at their children? We already have enough legitimate laws prohibiting physical abuse of children, and this proposal is certainly not one of them. . . .

“Some parents spank and some parents don’t, and that’s their right as parents. Government regulation of parents’ discipline wipes out the right of parents to raise their own children. This is wrong. God gave children to parents, not

to the state,” he said. “Appropriate spanking is not ‘beating’ or ‘abusing’ a child, which is a ridiculous and offensive comparison. When appropriate spanking is lovingly administered, it greatly helps a disobedient youngster to become a well-adjusted adult who respects authority,” he said. . . .

“Being a parent carries no right to slap and intimidate a child because you had a bad day or are in a lousy mood,” writes James Dobson of the Colorado-based Focus on the Family. . . . “It is this kind of unjust discipline that causes some well-meaning authorities to reject corporal punishment as a method of discipline.”

But he continued, “Just because a technique is used wrongly . . . is not reason to reject it altogether.

“Many children desperately need this resolution to their disobedience. . . . When he lowers his head, clenches his fists and makes it clear he is going for broke, justice must speak swiftly and eloquently. Not only does this response not create aggression in children, it helps them control their impulses and live in harmony with various forms of benevolent authority throughout life.”

Thomasson had said earlier that the California plan, which died at the end of the legislative session, could have biased “police officers, social workers, district attorneys, and juries to regard traditional methods of child discipline as hateful, harmful abuse.” . . .

The California lawmakers wanted to provide penalties even for parents who use a bedroom slipper to swat an unruly child (*WorldNetDaily.com*).

Amazingly another recent news item reflects just a little bit of light on this subject.

IT’S OKAY FOR PARENTS TO SPANK

The American College of Pediatricians carefully reviewed the available research on corporal punishment and concludes,

in its position statement on the subject, that disciplinary spanking by parents can be effective when properly used. "It is clear that parents should not solely rely upon disciplinary spanking to accomplish control of their child's behavior. Evidence suggests that it can be a useful and necessary part of a successful disciplinary plan," notes the just-released position statement.

"When a child defies a parent's instruction, spanking is one of a few options parents can consider to correct the misbehavior," says Den Trumbull, M.D., F.C.P., principal author of the statement. "Spanking is most appropriate with children 2 to 6 years old, and when milder types of correction have failed."

The American College of Pediatricians is a national medical association of licensed physicians and healthcare professionals who specialize in the care of infants, children, and adolescents (*Christian Newswire*).

Spanking, Not Child Abuse

We have said repeatedly, and we declare our conviction here again: spanking should be done, but it should be done in a right way. When done properly, it is **not** child abuse. To the contrary, it is a necessary part of what is required to produce the right fruit in a child.

Children who are, in effect, in control of themselves are not, and cannot be, happy children. They need to learn early to submit to authority, listen to instructions, and do what the parents say.

"Time outs" may be employed as a part of the disciplinary program, but they rarely, if ever, get a child under control.

Reasonable, measured physical punishment causes just enough pain to wrest the control from the child, conquer his self-will, and get him to be obedient.

The necessity of corporal punishment is so necessary that it is child abuse **not** to do it.

Biblical Principles Establish Right Perspective and Practices

Now I've saved the best until the last. As in all other things, my opinion, your opinion, or the opinion of whoever else weighs in on the matter is not really the big deal. No, we need to hear the divine mandates, the wisdom of God. Well, here it is.

Do It While There Is Time

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."
—Proverbs 19:18

Love Requires Discipline

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." —Proverbs 13:24.

If you do not discipline your child correctly, you simply do not love him as you should.

If you love the child, as every parent should love his own flesh and blood, you will chasten him "betimes."

"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." —Proverbs 3:12.

We have a great model of love when we consider how the Lord deals with us. He doesn't just give us everything in the world. He doesn't acquiesce to our whimpering, our crying, or our pouting.

No. Because He loves us, He corrects us when and where necessary.

Notice, the parent who loves his child also corrects the child.

So, don't pretend you love your children if you are not correcting them and chastening them.

Lack of Discipline Is the Road to Ruin

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." —Proverbs 29:15.

Just look at the current state of affairs with so many millions of families. Chaos rules on the home front. A quiet evening at home is out of the question because

the children are out of control.

If You Want Your Child to Turn Out Right

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.” —Proverbs 29:17.

When physical discipline is rejected, it handicaps the child for all of his life. You can’t get your children to *turn out* right if you can’t get them to *do* right in their developmental years. “Correcting” the child is the route to the “delight” of your soul. Amen!

