

What's New With You?

by Elder Don McWilliams
Brownsburg, Indiana

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4).

Has anyone ever asked you, "What's new?" The majority of the time the answer is, "Nothing, what's new with you?" We are so caught up in the fast lane of life we fail to realize what is new. Each day of our life is a new beginning with so many things to bless us in our enjoyment of life itself. Each day symbolizes a new start from the disappointments of the day before, from the sorrow, fears, terrors or whatever has been the cause of our melancholy mood.

There are many beginnings or new experiences which come our way in life, but the greatest and most blessed is that of the **NEW BIRTH**. The new birth is that with which we have nothing to do. We can neither ask for nor accrue by our own labors this new birth. Just as with the natural birth, a baby has nothing to do with its own birth, likewise we have nothing to do with

our spiritual birth. As the natural birth comes about by the process of outside forces, (the mother and father), so also the spiritual birth comes about by an outside force, our Heavenly Father.

What we do with each new day is up to us. We decide what we eat, how we dress, the friends with whom we associate, the many different places we go, whether we choose to obey or not obey the laws of the land as an upright citizen or a vagrant, whether to be pleasant with our family and friends or a disagreeable grouch.

We also have a choice in life pertaining to our spiritual life after our new birth. We can choose or not choose to live by the laws of God. If we choose to live a life close to God, we then will feel His nearness and consolation in times of need. It is a blessed truth that God never changes! What He has promised through His son, Jesus Christ, in redeeming all His elect to eternal glory can never be changed no matter how we live in this life. However, I believe how we live in this life determines how much we feel the closeness and nearness of His Spirit while we are here in

the world.

Once the new birth has been given, if we cherish the closeness of God, we must live close to Him. **GOD NEVER MOVES**, we do. We too often become lulled by Satan into believing that since we can do nothing toward our eternal salvation, we need do nothing toward our time salvation. Too many misguided souls feel that, "If I'm meant to go to Heaven, I'll go, so I'll just live any way I want."

What's new with you? Has God blessed you with the knowledge about His Son? Has He blessed you during some loss or crisis? Has He restored your confidence after a failure? Has He given you faith in a future life with Him? What will be new with you during the coming year? Will you make excuses for not attending services whenever the church is open? Will you feel you don't need Bible Study? What example will you set for your Children? Will you make excuses for not visiting the sick, the shut-ins, the elderly? **What will be new with you in 2009?**

Think on these things.: Phil. 4:8.

Only one life twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last.



The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. I Corinthians 3:12

Spiritual Renewal

by Elder Greg Phillips
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Another quality for which the Lord Jesus looks in His church is a sensitivity that leads us to continual or regular spiritual renewal. He expressed this desire in His letter to the believers in Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6). The members there had apparently become spiritually lethargic. They had a good reputation among the other churches and must have given outward indications of being a thriving body of believers. But as the Lord Jesus looked upon the people, He saw a serious shortcoming. Therefore, He rebuked them, saying, "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Revelation 3:1-3).

This church apparently at one time had so great a vitality that it acquired a "name" for being full of life and force. The Lord said, "...thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. The church was not completely dead, for the Lord said, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (verse 2). The greater part of the members of this church were lifeless in their discharge of duties, and in a state of spiritual decay, ready to die. Either there were spheres of duty which were altogether neglected, or else those duties were discharged in a spirit grievously lacking in fervor.

Among men, its name still stood. But "he that hath the seven Spirits of

God" observed a decline in devotion. There was the same outside appearance, and yet the church was already injured even unto death.

We do not read of trouble from the Nicolaitanes or a Jezebel. We are told of no tribulation or persecution nor of any opposition of any kind that the Church at Sardis had to meet — it was dead. Neither Satan nor any of his hosts will care to disturb either a dead Church or a dead pastor. Nothing would better please the powers of evil than to see such a Church falling to pieces because there was no spirit to keep the bodily framework together! It is no wonder to find such a Church's works defective. "I have not found thy works perfect before God."

It is sad indeed when the Lord Jesus sees any Church to be dead! The Church is, in theory at least, a company of those "alive unto God," bound together for his worship and work. In the world, death is what we expect to see; but in the Church, death has no place.

In Scripture, the Church is portrayed as the Bride of Christ, and by such figures as a family and a household. All of these symbols picture life and activity. The Apostle Paul speaks of spiritual Jerusalem, the Church of God, as being "...the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:6). A faithful mother loves and comforts her children. She feeds and clothes them. She teaches and disciplines them. If the mother is dead, the children certainly suffer a great loss.

Such a death is needless, for "He who hath the seven Spirits of God" is Lord and Husband of His Church. He loves her and enriches her with the fullness of life. He is always ready to hear the prayers of His own. Our Saviour has promised that our heavenly Father will "...give the Holy Spirit to them that

ask him" (Luke 11:13). The Apostle Paul gives us both a warning and a promise concerning the Holy Spirit. "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:8).

This state of deadness is certainly dishonoring to the Lord Jesus and discouraging to converts coming to the Church as the home of a spiritual brotherhood, and finds no life at all. Many have come to the church full of zeal and eager to serve, only to find the church doing nothing but going through the motions of religion.

It was not that the church at Sardis did nothing. On the contrary, their works are mentioned repeatedly. Their works were not found to be perfect before God (Revelation 3:2). Perfect in this instance, means full, complete, or fulfilled. Their works have not measured up to God's standard. They may have done only the things they wanted to do, leaving off many things that God had commanded. They may have labored halfheartedly or grudgingly. Their works may have been only "to be seen of men." Whatever the case, Christ was displeased.

The church at Sardis had a name, a reputation, an honourable character, as a living church. Laodicea deceived herself, thinking she was rich, but it is not said she deceived others. This church, Sardis, deceived others. She appeared to them to be living, while in fact she was dead. Perhaps, because she had a reputation of being alive, this church drew many to her who had a sincere desire to serve the Lord. Her condition may have caused many to die to the joys of the kingdom.

There was still a glimmer of hope at Sardis. There were "things which remain," though they were "ready

to die.” Jesus exhorted the believers at Sardis to remember, to obey, and to repent. They were to remind themselves of all that God had done for them in Christ. They were to change their minds and express their sorrow to God for their sad condition. And they were to wake up, to take hold of everything in the church that was still honoring to Christ, and to get moving in their Christian lives. They needed spiritual renewal.

A sure way for us to please the Lord Jesus is to renew our commitment to Him every day. This matter of commitment is both a once-and-for-all act and a daily pledge. Renewing our devotion to Christ every morning will keep us from spiritual lethargy, and it will prevent that deadness which so often marks our churches.

In Romans chapter twelve, Paul had finished the doctrinal part of this epistle, and proceeded to the practical application of those truths. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

Paul’s exhortation, “I beseech you” is in a very kind and affectionate manner. The saints are addressed as “brethren.” He had a sincere love and concern for them so he pressed them with strong language out of a sincere regard to their good, as well as to the glory of God. “I beseech you,” translated from the Greek *parakaleo*, literally means to call near, invite, entreat, or pray. It can mean to beg, and Paul was that urgent in his exhortation.

Paul urged the saints “by the mercies of God.” These “mercies,” as revealed in the Gospel, are the most positive, powerful, and effectual motive to prevail upon believers to devote themselves to God, and upon those who have done so, to do it more and more.

The word mercies here denotes favor shown to the undeserving, or kindness, compassion. The plural is used in consideration of the Hebrew word for mercy, which has no singular form. The particular mercies to which the apostle here refers, is that shown in the previous portion of this epistle. He had proven that all were by nature under sin, and that they had no claim on God. God had shown great compassion in giving His Son to die for them in this state, and in pardoning their sins. This was a ground or reason why they should devote themselves to God.