Short-Term Discomfort Assures Long-Term Success

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” —Hebrews 12:11.

Correction and discipline that are biblical bring some short-term pain, but they assure that great pain and heartache will be avoided later. “Afterward it yieldeth” good “fruit.”

Dad and Mom, the Choice Is Yours

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” —Proverbs 22:6.

You cannot get your children reared and into patterns of godly living that will last a lifetime without properly training them. Note that this verse addresses something more than teaching. It is “training” that gets it done.

You can’t “train up a child” unless you have control early in his life. It’s true that your child will struggle with you in an attempt to get his way and keep control of himself.

Only through the use of biblical discipline can you accomplish the task.

So get control and then set about to train the child. The results will be to your liking, your delight (Proverbs 29:17).

In spite of the controversy over spanking, it is right to do it. With the present status of the legal situation, you are well advised to be very careful and very private in the use of all corporal punishment with your children. Otherwise, you can be hauled before a judge—even when you have done nothing wrong.

I pray that you and your spouse will have the wisdom and blessing of God in all the days of your child-rearing years. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *The Sword of the Lord*, January 2008.



Let Your No Be No

by Harvey Yoder

In an all-too-familiar scene, a harried parent is trying to finish her grocery shopping while her four-year-old is hassling her for a highly advertised sugar-coated cereal.

She says No. He puts it in the grocery

cart anyway.

Mother again says No, and returns it to its place.

“But this is the cereal I like,” he protests, “and it’s what Bobby [a favorite cousin] likes! I won’t eat any other

kind!” and tosses it back in the cart.

Once more mother says No, emphatically this time, and places it back on the shelf.

This time Junior yells, “But I want this cereal! You have to get it for me!” and grabs the box and heads for the checkout line.

Mother, who has now reached her breaking point, dashes toward her son, yanks him by the arm, and yells at him (for yelling).

But Junior has learned not to give up easily. He shifts into dramatic meltdown, resulting in an angry mom shaking and threatening him, “I’m never taking you shopping with me again, ever!”

All to no avail. Son is crying uncontrollably, Mom is desperate.

Finally, she bargains, “Okay, just this one time. But only if you promise never, ever to act this way again. Understand?”

Child nods, half whimpering, half grinning.

Chalk up another win for Junior.

What part of No don’t children understand? Or is the real problem that we parents (and grandparents) don’t understand how to take a firm position with our children and teens?

In August of 2007, more than a dozen Minnesota parent, educator, and health organizations sponsored full-page newspaper ads launching a “Say Yes to No” campaign across the state. The program offers explanations and examples based on the book “NO: Why Kids—of All Ages—Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It,” by David Walsh, president of the Media and the Family Institute.

“Parents have been looking for solutions . . . for a long time,” says Rosie Loeffler-Kemp, president of the Minnesota PTA. “Say Yes to No will give parents and educators answers and tactics that put them back into control of their homes and classrooms.”

Sounds good in theory, and maybe in our homes, but what about our grocery store scenario?

Here’s how an effective No might have worked:

Child protests, “But this is the cereal I like! I won’t eat any other kind!” etc.

Mother gets on her child’s eye level, arms on his shoulders. “I know you want this, but we don’t use that kind of cereal at our house.” (Respectful but absolutely firm position.)

“But, Mom, that’s the only cereal I like!”

“I hear you, but we don’t use this kind of cereal at our house.” (Broken record restatement, still on his eye level.)

“But, Mom . . .”

“Remember, we don’t use this kind of cereal at our house. You can either stop begging, or we’ll go to the car right now for a time-out in your car seat. If you don’t cooperate, you’ll go to your sitter’s, and Mommy will finish the shopping and go to the Taco Barn this time without you. It’s up to you.” (End of discussion, Mother rises for action.)

Of course, she could have taken her son out and smacked him instead of giving him a no-nonsense consequence. But that would be over in a harsh and heated instant, whereas removing him from the store, enforcing a five-minute time-out in his car seat (time doesn’t start until he cooperates), and bringing an abrupt end to the fun of shopping—and eating out with his mom—delivers a lesson that can keep on teaching for a long time.

And in case you’re wondering, there are worse things than leaving a half-filled shopping cart in the grocery aisle.

Like not doing whatever is necessary to teach Junior what No means. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Valley Living*, Spring 2008.



When Parents Must Determine Between . . .

Arguing or Friendly Exchange

by Richard Zimmerman

God has designed humankind with the desire and ability to enjoy fellowship with others. This begins in life as children communicate with their parents. Observing how each child grows and begins to communicate with others is a privilege for parents to enjoy.

Parents are responsible for directing family communication. This can be a challenge with the different makeups of our individual children.

Conversation is engaged in in many ways. Arguing is the deliberate act of continuing to give another side to an issue. The saying "It takes two to argue" is true. It is also true that it takes two to have friendly exchange.

In some settings arguing is seen as legitimate. In court, lawyers will argue how they understand a law to apply to a given issue. However, in the Christian home and school we teach our children the value of friendly exchange and the inappropriateness of arguing.

Arguing is nearly as old as humankind. It was man's response to God when he fell into sin (Genesis 3:10-13). Excuses come from an argumentative mind. Arguing stems from our carnal nature. This is one reason why we diligently help our families to learn friendly exchange. Arguing is incompatible with the will of God.

Friendly exchange was the original experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden as God walked and talked with them in the cool of the day. In this serene setting, not a hint of arguing appeared. Only sweet, friendly conversation flowed. We covet this atmosphere for our homes today. For this to be reality, we need to tenderly cultivate the communicating "plants" that God has placed in our "gardens." We must be familiar with the Master Gardener and work with Him to develop the fruit of friendly exchange.

Parents should observe how children relate to siblings in everyday life at home. School and other social events also give children an opportunity for arguing or friendly exchange with others. Does John always need to have the last word when the boys are discussing car or tractor makes and models? If so, he needs to be taught that this behavior is not consistent with the "law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

Maybe Susan has a habit of always giving her ideas about situations that involve the other children. This can be a subtle form of arguing with parents. We may not tolerate our children arguing with us or others in authority over them.

Even though it takes two to argue, it takes only one to stop. Knowing who started an argument is not necessary to have it cease. We should, however, be discerning whether one child is habitually fueling the flames of argument.

Knowing that childhood argument affects a person's entire life gives us one reason to be concerned that our children learn friendly exchange. How they relate to their siblings indicates how they will relate to God and to brethren and sisters in the church. The habit of arguing with others makes it convenient to argue when God speaks or when spiritual leaders give us direction.

Cultivating normal friendly exchange in our children replaces the natural tendency to argue. We need to recognize that parents are the first ones children learn to imitate. It is important that we set a good example for them to follow.

Effectively teaching friendly exchange in a practical way requires discretion. Use kindness when bringing a less-than-ideal example to the child's attention. Do not embarrass a child in front of his peers unnecessarily. Maybe after arriving home

PAGE 30

SWORD AND TRUMPET

from the friend's house is the better time to remind a child about some arguing we observed. This will help them to develop the virtue of kind lips and normal friendly exchange. At times, having a child make an apology will help him conquer this habit.

Observe the tone of voice children use when speaking with others, especially when they disagree. Are they forceful and combative? Or do they, even at these times, share "pleasant words [that] are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24)?

Samuel is a Bible example of a child who was taught to communicate respectfully with those older than himself. When Eli told him to go lie down again, he obeyed without arguing. Yes, he did continue to come to the one he thought was calling him. However, he always responded rightly to Eli and eventually to God! God was able to use him in a very essential way as he grew up.

Christian parents have this vision for the rising generation. We want God to use our children in His kingdom in a way that is health to the souls of others. Samuel's experience shows us how important it is to keep our children from arguing with those in authority over them. We are glad for Samuel's example of victory.

Isaac's communication with his father en route to the mountain is another Bible illustration of friendly exchange. While Isaac had questions, he found rest in his father's answers. Can our children rest in our answers?

Parents should communicate with schoolteachers about how their children are communicating with their peers. Are they kind and considerate of others? We encourage our schoolteachers to be open with their observations in these matters. They are a valuable resource in helping us discern whether our children have a problem with arguing or are faithful in friendly exchange.

We should not forget the resource of God's Word and prayer to help us properly discern and guide our families in peaceful, friendly communication. We must be familiar with the Scriptures that relate to this

matter. Proverbs contains much instruction on using the tongue. We understand that what comes from the tongue is first from the heart.

There are many rewards for parental efforts to teach friendly exchange. One is the reward of friends, for "a man that hath friends must shew himself friendly" (Proverbs 18:24). Another is the reward of having the habit and ability to control one's speech. This is a very basic test of our religion (James 1:26). Parents will have the reward of seeing their children involved in friendly exchange. We all enjoy pleasant words that are good for our natural health! However, most of all, we want words that are sweet to the soul (Proverbs 16:24). ■

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PARENT/YOUTH RELATIONSHIPS . . . cont'd.

lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The values which reject the world and embrace the will of God are litmus tests from which we can make our daily decisions. These are values which will shape a life that is meaningful, and an eternity without regrets.