Devotion to God is the action encouraged by Paul. The Roman believer (and believers in every age) are admonished to present our bodies as a living sacrifice.

The word present used here commonly denotes the action of bringing and presenting an animal or other sacrifice before an altar. It implies that the action was a free and voluntary offering. The person offering picked out the choicest of his flock, brought it to the altar, and presented it there to the Lord.

Paul said, “present your bodies a living sacrifice.” The body represents the whole persons, soul and body. We are to give all our being to the service of God and His glory in the spirit of sacrifice. We are to be wholly the Lord’s property as the whole burnt-offering was, no part being devoted to any other use.

We must present a living sacrifice. The sacrifices of the Law were presented alive to God, and their blood was shed at the feet of the altar. A beast that died of itself, or was torn by wild beasts, was not so much as to be eaten, and much less acceptable as an offering to God. Christ, “our Passover” (I Corinthians 5:7), was offered for us, and a new order of sacrifice has come in. We should give ourselves. As the victim on the altar was surrendered wholly to God, so our bodies with all their members should be consecrated to His service; not as slain, but as “living sacrifices.”

To be devoted to God, a living sacrifice, one must of necessity be separated from the world. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). The word world used here properly denotes an age, or generation of men. Here it may mean the ideas, habits, and sentiments, of a wicked, self indulgent, and idolatrous age, all that is opposed to Christ.

Satan is “the Prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Christ died “...that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Galatians 1:4). The service of Christ makes it necessary to refuse to fashion ourselves after the world’s ways.

The word conform means to fashion alike, shaped to the same pattern. The word paints a picture of soft clay being pressed into a mold and taking the shape of the mold. We must not shape ourselves according to the world’s mold, nor allow the world to shape us. Instead of following the ways of the world, the Christian must be “transformed,” changed into a new form of life. “Transformed” is from the same Greek word from which we get metamorphosis, that radical change by which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. The transfiguration of Christ is expressed by this word in Matthew 17:2. The fullness of the Godhead, which dwelt bodily in Christ, began to shine forth through the human nature, revealing the Divine nature. Believers are “...partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4). We are to be transformed so that the Divine nature in us shows through our humanity.

This can only be done through spiritual renewal, by the “renewing of your mind.” Paul tells us, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians

5:17). Because he is a new creature, he is commanded to live as a new creature. "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:21-24). Here is a positive command to "...be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Believers must let the inward change produce outward change. The word translated mind here usually denotes intellect, as

distinguished from the will and affections. But here it seems to be used of the whole spirit as distinguished from the body, including the understanding, will, and affections. This change is not to be the body only, nor the mind only, but to the entire being.

There must be a daily renewal. The Lord 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 early church continued daily in the temple (Acts 2:44). The Apostles preached and taught "...daily in the temple, and in every house" (Acts 5:42). The noble saints of Berea "...searched the scrip-

tures daily" (Acts 17:11). The writer of Hebrews warns, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12-13). It is to be our daily business to admonish and exhort one another. Christians are liable every day to go astray. Every day they need the help of the Lord and of one another. The "deceitfulness of sin," if not dealt with daily, will harden believers to the point that they will be as those of Sardis, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

Grow in Knowledge

1. "And God saw that the _____ of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
2. "As saith the proverb of the ancients, wickedness proceedeth from the _____; but mine hand shall not be upon thee."
3. "For my _____ shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips."
4. "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped _____; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men."
5. "For we _____ not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
6. "Treasures of wickedness _____ nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death."
7. "But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why _____ ye me, ye hypocrites?"
8. "_____ therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
9. "Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit _____ an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within; and defile the man."
10. "But if the wicked _____ from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby ."

ADDRESS CHANGES

Occasionally, we are slow about making address changes. Please forgive us.

If your change is not immediately corrected, please contact us again.

We try, but do sometimes make mistakes. Thank you for your patience!

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

The Valley of the Shadow!

by Elder Phillip Nichols
Blackshear, Georgia

Sometime ago, my wife was away for a couple of days at her parent's house. Now I must confess, when I am alone particularly at night, I am more jumpy and afraid. Some of you might think that that is strange, but I am also sure that others of you understand what I mean. Of course, I realize that God is always with me, and that is enough to sustain me during the times I am afraid. On this particular night, I had been studying the Scriptures as I had to speak at a local nursing home the next day. I just didn't feel any leadership from the Lord on what to speak, and was lost in prayer and thought. In that state, I decided to do a little work outside, hoping some thought on what to speak would come to mind. When I was going back in the house, it was darker outside and the porch light was shining through the window. As I went in, I casually glanced over my shoulder and received one big scare! I saw one of the biggest cat-like creatures that I had ever seen. It looked like a huge panther and it was leaping toward me! Needless to say, I froze with fright momentarily. It took a moment for me to realize what "it" was. We have two house cats. Nebo, our male cat, was on the freezer in the porch. As I took that fast glance over my shoulder before going in, he jumped from the freezer to the window sill. The porch light had cast his shadow on the side of the house. It was his shadow that had frightened me so --- thank God! Nebo is a big, 15 pound cat, but his distorted shadow appeared to be at least a 250 pound cat. I went in and began to talk to and pet Nebo and Malley our other cat. God impressed a verse of Scripture on my heart to preach the next day. It was Psalm 23:4, a well known verse which states, "Yea though I walk through **the valley of the shadow of death**, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me..."

Those words burned in my mind as I realized that our fears, problems or troubles, just as my cat's shadow leaping toward me, cast shadows upon us. We must realize that the shadows are only distortions causing what we are going through to be bigger than it really is. I am not discounting how big problems can be, because I know that life is not always easy and tragic things happen, but God is always there no matter what the problems are! I had no reason that night to be afraid because God was and is with me. Even when it is dark spiritually, and the glory of His brightness is not seen, He still is there to help, strengthen, and protect His children. As I went through these thoughts, I was rejoicing in the Lord. I was experiencing what David said in Psalm 18:28, "For thou wilt light my candle. The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness."

Those children of God who have heard the gospel and profess Christ as the Son of God and trust in Him, God will deliver or save them from fears and troubles. We are to call upon Him in our times of need, believing that He is able to deliver us. This is what trusting is about. Tell Jesus the problems and trust Him to help us. Many times people run to some other sources for help such as alcohol, drugs and other people. Deliverance simply is not there. Deliverance comes only from God or His Spirit working through others.

In Psalm 56:3, David states "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." You might say if you trust in God, why are you still afraid? The Spirit within a child of God is willing, but the flesh is so weak. There are always fears or problems that tend to raise their heads from time to time in each person's life. Yet even when those times come for me, it is different now than it was before I

heard the gospel and began serving Jesus Christ. I was always afraid of the night, and all my problems seemed hopeless and with no deliverance in sight. Now in the midst of fear and problems, I have a comfort and deliverance because I am able through Jesus to be released from those chains that bind.

We don't just trust in Jesus one time, but we have to trust in Him at all times. Even when fear comes, with trust in Jesus, we are able to overcome the Devil and trample him under our feet. I suppose II Corinthians 4:6-9 explains it better than I, as it states, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Yes, sometimes there are problems on every side, yet these problems no longer have to consume me or close in on me. There are many things that I don't know what to do about, but I do know I have hope and assurance in God and His son Jesus. Oh, there are plenty of people to stand in my way to make fun or hinder me, but as Paul stated in II Timothy 4:17, "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me...". So when we are cast down, remember we no longer have to go to the grave being held captive.

David states in Psalm 56:4, "In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." In order to praise God, we must know the word and believe or trust His word knowing He can't lie.