Do we as parents and youth form our lives around these values and filter our decisions through them? Is this what we endeavor to teach or learn? Are we satisfied with our relationships? Since we are imperfect creatures, the expectation of perfection may be unrealistic, but perfection should be our goal. A satisfactory and fulfilling relationship is certainly within the grasp of those who purpose to have it.

The root cause of problems between people is differing goals. When our goals converge, other problems are usually minor.

I urge both parents and youth to center their relationships on transmitting godly values. Acquire them for yourself, and pass them on to others. Nothing can be a better foundation for life. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Life Lines*, Jan/Feb 2008.

The Supreme Goal in Parent/Youth Relationships

by Tim Myers

Edited from a presentation at a Parent/Youth Banquet

To live life well we need foundational viewpoints from which to approach it. While there are many good things in life, we need to identify a few which trump all the rest. It is important that we establish such, because life often confronts us with dilemmas which force us to choose the best thing among several good things.

These are what we could call our core values. They establish a hierarchy of importance. In other words, they are our priorities. We apply these values to every area of life. There is no choice which is not rooted in our values. The choices we made today expose them.

The brain surgeon has a motto which illustrates the importance of priorities: "First of all, do no harm." When he operates on the human brain he can do many things, but he must be sure, above all else, that what he does is more helpful than harmful. Some goals which are good, such as removing a cancerous tumor, are of less importance than preserving a person's life. The right priority produces the right choice.

As parents and youth, what do we want our relationships to accomplish? Is there one aspect that is more important than others, for which we would sacrifice others? Are there times when choosing the good rather than the best can be harmful?

While there are many good goals to be pursued in our relationships as parents and youth, there is one that I believe trumps the rest.

Proposition: The ultimate goal of the parent/youth relationship is to pass on godly values. There are other goals which are good. We want to pass on life skills, knowledge, and maybe even a material inheritance. We want our rela-

tionships to be happy. We want to affirm each other. Too many settle for simply surviving. But transmitting godly values is the most important.

What are factors which influence the transfer of values?

When something is transferred from one entity to another, both the sending and the receiving are important. If either malfunctions, the system breaks down. That is true with telephones, throwing a ball, in teaching . . . or with parents passing down values. If either party fails in the conveyance process, the chain of godly heritage can be broken, perhaps irreparably. I would like to mention five factors that are important in that transmission.

A. Example. While we can learn information without really believing it, we will never accept values without being convinced of them. Children may pick up good values from others, but they will never be convinced that we as parents believe something which we do not practice.

B. Communication. While preaching without practicing has little value, a clear example is enhanced by explaining it. We should live a Biblical lifestyle, and we should also teach our children why we do so, and how it applies to all of life.

C. Authority. Parents do not automatically have an aura of authority. They must earn it with consistency. While related to example, consistency goes further, underlining the principle by demonstrating it again and again. It takes but a little inconsistency to wipe out a balance of trust that has been years in accumulation.

True authority is also based upon Scripture. We are not an authority in our own right. A parent's position is a delegated

one. We should be sure that the values we present to our children as godly are indeed based on the authority of the Bible.

D. Mutual respect. This one is probably the most difficult, creating challenges on both sides of the relationship. Children are to both obey and honor parents, and parents are to avoid creating negative attitudes in children—“provoke not your children to wrath.” Layered through it all there should be an underlying respect for the position and personhood of the other.

Obedience to parents is described as the only commandment with an intrinsic blessing connected to it—a long life. That is true both because of God’s special blessing and because of the benefit of learning from the experience and maturity of others.

A great scientist said, “If I have seen farther than other men it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.” We understand the value of learning from the scientific discoveries of others. I hope we also see the value of learning from the experience of generations before us in the school of life.

But there is also a heavy duty upon parents to relate to children considerately, avoiding words and actions which unnecessarily hurt or embarrass them. The Golden Rule certainly applies here. There should be openness, warmth, and commendation whenever the situation merits it. Conveying to our children, especially to our youth, that we consider them a blessing from God and sincerely appreciate them will do much to enhance the transfer of godly values. As they grow older, we need to increasingly relate as adults on equal footing.

E. Outside influences. Physically, you become what you eat. Spiritually, you become what you admire. We unconsciously absorb the values of those we look up to, whether good or bad.