Psalms 119:11 states, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." How great is the sin of unbelief or doubt in God! We must learn the Scriptures and hide them and their meaning in our hearts, so when trouble or fears come we will be able to do as Jesus did in Matthew 4 when he was tempted of the Devil. He responded every time, "It is written!" He fought Satan with Scripture. There is power in the word of God to the Children of God. Psalm 119:25 states, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word." God's word can bring us from the depths of distress, despair, forsakenness. Destruction cannot abide when God's children believe His word. For it is the power of God unto salvation or deliverance to every one that believeth. The faith of God is revealed from His faithfulness through our faith in Him and His Son. (Romans 1:16-17).

To give you an example of God's power in His Spirit and word, I want to tell of another experience that I have had. In the fall of 1983, I was asked by my pastor, Elder Billy Mullis, to go with him to Indiana as he was to preach a meeting at the Mount Tabor Church. I had only joined the church about 6 months before. In order to be able to go on this trip, I had to work all night the night before leaving as well as my time during the day. Now most of my job's time (which was in a grocery store) was put in at night along with other people, and I was used to working long hours straight, but this night I would be alone from about 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. the next morning. I agreed to do this, but I was fear-struck at the thought of working by myself. During that night, I had one of the biggest battles of my life. To make matters worse, the store was a real old building in the old part of town, and often about 9 p.m. the area is dead. The frozen food cases,

for those who might not know, make a terrible noise without warning at times when it goes into the defrost cycle. Yes, the Lord, the Devil and I had one battle that night. I prayed, sung hymns, and quoted Scripture and kept on working. I felt strong one minute, but afraid the next, as Satan would cast the shadow of doubt, or I would hear some sound and the shadow of fear would overtake me. Every time I was afraid, I would cry out to God to help me overcome my fear. I quoted II Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The Devil kept telling me if I was one of God's, I wouldn't be afraid. My response to that lie was in Romans 8:38-39 which teaches us that nothing shall separate us from the love of God. Hymns that seem to help me most are "Amazing Grace" and "I Am Resolved". Through God's loving Spirit, I was able to make it through the night and to gain victory with each tick on the clock. By the end of the working shift, I was very tired, but felt very much victorious in my Lord Jesus.

I feel that the torment some have and are going through is **one reason** why it is so important that we teach, preach and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. The truth sets captives free! Many of God's dear children are ensnared in darkness, yet with truth they are able to come to the light and find deliverance, power and comfort in the gospel. Knowing that Jesus has saved my soul from death and hell released me from the fear of dying and torment and from the grips of sin. Hebrews 2:15 states, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." What bondage are those of God's children who don't know the truth of the gospel. No, the gospel doesn't save a persons eternally. Christ did that on the cross, yet the gospel does do something. The gospel is able

to save or deliver us from our problems while we live on this earth. And as we already stated, this is done through trust in God.

When we think of deliverance, we usually think of Daniel from the den of lions or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. There are things however, that we might not receive deliverance from naturally. Stephen in Acts 7 was stoned to death for his preaching, yet he experienced a deliverance in a different way. Even as Stephen was being stoned, God was delivering him by allowing him to look straight into heaven and to see Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Stephen did not taste death. Yes, Stephen was killed, but nonetheless he was delivered. Matthew 10:28 tells us "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Do we sometimes fear men more than God?

Death is also a distorted shadow. It is a shadow and is bigger than the actual thing. Death is a victory for children of God! We will experience victory through death as we enter into eternal rest with our Father. Even our bodies will be raised for the ultimate victory in the resurrection.

All problems in our life appear as shadows just like my cat's shadow ---much bigger than they really are. There is a statement of one of our past presidents that is so true. It is "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." Without fear, we have deliverance and are able to enjoy the kingdom of God which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). Please remember that because of the carnal bodies we live in, we will have fears, but when we look unto the author and finisher of our faith, we are able to overcome the world and it's fears, and have victory over the shadows of Satan.

**AND WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER
FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD,
TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. ROMANS 8:28**

Study Your Bible

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

LESSON 1

- I. What is the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God?
 - A. Romans 14:17
 - B. Questions for Discussion
 1. Do you have to be in a church building to be in the Kingdom of Heaven?
 2. Do you think you have ever seen the Kingdom of Heaven?
 3. Tell of the time you felt true righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
- II. Are the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God the same?
 - A. Terms used interchangeably in Scripture by the Gospel writers.
 1. Compare Matthew 5:3 with Luke 6:23.
 2. Compare Matthew 13: 11 with Luke 8: 10.
 3. Compare Matthew 19: 14 with Luke 18: 16 and Mark 10:14.
 - B. Terms used interchangeably in Scriptures by Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:23, 24.
- III. What is the difference between the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Heaven? Consider Luke 17:21.
- IV. Most of the New Testament is about the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - A. Sermon on the Mount -Matthew chapters 5-7- See how often it is stressed.
 - B. Parables (See Matthew 13 which has 8 parables, Matthew 25, etc.)
 - C. Everyone preached about it (Matthew 3: 12; 4: 17; 10:5-7; etc.)

LESSON 2

1. Who can enter the Kingdom of Heaven?
Born again believers, who do the will of the Father (see Matthew 7:21).
- II. What are some of the things we must do to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?
 - A. We must humble ourselves. Matthew 18:3,4.
 - B. We must set our affections on things above. Matthew 19:23, 24. (Colossians 3:2).
 - C. We must enter the strait gate. Matthew 7:13,14.
 - D. We must press into the Kingdom. Luke 16:16.
 - E. We must suffer tribulations. Acts 14:21,22.
 - F. We must serve our brother. Matthew 25:34-40.
 - G. We must let our light shine. Matthew 5:14-16.

- H. We must walk in the light and have no fellowship with darkness. Ephesians 5:1-13.
- I. We must run the race. Hebrews 12:1.

LESSON 3

- I. We must be good soldiers to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - A. We must endure hardness.
 1. II Timothy 2:1-4.
 - B. We must resist the devil.
 1. I Peter 5:8.
 2. James 4:7
 3. II Chronicles 16:9
 4. II Kings 6:17
 - C. We must fight a spiritual warfare.
 1. Revelations12:7
 2. I Timothy 6:12
 3. Psalms 44:5
 - D. We must put on spiritual armour.
 1. Romans 13:12
 2. Ephesians6:10-19
 3. I Thessalonians 5:8
 - E. We must use spiritual weapons. II Corinthians 10:4

LESSON 4

1. LIFE in the Kingdom of Heaven is the only **REAL LIFE! (Abundant Life!)**
 - A. Matthew 7:13, 14
 - B. Questions for discussion.
 1. After the people of God are born of the Spirit, do they then have to choose whom they will serve (how they will walk)?
 - a. Deuteronomy 30:15-20
 - b. Joshua24:14, 15
 - c. Proverbs 4:14-27
 - d. Proverbs 7
 2. What is this "abundant life" or "life eternal" which we are able to enjoy?
 - a. I Timothy 6:12, 17-19
 - b. Galatians 6:7, 8
 - c. John 12:25
 - d. Luke 18:28-30
 - e. John 17:3 ***Key Verse
 3. Why does the Scripture say, "Few there be that find it"? (Matthew 7: 13, 14)

Awake Thou That Sleepest!

by Bro. Brooks Strickland
Statesboro, Georgia

When we hear people talking about our Christian walk or our walk of faith, it really is a walk. Many times throughout the Bible, we are told to spiritually stand up and to walk upright. There are all kinds of analogies referring to quick feet and a strong spiritual posture. In Ephesians 5:14-20, we are told how to spiritually walk in a very literal sense. Beginning in verse 14, we are told: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead". Here we see a commandment that first tells us to get up, then stand in the upright position and prepare to walk. The next phrase is the promise that "Christ shall give thee light". After we have arisen and sobered our minds, verse 15 tells us, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise". We are to walk according to God's commandments.

One of the most important verses in this chapter is verse 16 which states, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil". When I first read through this, I casually read over this verse not really having it "sink in" with me. Redeem is a word that I've used many times, but don't think that I have ever known its specific meaning. After searching the Scriptures, I found that redeem means to rescue or to take. Two Scriptures that I used to come to this were Ruth 4:5-7 and Colossians 3:5-7. In Ruth 4:5-7, Boaz redeemed Ruth as his wife. Marriage to Ruth was an opportunity that he had to 'rescue' or 'take' rather quickly before it was

wasted.

In Colossians 4:5, we are told again to "Walk in wisdom...redeeming the time". The conclusion to Ephesians 5:16 that is extremely clear to me is that we are to "take the time." This can mean two things. First it means to set aside time every day to serve the Lord. We all have to "take the time" to do different things throughout our day. This is simply saying to take time to serve the Lord by adding specific works into your schedule. We have specific duties on Sunday that include going to church and any other activity needed to keep the Sabbath day holy, but we also need to make time during the week to serve God. The other way that is meant is the way that it first struck me. Not only making a time slot for God, but taking and grabbing hold of every minute that goes by. We are to "take the time" in a conquering manner. There is a Latin phrase known as "carpe diem" that means 'seize the day'. We are to seize the time we have, and put it to use through serving God. When I looked at it for the very first time, I thought that redeeming meant changing. Though I did not have the true meaning of the word redeem, I was still able to understand the fullness of this passage. If we are seizing the time and using it to God's honor and glory, we are changing the time because the days are evil. The time is ours to lay our hands upon and make use of.

As we are laboring in taking and using the time for serving the Lord, we

grow weak and have tendencies to doubt and murmur. Eph. 5:17 tells us to "Be not unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is". God's will is not always our will, and as it gets difficult to serve Him, sometimes we need to understand that the service that we do is based on His will. Verse 18 says that we are to "Be not drunk with wine". When it gets difficult to do the things we are supposed to do, we are not to look elsewhere to find relief or strength, but "Be filled with the spirit", as the second part of that verse states. Two of the first things to do to begin to be filled with the spirit are verses 19-20. In 19 it says "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs". Then verse 20 states, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ".

As children of God, we need to awake and arise to an upright position, so that we may begin our walk. If we walk circumspectly as we are commanded, Christ will give us light. We are told most importantly in verse 16 that we are to take time for God by making a place for Him in our everyday lives, but also to take time by grabbing hold of it. Verse 16 states also that the days are evil and they are in no way any different today. But these evil days are for us to lay hold on and put to use for the purpose of honoring God. "Take the time" and make it better. We as Christians need to redeem the time that is so freely given to us.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Wickedness - Genesis 6:5 | 5. Wrestle - Ephesians 6:12 | 8. Repent - Acts 8:22 |
| 2. Wicked - I Samuel 24:13 | 6. Profit - Proverbs 10:2 | 9. Lasciviousness - |
| 3. Mouth - Proverbs 8:7 | 7. Tempt - Matthew 22:18 | Mark 7:22 and 23 |
| 4. Iniquity - Hosea 10:13 | | 10. Turn - Ezekiel 33:19 |

Satan Is Working Today!

by Bro. Tony Jackson
Tifton, Georgia

Please prayerfully read John 10:10 carefully. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "The thief comes to steal, kill and destroy." My thoughts begin from this passage and spread out from here, so I am going to begin at this point. This passage concerning the sheep and the sheep fold seems to have to do with entering in to the Kingdom of God. A kingdom is made up of a king and his citizens. In this kingdom Christ is the King and those that believe in and worship Him are the citizens of that kingdom. It is a kingdom which is on this earth and the citizens of this kingdom enjoy a life with Christ their king which is abundant in that it is joyful. The laws of our King are for our benefit, and obedience to these laws is essential to continue in this abundant life. This verse fits here in as much as it is said that the thief comes to take from us all those things which we enjoy as citizens. It seems to me that the thief is Satan. His mission is to "**steal, kill and destroy**" and it is contrasted to Jesus' mission, that citizens of His kingdom can have **the abundant life!**

Satan is the enemy of God's children, and we will, Lord willing, speak more about his role as our enemy. In situations where we have enemies, it is in our interest to know as much as we can about our enemy. When the children of Israel would first consider entering into Canaan, they were directed to send out spies in order to learn as much as they could about the enemy they would face. In times of war, it is customary to use whatever means are necessary to learn about our enemy. Where I work, we consider our competition, those that sell the same products as we do, to be our enemy. We try to keep up with the competition and what

they are doing. What new products are they considering? How are they doing in the market? What are they charging for their products? What methods are they using to market their products? It seems to me it would be in our interest as Christians to know as much as we can about our enemy!

One of the first things we know about our enemy is that he is real! I have a brother-in-law who told me when he was in college that one of his teachers said that Satan was just the evil tendencies which are within us. My brother-in-law asked that teacher if that was the case, then who was it that tempted Jesus in as much as we know that Jesus had no evil within Him. The thought that has continued with me as a result of the present moral collapse we see around us is that the evil and rebellion we see in mankind attest to the reality of Satan. There is no explanation for the insane rebellion which is taking place except the existence of Satan. Rebellious individuals such as Madonna and RoseAnn Barr exceed the wickedness we thought mankind to be capable of. The murder of 30 million unborn, and exalting homosexuality which God's word says is an abomination. The outright attempt to destroy the mention of the name of Christ from our history and present world is unbelievable. Why would men seek to destroy that which has blessed their lives with multitudes of benefits? There is no other explanation than **the reality of Satan!** He is a real being. I think that the attempt to portray him as red with horns and a tail and pitch fork is probably part of Satan's attempt to be a figment of our imagination. If Satan can make us believe that he is not real, then we will not be vigilant as the Scriptures tell us to be concerning our enemy, the Devil.

He goes by several names in the

scriptures. He is referred to as Satan in the new and old testaments. He is referred to as the Devil, Belial, Beelezebub, the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air, that old serpent. His names seem primarily to mean accuser, slanderer, worthlessness or hopeless ruin.

Satan desires to be worshipped! The Scripture says that when heathens made sacrifice to idols, they made sacrifice to Devils. It seems to me that he has been trying to get as much of the world as possible under his influence and worshipping him. This is evidenced in a lot of places in Scripture, but it seems the most prominent when he tempted Jesus to fall down and worship him. He takes captive, II Timothy 2:26, and his captive serve him. Our fleshly nature does not want to be a servant, but we are going to be a servant of either Satan or Jesus. Jesus said that whoever commits sin is the servant of sin. I can assure you that being the servant of Christ is not even comparable to being the servant of Satan.

Satan has great power. The old Martin Luther hymn, "A Mighty Fortress" says "On earth is not his equal." He apparently has a lot of knowledge. The Scripture says the Devils believe and tremble. They recognized Jesus and called him, "Thou Son of David" which is to recognize Him as the Messiah, something which men can do only by the Holy Spirit. "No man can call Jesus the Christ but by the Holy Ghost". He apparently was permitted to exercise this power to a greater extent before the crucifixion of Christ than since that time. We see him exercising that power in the life of Job. He had the power to afflict with bodily harm but only as far as God would permit. The Scripture says he had the power of death which he apparently gained at the Fall of

Adam and held until Jesus destroyed death with His own death. Humanly speaking, death is a great enemy. That fact was displayed to me as I saw my own father breathe his last. Death is an awesome creature, but thanks be to God that Jesus destroyed death, and to be absent from the body is to be present with God. His power over death seems to be under consideration as he struggled with Michael the archangel over the body of Moses. It is interesting that Michael refrained from rebuking Satan, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." I am not comfortable with the song which children sing which says, "if the Devil doesn't like it he can sit on a tack." Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan". I don't think we have that authority. We must resist him by resisting temptation. I want to talk a little more about Satan's great power as we look briefly at the history of his activities in the Scriptures.