But we don’t have to admire something to be influenced by it. Constant contact with that which we consider wrong can erode our objection to it. We should be careful of the ideas to which we expose ourselves. No one is immune to his environment.

What are the godly values which need to be transmitted?

First consider some wrong values:

Within all of us there is a voice that tells us, “Trust your desires.” Our society is saturated with this “If it feels good, do it” mindset. The Bible refers to it as living after the flesh, that part of our nature which is corrupted by sin.

Another deluding voice says, “Trust yourself.” That is based on the idea that truth is relative, that your truth is not the same as my truth—there is no such thing as absolute truth. That is as absurd as saying that there is no such thing as absolute gravity, and you can make your own gravity. Try to convince the airplane pilot whose motor has failed of that.

A third voice says, “Trust your culture.” Or in other words, if enough people do it, it must be right. The problem is that the majority can be dead wrong. Adolph Hitler made two interesting statements: “If you tell a lie often enough, and loud enough, and long enough, people will believe it,” and, “The bigger the lie, the easier it is to get people to believe it.” Unfortunately, history seems to confirm his observations.

Ultimately, we can trust only God.

While godly values are numerous, here are two which summarize them well.

Jesus simply said, “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

The Apostle John referred to both youth and parent in 1 John 2:14-17, and left us some very straightforward values: “*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the*

(continued on page 31)



Song of the Month

Douglas A. Byler, Music Editor

This column welcomes the submission of original hymns. Please send hymns, as well as applicable information about the author and/or composer to: Douglas A. Byler, Sword and Trumpet, Box 575, Harrisonburg, VA 22803.

Day Is Dying in the West



by Lathbury/Sherwin

Lyrics: Beautiful sunsets have inspired many works of art, poetry, and music. “Day Is Dying in the West” combines poetry with music in a hymn of worship that begins with a description of a twilight scene. The first verse describes the panorama: the sun going down, stars coming out, and the calm of night settling over the world. The response to this beauty is expressed in the refrain: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!”

As Christians, this needs to be our instinctive response to all the natural beauty in the world around us. Although it is possible for an unbeliever to experience some of the pleasure of viewing a sunset or a beautiful landscape, he is not equipped with the “glasses” to properly understand and enjoy what he is seeing. To him, what he sees may be pretty, but he still views it as a colossal accident, and any beauty found there is purely incidental. The Christian worldview frees us to enjoy the beauty of nature to its fullest potential, because we believe that God created it specifically for us to enjoy. Of course, the entire world is now marred in some way by sin, but there are still many ways in which the glory of the original creation is present. While the unbeliever is limited to experiencing beauty with his physical eyes, the Christian can glory in the God that created it.

As this hymn suggests, our response to beauty should always be, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!”

In addition to writing an occasional hymn, Mary A. Lathbury taught art and French, and contributed to several periodicals. She also became associated with the Chautauqua Movement in New York,¹ which focused on adult education in such fields as music and art.²

Music: William Fiske Sherwin spent most of his life in Massachusetts, working as a music educator. As a young man, he studied under Lowell Mason, who is known for his singing schools as well as his many hymns and arrangements. In addition to teaching singing, Sherwin also served as the musical editor of Biglow and Main publishers, which later became part of the modern Hope Publishing Company. He was the first musical director of the Chautauqua Movement in New York,³ where he made contact with Mary Lathbury. In addition to his setting of “Day Is Dying in the West,” Sherwin composed the music for another one of Lathbury’s hymns, “Break Thou the Bread of Life.” ■

1. www.cyberhymnal.org

2. <http://en.wikipedia.org>

3. www.cyberhymnal.org

Day Is Dying in the West

To show . . . Thy faithfulness every night. —Ps. 92:1, 2

CHAUTAUQUA 7.7.7.7.4 Ref.

MARY A. LATHBURY, 1841

W. F. SHERWIN, 1877

1. Day is dy - ing in the west; Heav'n is touch - ing earth with rest; Wait and
2. Lord of life, be - neath the dome Of the u - ni - verse, Thy home, Gath - er
3. When for - ev - er from our sight Pass the stars, the day, the night, Lord of

wor - ship while the night Sets her eve - ning lamps a - light Thro' all the sky.
us who seek Thy face To the fold of Thy embrace, For Thou art nigh.
an - gels, on our eyes Let e - ter - nal morn a - rise And shad - ows end.

p REFRAIN

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, Lord God of Hosts! Heav'n and earth are

cres.

full of Thee! Heav'n and earth are praising Thee, O Lord most high!