There is a great debate of the origin of Satan. Some say he is a fallen angel, others that he was created as he now exists. Frankly, I won't enter into that because I don't know, and I don't see how it is essential for us to know. We first encounter him in the Garden of Eden where he is referred to as the serpent. It was there that he took from us that relationship which we had with the Lord. He accomplished that with deception and by appealing to human pride. Satan is extremely smart and cunning. He was obviously active in that old world in leading Cain to kill his brother and in tempting men to the point that in Genesis 6, we read that the, "Imaginations of men's hearts was only evil continually." Can you imagine the depth to which mankind will go under the influence of Satan?

It seems that Satan has always desired to unite mankind under his leadership in a rebellion against God. I think that is what is under consideration in the record of the tower of Babel. It was displeasing to God. If Satan can unite mankind under one authority, he must feel he can gain control of that authori-

ty which can exercise it's authority over everybody else. It seems to me that in addition to being active in tempting individuals to destruction, he has been continually active in dominating entire nations of people. He is referred to as the prince of this world. There is some language in Daniel which seems to indicate to me that the Devil and his angels exercised power over entire nations. He seems to have been accustomed to having that power when he tempted Christ and said, "If you will fall down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the world." It is interesting to me that Revelation 12 says, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." I believe that this is a great change that took place with Jesus coming to this world. The prince of this world was cast out. I think it is hard for us to imagine the wickedness of the world before Christ. A time before light entered into the world. A time before the gift of the Holy Ghost was given to believers. A time when paganism was dominant. The Scripture says, "They sacrificed to devils."

I have often wondered about the vision that King Nebuchadnezzar had of the image with the head of gold, the arms and breast of silver, the belly and thighs of brass and the legs of iron and feet of clay. The mountain, which is interpreted as the Kingdom of God, destroyed that image. It seems to me that when the kingdom of God was established on this earth that the prince of this world was cast out. The kingdoms of this world became the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ. We stand in awe as we see the followers of Christ using methods unheard of destroying the multiculturalism that existed and flourished under Pagan Rome. We see paganism falling as Paul came to Athens and said, "I perceive that you are too superstitious." Paul recognized this power of Satan when he said, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood..."

There is a lot said today about multiculturalism in our world. I finally con-

cluded that multiculturalism is multi-religious, and those who promote it are promoting any religion but Christianity! In the world where the gospel went, Christ was exalted as God and honored as such. One of the queens of England said she hoped Christ would return during her reign so she could cast her crown down at his feet. King James authorized and encouraged the King James edition of the Bible. The word of God was universally recognized in the western world as the final authority. At one time it was said that lawyers could quote more Scripture than anybody because they recognized the great authority which the Scriptures held. The founders of our own beloved nation founded it upon Christian principles, and they chiseled that in granite all over Washington. We have enjoyed more than 200 years of abundant blessings in our nation because Jesus came into the world and cast out the prince of this world. Evil was in the world, but it did not dominate. Murder was murder because the ten commandments said, "Thou shalt not kill." Sodomy was a sin because God's word condemns it. I think even most sinners recognized that they were sinners against the God of heaven.

I certainly am not a historian. I remember a little about the history of western civilization. I would like to make some remarks concerning our present situation realizing that I don't know what the future is, but also considering what Jesus said about our need to be able to read the signs of the times. We need to consider the times we live in, and we need to adjust our lives accordingly. It seems to me that there is a reversal of the book of Acts taking place. Rather than the word of God growing mightily, the word of God is diminishing in its influence. In the book of Acts, multiculturalism or multi-religions were falling. In our world, multiculturalism is being exalted. The county school board candidates were on a forum the other night and I was told that one of the questions asked

them was, "What will you do to promote multiculturalism?" Every effort is being made to remove the mention of the name of Christ from our world. Atheism is taught in schools in the name of godless evolution which is a satanic lie. Sodomy is being promoted as an alternate lifestyle and those promoting it are chomping at the bits to do so in public schools. Our tax dollars are being used to murder the unborn. I believe that public education is being restructured from the federal level to turn our children to a humanist and globalist view rather than a Christ view and a national patriotic view! To get back to our original subject, I believe that all of this is orchestrated by Satan. The laws that are made in congress seem to be anti-family. The tax structure so burdens young families that they feel it necessary to limit themselves to one or two children, and to put the mother to work out of the home. I don't know whether we are at the point that the Scriptures speak of Satan being loosed for a little season or not, but I can see that **his influence is growing mightily!**

You might be saying, "this is depressing, of what value is it?" Jesus said we ought to be able to read the signs of the time. I believe we ought to read the signs of the time because we need to consider the gravity of our present situation, and it should cause us to draw nearer to God. Our children who are growing up in a world that says that sin is not really sin need to know that the time we are living in is a **deviation from the morality of God!** They need to be continually taught from the word of God against the error they are receiving as a result of the age they live in. We need to read the signs of time in order to see our duty to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We need to know our enemy is real and that he is the mastermind of this present destruction of Christian values. We need to know that in spite of the present destruction that God is in control and that Satan can

only go as far as God will allow. I think that present circumstances should cause us to examine our own lives and bring them into conformity to the word of God. It should cause us to examine the church and to make sure that we as a church body are in conformity to the word of God! It should make us realize that God doesn't need us. **We need God!**

I think that reviewing God's dealings with mankind and His control over Satan in spite of his great power, will assure us that God is the God of history, and His will be done in spite of the rage of Satan and the rebellion of men. It should cause us to commit ourselves to doing the will of God as closely as possible. Please read John 10:10 again. I would like to talk some about Satan's role in his dealings with God's children on an individual basis. I hope you will keep in mind some of the things we have already said about our enemy and remember that it is valuable for us to know about our enemy.

HIS MISSION

The verse says that Satan's mission is to steal, kill, and destroy. That is his purpose. That is what he is about doing. We see him exercising that mission throughout the word of God. In the garden of Eden, he took from Adam and all his posterity the relationship which they enjoyed in the Garden with God. We find him in the book of Job, taking from Job his health and his wealth and his family. I believe he would have taken his life if God would have permitted because his mission is to steal, kill and destroy. He apparently had the power to bind men with diseases, Acts 10:38. He rejoices in that sort of activity. In our nation, we see him taking from us the Christian heritage and the foundation of our nation. He is probably dancing with glee at the progress he is making.

STEAL

I want us to think a few minutes about Satan as the thief. A thief is someone who comes and takes something of value from you. The thief

normally comes when we are asleep and when we are not vigilant. Perhaps this is why the word of God cautions us to be vigilant and to awake from our sleep. There are white collar thieves. I suppose they normally steal by deception. They juggle the books and seek to confuse, and in the confusion they take something of value from you.

Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ." It seems to me the very thing that Satan seeks to take from us is that abundant life which Jesus would have us to have. In the process of taking that abundant life, he takes from us several things.

One of the first things that Satan takes from us is virtue. This is the first thing we are told to add to the faith which God gives us. "Add to faith virtue." This speaks highly of virtue in as much as it is the first thing we are told to add. To me, virtue is moral purity. Satan wants to steal our **moral purity** by tempting us to sins like fornication. One of my fears is that young people growing up in today's world will begin to take major sins lightly. They hear about their friends being involved in major sins and appearing to get away with it.