Resting in Him

by Sharon Shirk

Being restful is not one of my natural responses to life. Sitting too long was always demanding and waiting on anything was a chore. My own children have been known to say, "You aren't a very restful person, Mom." When I first heard it, I didn't like what I was hearing. Being a mom was supposed to have a more restful feel to it . . . and they weren't feeling that. I would often go back to that thought.

Over the years, work and things to do were a part of getting through life, a part of what had to be done and part of being productive. The work ethic did not allow for sufficient time to rest, reflect, and refresh appropriately. Too many years of that kind of running and doing and you are bound for trouble. It happened to me just that way.

Busyness of Life

A few years ago, I went to the doctor with some questions about the route my health was taking. More and more there was just that deep bone weariness that traveled with me and almost held me down. I would plan a usual busy day, but would not be able to accomplish what I thought should be done. My doctor asked me lots of questions and ordered some tests. But what rattled me most was when he walked me back through my schedule of the last several weeks prior to my appointment. He had a way of showing me things in my schedule that really held me accountable to how much I was requiring of myself. Even Sundays were full of DOING good things (and there is nothing really wrong with that . . . Mark 12:9-13). However, Sundays are set apart by God for REST and REFLECTION.

Much of my tiredness and weariness could be traced back to how I chose to live my life (BUSY). The message I was getting was . . . you need to find ways to rest and allow your body to catch up to be able to heal and feel well again. It felt like an invitation to learn to live differently. I was hear-

ing it clearly and wanting that, but was not sure what that would require of me.

God Rested

The Bible talks about our lives being like a race. Most of us have a good understanding of that part, but it also says much about REST. To begin with . . . God rested after creation. It would be hard to believe that He was tired. Rather it seems He FINISHED what He was doing and then rested (Genesis 2:2, 3). I wonder . . . did He do that to put some space between creation and His next big project? Did He rest and reflect on all that happened, take time to enjoy it, and say it was good? That is refreshing for me to think about. Am I ever finished? Do I take time to rest after a project or a week of busyness?

Remember Mary and Martha? Well, I'm going to be bold enough to admit that I would be a Martha and still I WANT to be a Mary. Admit it with me . . . sitting at Jesus' feet takes effort, allowing Him to quiet me and my agenda. Seems like doing things for Him, or for someone, comes easier than to *sit* in His presence.

Jesus said early in His ministry in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me . . . all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and LEARN from me, for I am GENTLE and HUMBLE and you will find rest for your soul (your inner person)"—that part of me that NEEDS to CONNECT and YOKE UP (with Jesus) and LEARN from Him. This is such a beautiful invitation that I don't want to miss.

Jesus rested, too, even when there were crowds of people who wanted to be with Him for healing and learning. He went apart from the people and rested awhile, even when there were needs and demands all around Him (Mark 6:31, 32). His times of rest refreshed Him for times of service and He knew how one was important for the other. He is my true and living example.

PAGE 36

SWORD AND TRUMPET

Rest in Heaven

REST is one of the things I look forward to most when I think of Heaven . . . rest from the worries of life, from schedules, from challenging decisions of what is best over what is better or good . . . far away from fear and grief. To see Him face to face will be to know Him . . . quite different from feeling overwhelmed and distracted by the busyness of life, war, and unanswered prayers. I think of heaven as a never-ending fellowship with God and people and living at peace with the way things are, of seeing and being, of beauty and worship . . . a very restful place.

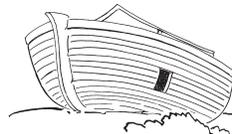
And I believe REST is also for now. Like Hebrews 4 says . . . “There is a rest for the people of God,” . . . mixing faith and trust

with what we already know about God is restful. Ephesians 1: Long ago before the world began . . . God chose us to be His very own through what Christ would do for us, to make us holy in His eyes without a single fault . . . we stand before Him covered with His love. All praise to God for His wonderful kindness to us and His favor that He has poured out upon us because we belong to His dearly loved Son, by whom we are saved, and He has showered upon us the richness of His grace—for how well He understands us and knows what is best for us. And because of what Christ has done, we have become gifts to God that He delights in. REST for today is trusting a God like that. ■

—Reprinted with permission from *Life Ministries Newsletter*, March 2008.



Beginning Issues



Noah and the Animals on the Ark

by John Mullett

In defending the Bible as being accurate historically and scientifically, one of the questions we may encounter in relation to the Great Flood is the feasibility of the ark in preserving life in all the diversity that we observe today. Was there really room for all the animals on the ark? How could only four men care for all of them? The first two things we need to establish are the size of the ark and the number of animals (amount of space) required to account for all of the

animals required by the account in Genesis. Without establishing those two things we are dealing with an unknown number of animals on an ark of unknown size. It sounds like a rather obvious starting point, but it is surprising how often we argue dogmatically about something without doing our homework first.

Just how big was Noah's Ark? Using the most conservative measurements it was at least 450 feet long by 75 feet wide

by 45 feet high. It was one of the largest wooden ships of all time. Not until the late 1800s was a ship built that exceeded the capacity of the Ark.¹

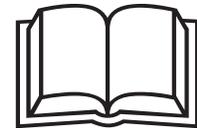
Noah did not have to take every single *kind* of animal on the ark. The Bible says God was sending the Flood to destroy everything that had the “breath of life.” Noah was to take with him into the ark a pair of every *kind* of air-breathing, land-dwelling animals, creeping things, and winged animals (birds and also some mammals and reptiles). God gives further direction to take seven pairs of the clean animals and the birds. The aquatic kinds did not need to be on the ark to survive since water represents their natural habitat. While many would be killed in a global catastrophe, enough would survive to repopulate the Earth afterwards. Insects, spiders, etc. . . . would be small enough they could have survived either as “stowaways” on the Ark or pieces/mats of floating vegetation. If you are like me you’re wishing a few of them (especially mosquitoes) wouldn’t have managed somehow, but they did.

A *kind* is most likely as broad as the modern-day *family* classification. This means Noah did not need to take every single species of dog (wolves, coyotes, bulldogs, retrievers, etc.), but just a male and female of the dog *kind*. Likewise with cats of which there would have been one or at most two *kinds*. John Woodmorappe in his book, *Noah’s Ark: A Feasibility Study*, suggests at most Noah would have needed room for about 16,000 animals with some suggesting that number may have been as low as 2,000.² The average size of the animals would likely have been about the size of a sheep, dinosaurs notwithstanding. Thus the animals would have required less than half of the accumulated space on the Ark’s three floors, leaving plenty of room for food, water, and the rest of the needed provisions.³ Most likely there was still plenty of room left for more people. For those who are concerned over

the size of large animals, such as a few of the dinosaurs, there was room for them, but remember all animals are once small. Besides, wouldn’t it make sense for God to send young pairs on the Ark as they would represent their *kind* in repopulating the new world? ■

(to be continued)

1. Ham, Ken. *The New Answers Book*, Masterbooks 2006, pp. 125, 126.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 130.



TWO OF A KIND . . . cont’d.

seal it with my blood.” After the fire burned the ropes off his hands, he raised his hands and struggled to form the words: “Father, I commend my spirit into Thy hands.”

After Michael’s death the authorities tried in vain to persuade Margaretha to recant her testimony, but she declared that she would forever remain true to her Lord and to her husband. Eight days after Michael’s execution, Margaretha was drowned in the Neckar River that passes through Rottenburg.

Reflection

Do you tend to go along with the flow, taking the path of least resistance, or, like the Sattlers, do you take the more difficult, nonconformist road when your convictions call for it?

“Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9). ■

—From *One Year Book of Christian History* by E. Michael and Sharon Rusten. © 2003 Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Used with permission.

Masculine Spirituality

by Anthony B. Bradley

For nearly 10 years researchers have been lamenting the “boy crisis” in America. I didn’t realize how pervasive the crisis was until I taught in a Christian high school. I found guys whose fathers were physically, emotionally, and/or spiritually absent. I found over-mothered boys struggling emotionally and spiritually. Standing outside my classroom, I watched parades of high school guys slouched over, heads down, and limping with no passion for leadership. I realized then that the Church was in trouble. I had to act.

I locked arms with the ninth-grade history teacher, and we petitioned our administrators to let us lead a men’s Bible study. Thinking most of our attendees would be boys from single-parent families and broken homes, we were surprised to see sons of elders, deacons, and church leaders show up. These boys were hungry. It was then that we realized that most churches—despite their multiple ministry programs—did not provide direct, intentional contexts for the masculine formation of boys. There was nothing about how to be initiated as godly, image-bearing men.

Questions That Haunt Men

What is a man? Am I a man? How do I know? Do I have what it takes? Does my father delight in me? Like a siren, these questions haunt the American male. How do you answer questions such as these? Or better yet, how can the Church embrace the battle for the hearts and souls of men? Is the answer to be nice, stay out of trouble, and read your Bible, so you don’t sin? Or is there something more?