They might then begin to think that sins such as drunkenness and fornication are just a normal part of growing up and that God sort of winks at these sins. I have always been an observer of people. I have learned a lot of lessons by my observations as well as my own mistakes, but I have observed that when people lose their virtue, they also lose their joy! They may retain some superficial happiness at the pleasures of sin which deceive the simple into believing that they are escaping the consequences of sin. Have you ever noticed that you can tell from a person's countenance whether they are joyful from the depth of their souls or whether their glee is a cover for the sorrow over the loss of their virtue. Their laughs are not from joy, but are rather sarcastic. Just the obvious

joyful countenance of those who are faithful to God should be a testimony to those who see them.

When Satan takes your virtue, he takes your **joy** with it. The kingdom of God is righteousness, joy and peace in Holy Ghost. Righteousness first, and then joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. When Satan takes your righteousness, he takes with it your joy and peace. **Satan takes those things which are of value!** For someone who does not know the Lord, joy and peace in the Lord may not be valuable, but for those who do, they know that Satan would be taking their most precious possessions. How valuable is your relationship with God, and the joy and peace you derive from that? I recently went to a family reunion and saw a cousin who is about 45 years old and who is in a wheel chair. He had his first heart attack at 31 years of age, and has deteriorated since that time. Naturally speaking, he has only a few months to live. While he was at the reunion, he began to have heart problems, and we had to take him to the hospital. While we were waiting in the room, where they run all these machines on you, I had a conversation with Louis which revealed to me that he knew the joy and peace of knowing God. He was not frantic, but rather at peace. He told me about his church and how his church members take care of him. He is divorced from his wife, his mother is dead, and his father is in the nursing home. He has no family members to care for him. I asked him how he came in contact with this church. It seemed he was just waiting for me to ask that question because he told me his whole spiritual experience. He also told me that one of the sisters in the church did not understand why God did not heal him when he first came to that church. Louis said that if God had healed him he would probably have gone back to his old ways, but he said that now there is no way he would leave the Lord. It was very obvious that he, through much tribulation, has entered into the kingdom of God,

and that the joy and peace of knowing God is the most valuable thing in his life. **Satan would take our virtue, and in taking our virtue he would take our joy and peace!**

The second thing that comes to my mind that Satan would take from us is our good relationships. He is the sower of discord. When we consider our relationship with God as paramount, then we realize that relationships are the most important thing we have. By sowing discord, Satan would destroy the fellowship we have with one another. He can cause us to be filled with malice, hatred, envy, and strife. When we (by the instruction of Jesus, and through the Holy Spirit) learn to love others in spite of their faults and even when they spitefully use us, we can have great joy and peace. Family relationships are fundamental to our happiness in life. The word of God gives very simple instructions as to how to have joyful family relationships. Husbands love your wife, wives submit, children obey your parents. The joy of a family whose home is built on the foundation of faith in God and anchored in His word is of more value than all the material wealth this world has to offer. Young people do not marry a person without a strong faith in God. In today's world, you would not stand at chance. **Satan is seeking to steal those good relationships.** He would take your virtue, and by taking your virtue, he would greatly reduce your chances of having the sort of home I have described. If you are a young person and you don't want Satan to steal from you the prospects of that sort of family relationships, you need to make up your mind to commit your life to the Lord and live a virtuous life, and beg God to send you a mate who has the same values as you do! There is no other foundation upon which a successful home and family relationships can be built, and there is no greater joy than the joy of feeling the love of God and enjoying good Christian fellowship and good family relationships. Don't let Satan take this from you. **He comes to steal, kill and**

destroy!

There are many things that Satan can steal from us. He can steal faith. Faith is something which can be overthrown. That is what Satan is attempting to do with the humanistic and atheistic teachings in America's schools. Church's need to set up their own schools.

He can take your wisdom. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The word of God says that God will take away the wisdom of the wise. That was one of my Daddy's favorite verses. We see a lot of insane ideas floating around. God has removed the wisdom of those that should have wisdom.

Satan has the power to steal our health. Many people you encounter daily are walking around with sexually transmitted disease for violating God's laws of purity.

Satan is a thief! If we let him, he will take from us all that is of value to us in this life!

DEVICES OF SATAN

The Scripture tells us that we should not be ignorant of Satan's devices. Now, in as much as Satan is a thief who would take everything of value, and in as much as God's word says we should not be ignorant of his devices, it seems to me that it would be of value for us to go to Scripture and observe his devices. That is, what methods does he use in order to steal from us? We know his mission is to steal, but what **methods** does he use?

One of the first things that comes to mind that Satan uses as a device to steal from us is **deception**. The Bible says he is a liar. Words are just a tool to Satan. He has no regard for honesty.

We find him using this device in the Garden as he deceived Eve. He told her they would become as gods. I think Satan is still deceiving **the feminists** into believing that they should not be in subjection to their husbands. God has designed a way by which a woman can have the greatest joy and fulfillment in this life. Generally speaking,

she is to find her fulfillment in marriage to a believing husband who loves her and puts her happiness above his own. The Scripture says she will be saved in child bearing. She is instructed to be a keeper at home and guide the house. Satan uses deception to deceive some into believing that it is not possible to find satisfaction in that sort of relationship anymore. I think that if a young couple marries and want to build their home on the principles of God's word and wants their home to be a pattern of the Lord's church and the relationship between Christ the Bridegroom and His church, I believe that God will help them to do that. It is still a man's responsibility to provide for his family. Satan is using the method of deception to steal from us that which will bring us the most joyful and satisfying life.

Another deception that Satan uses is that we can sin and get away with it. I can assure you from my experience that it cannot be done. The Scripture says, "Be not deceived God is not mocked...". All you have to do to see the sorrowful consequences of sin is to just look around you. There are a lot of satanic deceptions: Abortion is a choice. Homosexuality is just an alternate lifestyle.

TEMPTATIONS

Satan uses the device of temptation. He presents sin in a pretty package. Sin has a pleasure to the flesh. But the Scripture says, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." I Timothy 5:6. Satan uses that lust of the flesh in order to take from us those things which are of the most value. He tempts us with alcohol. The alcohol advertisements present alcohol in a pretty package for the young and the beautiful and the athletic. (See Proverbs 23:32.) He tempted Joseph with a woman who would entice him to sin against God and against his master. Satan uses the method of appealing to our pride. The Scripture says that pride goes before a fall! Satan appealed to Eve's pride, "you will become as gods."

IDLENESS

We are more vulnerable to Temptation when we are idle. When we are up and about our Father's business, we are less likely to be overcome by temptation. The old saying, "is idleness is the devil's workshop." It seems to me that it was idleness that resulted in King David falling into sin. If he would have been out leading his troops, he would not have had time to have been tempted by Bathsheba. I noticed in the paper the other day that the young people were complaining that they had nothing to do. The police are restricting their cruising. They are saying they have to cruise because there is nothing to do. Now, don't you feel sorry for them? We have softball teams, a bowling alley, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, movie theaters, television, but they don't have anything to do. Not to mention the fact they could get a job and work. Don't you young people that work out in the fields all day feel sorry for the teenagers in Tifton? They don't have anything to do! If they don't find something to do, Satan will come along and give them something to do. I think that parents need to lead young people into activities that will fill their time.

I think to a degree we are all a little different. What might be a temptation to one person may not even be a problem to another. Satan knows what our weaknesses are and he knows when we are most vulnerable. If we have a weakness, we need to know what that weakness is, and take steps to avoid being taken captive by Satan.