When these questions go unanswered, they are really answered negatively. Boys left to figure things out on their own misinterpret messages they have received from their fathers and other men in their communities. However, by design, Christ-centered masculinity is bestowed from one

man to another—from father to son or in a community of men.

Boys without godly discipleship are Satan’s playground. The Enemy deceives men into answering those vital questions with sports, work, or women. Success in athletics, academics, careers, and female conquests mark a perverted right of passage for boys today. Sadly, many Christian homes nurture this false masculinity and consider it as spiritual success or being well behaved because these sons never do anything to embarrass their parents.

In a fallen world, men who seek to answer these vital questions through work or career often get good grades or even become CEOs. Men who take their questions to women boast of having had many girlfriends or are husbands who do whatever their wives want but cannot offer them their strength.

The Walking Wounded

Every man carries wounds. We live in a fallen world and are born into broken families. Woundedness begets woundedness. The Enemy delights to see men shackled to their pain. Moreover, most men have wounds that go unhealed or unaddressed because there are few contexts in which men are free to disclose them and receive long-awaited, regular validation from God and other men. Most men will not journey down that road. Men will deny the wound behind bravado, minimize the effects of past pain, or simply swallow it and attempt to move on. Meanwhile, we’ll live as posers and frauds, fashioning a fig leaf, faking life as if we have it all together, and running from things that might expose us.

The wounds of our youth affect us as adults. For example, over-mothering undermines a man’s ability to pursue female relationships in a healthy way. Women who marry passive men or find themselves in cold, stagnant marriages often turn to their

sons as surrogate husbands to get much-needed support. Experts have found that this over-mothering ruins a boy's masculine formation. One man recently wrote me this:

My parents never divorced; they just lived separate lives under the same roof. But as the elder son, I became my mom's surrogate spouse. It took me years to figure out what I had gone through.

I'm 36 years old, a solid Reformed Christian, have a good job as a lawyer, and generally enjoy life. But I'm absolutely ruined as far as relationships are concerned. I give time to my church, work, and use my spare time to travel the globe. But I don't even bother dating anymore.

Additionally, men so desperately long for their fathers' approval that many choose careers they hate or overwork themselves to get straight A's just to hear their fathers say, "I'm proud of you." Even worse, men embracing their fathers' piercing articulation of them as unworthy often live out that prophecy with reckless abandon.

What Is Needed

Articulating biblical masculinity always brings controversy, resentment, and fear because most of us define biblical masculinity in terms of our own histories with men during childhood and adolescence.

Those nurtured around abusive men tend to define masculinity in terms of gentleness and meekness. Those with passive, soft-spoken, weak fathers tend to misinterpret passivity as normal or reject any appeals to a more assertive definition of masculinity, believing that any talk of masculinity is an appeal to the macho. Histories aside, extremes should not keep us from highlighting masculine formation while the Church passively defaults to a call for young men not to be troublemakers.

Boys and men need intentional, long-term masculine formation in a community of men in order to fulfill their vocation as Christ-centered men. During my second seminary teaching year, I taught a class called "Masculine Spirituality" because, like the high school boys I had 10 years ago, I looked

around and saw many men wounded and limping. It was a life-changing semester of intentional masculine formation, the type desperately needed in the Church today.

Christ-centered masculinity entails nothing less than fighting for the cosmic cause of the Kingdom, fighting evil, accepting responsibility, leading with radical fortitude, pursuing justice for others, showing empathy for the things that God cares about, and living out the implications of the Gospel in every area of life in ways unique to our vocation as men (Proverbs 5; 1 John 2:12-14).

Masculine formation is not a onetime event that happens on a retreat. It does not happen during a once-a-week men's basketball game or a Thursday-morning informational Bible study. Formation is a long-term process—life-on-life validation beyond mere accountability confessionals. Masculine formation is both formal and informal as men engage in intentional formation in the image of Christ at all stages in the masculine journey.

In recent years, I had the privilege of co-leading groups of men into the wilderness of Canada. It was an invitation to men with the hopes of initiating a journey of intimate, empowering relationships—fueled by the Gospel—to be later cultivated in local churches. Sending men to be alone with God to wrestle with their pain, questions, identity, dreams, and to covenant with their brothers to support each other for the long term has blessed me beyond words.

According to a 2006 study by Duke University, the typical U.S. congregation draws an adult crowd that is 61% female and 39% male, with virtually no men in their early twenties. Please join with me in this effort to establish true masculinity. Unless we reinvigorate intentional masculine formation into our Kingdom mission, the Church will remain stagnant and impotent, and the whole creation will suffer for it. ■

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