DEFENSES AGAINST SATAN

The thief steals. There are precautions we use in our homes to avoid thieves from taking our possessions. We put locks on everything. We put up burglar alarms. We get a dog. We have a little dog in the house and if there is any unusual sound, she sounds an alarm. There are defenses that God's word prescribes which will help us to avoid Satan taking from us all that is of value.

The model prayer which Jesus

taught says, "Lead us not into temptation." We ought to pray daily for God to lead us in a path away from temptation, and then we ought to walk in a way to avoid temptation.

The scripture warns us to **flee** fornication. Joseph used this method when Potiphar's wife tempted him. He got up and fled. There are some temptations which can only be avoided by fleeing. I have a tendency to overeat. One night after I had already eaten enough, Stacie saw me sitting there thinking about eating more. She told me that the only way to avoid overeating was to get up and leave the table. Our defense against sins which appeal to the lust of the flesh is to flee. If David would have fled, he would have avoided the sin of fornication.

When Jesus was tempted, what method did he use. On each occasion he **quoted Scripture!** "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God," "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", "It is written, thou shalt serve the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou worship". When we are young, we need to store the Scriptures up in our hearts so that we will have it to call upon in the hour of temptation. (Proverbs 23:29-32).

Satan's mission is to steal, kill and destroy. I see him as Goliath, "Come unto me and I will give your flesh to the beast of the field and the fowl of the air". He will destroy our lives, he will take from us all that is of value. I am reminded of the woman who had the devils cast out of her. Her house was left empty swept and garnished, and more devils worse than the first came and filled her house. It takes more than just resisting temptation. Contrasting to Goliath who will give our flesh to the beast of the field and the fowls of the air, I see Jesus saying, "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". Faith in Christ is the only chance you stand in this life of keeping your life from being destroyed and all that is of value taken from you.

The Power of a Parent's Prayer

by Sis. Stacie J. Tucker
Tifton, Georgia

The Lord has been so good to me every step of my life of which I am completely undeserving. I feel like one reason God has been so gracious and merciful to me is due to my parents' prayers that have gone up on my behalf. And now that we have a son, I have realized the importance and urgent need of parents' prayers in the life of their child. There are many examples in the Bible of God blessing, healing, and touching a child in answer to a parent's prayer.

In Luke 8:41, Jairus' daughter was sick, and he begged Jesus to come to his house and heal her. When Jesus arrived at his house, she had already died! Now I am afraid I would have given up on Jesus right then and wonder why He hadn't answered my prayer! Well, Jesus did an even greater thing than healing her sickness! He made her alive again! Sometimes we may think a prayer is unanswered, but God may be waiting to answer it in an even mightier way than we expect!

In Matthew 15:22, a mother had a daughter who was possessed with an unclean spirit. As a parent, this would be worse to me than having a child with a physical sickness. She asked Jesus to cast this demonic spirit out of her daughter, but "he answered her not a word." And then the disciples told Jesus to send her away! She came again to Jesus and begged him to help her, and Jesus responded, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs." Now, I think I would have given up right there! First, it seemed Jesus ignored her, then the disciples asked Jesus to send her away, and then Jesus' response seemed to be indifferent and condescending. But this woman was full of faith, and responded, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." She kept persevering in her request! And finally Jesus responded, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter

was completely healed!

In Matthew 17:14, a father begged Jesus to heal his son with this sad description: "He is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." And Jesus granted his request, and "rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour." If that father had not asked Jesus to heal his son, it seems to me he would still be in that sad condition! The power of a parent's prayer!

In John 4:46, another father had a sick son who was at the point of death. And the father begged Jesus, "Come down ere my child die." And Jesus told him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." These examples show me the importance, responsibility, and power of parents' prayers in the life of their children!

I feel like God has used the faith of my parents to bring blessings into my life, especially since there have been many times when I have had so little faith! In Matthew 9:2, a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus by his friends so that He would heal him. I thought this verse was interesting: "And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of palsy; Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." So it wasn't just the paralyzed man's faith, but the faith of his friends that Jesus commended!

My husband and I had been married for nine years, and the Lord brought our son Nehemiah into our family through adoption all the way from the Philippines. I was full of faith through that whole process! I knew it was God's will to bring him into our family, and what a joy and blessing and delight he has been! After 10 years of marriage, we had not conceived (although we had a peace with that). We thought maybe we should bring another child into our family through adoption since the transition and process with Nehemiah was such a blessing. In Nehemiah's adoption, we felt God's hand leading us the entire way. However, as we began the

adoption process again for a second child, we did not feel that way as before, but we knew we wanted more children, so we figured we might as well try to adopt another child. (Now I know the reason we did not feel God leading us in the second adoption process as we did in Nehemiah's homecoming.) I had very, very little faith that I would ever conceive, and I had accepted that. In fact, I didn't even purchase any maternity insurance.

Well, surprise, surprise! After 10 ½ years of marriage and countless prayers sent heavenward by my parents, I found out that I was expecting a baby and was 6 weeks and 4 days along! I could not have been more shocked because I never thought it would happen! (I knew there had to be a really good reason for me to stop craving chocolate.) And then I realized that my parents' faithful prayers had finally been answered! I knew sometimes when my mama woke up in the middle of the night, she would pray for me to conceive. I know she prayed this without ceasing. She reminds me of the widow in the parable in Luke chapter 18 that kept going before the judge with her request. And finally, after coming to him time after time after time, the judge said he would grant her request, but only because she was wearying him! And Jesus said, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

I still stand amazed at the grace of God in my life! All parents should have an urgency within them to bring their children before the Lord God of heaven and beg for His protection, guidance, and Spirit in the lives of their children. Prayer does make a difference. My parents' prayers have made a difference in my life. Because of the prayers of my parents, I can say, "He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name!" (Luke 1:49)

The War Inevitable

by Patrick Henry

March 23, 1775

at the Old Church in Richmond

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as the abilities, of the very worthy gentleman who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom and slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason, toward my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss.

Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing.

We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have demonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free --if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending -- if we mean not basely to abandon the noble

struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained --we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight. An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which the enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God which presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable --and let it come! I repeat, sir, let it come!

It is in vain to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace --but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle! What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

Bible Reading Calendar for March

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Numbers 23,24,25	Mark 8:1-21
2	Numbers 26,27	Mark 8:22-38
3	Numbers 28,29	Mark 9:1-29
4	Numbers 30,31	Mark 9:30-50
5	Numbers 32,33	Mark 10:1-31
6	Numbers 34,35,36	Mark 10:32-52
7	Deut. 1,2	Mark 11:1-19
8	Deut. 3,4	Mark 11:20-33
9	Deut. 5,6,7	Mark 12:1-27
10	Deut. 8,9,10	Mark 12:28-44
11	Deut. 11,12,13	Mark 13:1-13
12	Deut. 14,15,16	Mark 13:14-37
13	Deut. 17,18,19	Mark 14:1-25
14	Deut. 20,21,22	Mark 14:26-50
15	Deut. 23,24,25	Mark 14:51-72

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Deut. 26,27	Mark 15:1-26
17	Deut. 28	Mark 15:27-47
18	Deut. 29,30	Mark 16
19	Deut. 31,32	Luke 1:1-23
20	Deut. 33,34	Luke 1:24-56
21	Josh. 1,2,3	Luke 1:57-80
22	Josh. 4,5,6	Luke 2:1-24
23	Josh. 7,8	Luke 2:25-52
24	Josh. 9,10	Luke 3
25	Josh. 11,12,13	Luke 4:1-32
26	Josh. 14,15	Luke 4:33-44
27	Josh. 16,17,18	Luke 5:1-16
28	Josh. 19,20	Luke 5:17-39
29	Josh. 21,22	Luke 6:1-26
30	Josh. 23,24	Luke 6:27-49
31	Judg. 1,2	Luke 7:1-30

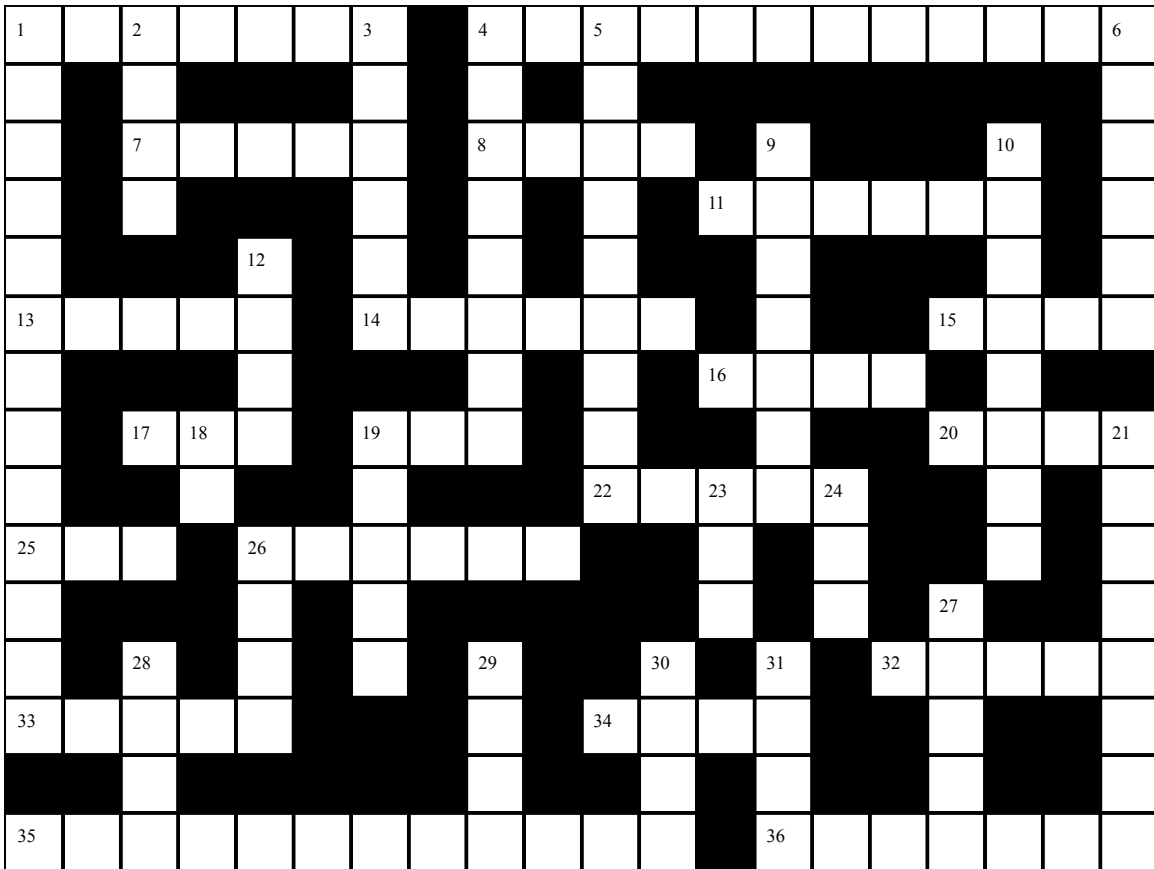
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE
FEBRUARY 09**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "And that they may _____ themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 5. "_____, but not forsaken;..." 7. "What time I am afraid, I will _____ in thee." 8. "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it _____ abundantly ." 11. "Blessed are they which do _____ and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." 13. "..._____ imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." 14. "Then the Lord _____ upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." 15. "..._____ down, but not destroyed." 16. "I understand more than the ancients, because I _____ thy precepts." 17. "And God saw that the wickedness of men _____ great in the earth;..." 19. "Happy is the _____ that findeth wisdom,..." 20. "My soul cleaveth unto the _____: quicken thou me according to thy word." 22. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of _____, I will fear no evil:..." 25. "Blessed is the man that walketh _____ in the counsel of the ungodly..." 26. "Finally, my brethren, be _____ In the Lord, and in the power of his might." 32. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I _____ not sin against thee." 33. "The thief cometh not, but for to _____, and to kill, and to destroy:..." 34. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of _____, and of a sound mind." 35. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and _____ me;..." 36. "For I am persuaded, that _____ death, nor life, nor angels... nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God,..."



DOWN

1. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink but _____ and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." 2. "And the Lord said, if I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the _____, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." 3. "... but _____ fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." 4. "For sin shall not have _____ over you:..." 5. "...we are _____, but not in despair;" 6. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall _____ thy paths." 9. "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime _____ to bondage." 10. "But we have this _____ in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 12. "Be not wise in thine own _____:..." 18. "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like _____ adder." 19. "He that followeth after righteousness and _____ findth life, righteousness, and honour." 21. "And he gathered them _____ into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." 23. "For we wrestle not against flesh _____ blood, but against principalities,..." 24. "... who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with _____." 26. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the _____:..." 27. "For thou wilt _____ my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." 28. "And Abraham drew _____, and said, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" 29. "We are troubled on every _____, yet not distressed:..." 30. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and _____." 31. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and _____ not to thine own understanding."

Their Son Came Home!

"Love is patient and kind..."

by Dr. Donald E. Wildmon, President

Tupelo, Mississippi

I ran across a story in my reading once which I wish to pass along to you. I think it has something of a moral in it.

Back during the Second World War, the parents of a sailor went for several weeks without hearing anything from their son. Finally, they gave up on their son and considered him a war victim. However, near the end of the war the parents, who lived in New Jersey, received a phone call from someone in San Diego, California. After a moment on the phone, the parents recognized the voice as that of their son. He was alive!

During the course of the conversation the son explained to his parents that for the past several months he had found it difficult to write because he had been taking care of a war victim. He told them that the person had been wounded in the war and had lost a leg, an arm, an eye, and part of his face.

His parents expressed concern over the poor sailor and then bragged on their son for taking care of him during all

those months. The boy then asked his parents for permission to bring the boy home to live with them. He explained that the boy didn't have another home nor anyone to care for him. His parents expressed their concern for the wounded sailor and also told their son that they thought it was very noble of him to want to bring the sailor home with him. But after some conversation, the parents expressed their desire to their son that he not bring the boy home with him. They simply didn't want the job of taking care of such a battle-scarred sailor. Their son said he understood their feelings and said that he would not bring the boy home. Expressing his love for the parents, the sailor son hung up.

You know, I guess it is hard to fulfill such a request as the sailor son made. For most of us don't want a disfigured person around the house, do we? None of us like to look at ugly things, and most of us judge a person's beauty by his physical appearance. We appreciate the good that those who are disfigured

have done. But we would just rather not have to be burdened with them around the house.

Many times we feel sorry for the physically handicapped. So we give some little something that requires no effort on our part and does them little good. But I think what the handicapped person wants more than anything else is **to be treated like a human being!**

The morning after they spoke with their son, the couple in New Jersey received a telegram from the Naval officials stating that their son had jumped from a window to his death. The parents couldn't understand why their son had reacted so to their request until the body arrived and the casket was opened. Their son had only one arm, one leg, one eye, and a badly disfigured face.

Maybe we should try a little harder to love those who want to be treated like a human being!