

Let's Worship Jesus!

by Elder W. A. Mullis
(deceased)

At this season of the year, I feel sure that all in our nation who truly believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of the Living God turn their hearts, minds and affections to the scriptures in the word of God that pertain to the Birth of Christ.

I would like for us to think for just a little while on the great privilege and honor that some of the people of God had in the days of the birth of Christ. We will only be able to touch briefly on two or three of these saints. First of all, let us consider Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary was a virgin, who was espoused to a man named Joseph. But before they had come together as husband and wife, she was found with child which was of the Holy Ghost. Mary was a virgin, but I am sure that she was not the only virgin in this world. God bestowed upon her as great an honor as any person could ever have. She was a virgin chosen of God to bring forth the Son of God into this world. The angel of God declared to her, "Thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." God made a choice that this particular virgin was to bring forth His son into this world. A very great honor, indeed, but Mary is not to be worshipped. She, along with all the other great men and women that we have a record of in God's Holy Word are to be honored, but never worshipped.

Next, let us think for a minute about the husband of Mary, whose name was Joseph. Surely he had one of the most marvelous experiences of all the saints who lived at the time of the birth of Christ! Joseph had learned that Mary was with child. As her husband,

he knew they had not come together as husband and wife. Yet she was with child! Surely Mary had told him of the experience which she had with the angel Gabriel and of the message the angel had delivered to her from God. Yet Joseph evidently did not believe that the child was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God. Please notice this very carefully, for if Mary could not convince Joseph that the child conceived within her was of the Holy Ghost, how can men today hope to convince anyone by their own preaching or testimony that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Joseph was not convinced until God Himself had revealed it to him. Listen to the words found in Matthew 1: 19-20: "Then Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Mary could not convince Joseph. God and God alone could do that, and so it is with every one even today that believes Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto us, but God and God alone. (See Matthew 16: 13-17).

Let us consider another man who received a very great honor in the days of the birth of Christ. There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon: The same was just and devout, and the scripture says that he was waiting for the consolation of Israel, that is the coming of the promised Messiah.

It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. What a great blessing this was in his life. Then he was led by the spirit of God into the temple, when Joseph and Mary brought in the Christ child to do for him according to the custom of the law, he, Simeon, took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God. Surely this must have been the happiest moment of this man's life, for he then said, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou has prepared before the face of all people." This man, Simeon, must have surely died in peace, after having had the great honor of holding his Lord and Savior in his arms.

In the same chapter of Luke, we are told of a widow whose name was Anna. She departed not from the temple, but served God night and day with the fastings and prayers. Anna came in as Simeon held the Christ child, and she gave thanks likewise unto the Lord. The scripture also tells us that she spake of Christ to all them in Jerusalem who looked for redemption. There must have been some in Jerusalem who were not looking for redemption or a redeemer. There are still some today who are not concerned about a redeemer or redemption. But to those of us who do believe in Christ as our Savior and Redeemer, may God give us the grace to keep this Christmas season completely unto the Lord, to the honor and glory of His great name.

May God bless each of you.

***"THIS KNOW ALSO, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS
PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME."***

(II Timothy 3:1)

Go Forward

by Elder Don McWilliams
Brownsburg, Indiana

"Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord." (I Chronicles 28:20).

This passage was spoken by David to Solomon, concerning the building of the temple, encouraging his son not to be fearful of such an enormous task. The temple of God that Solomon built was a masterpiece, a wonder to behold, first and foremost because **God gave the design!**

Though that temple was built of stone, cedar wood, and hard, inanimate objects, I feel we can look to Ephesians 2: 19-22, where we find that **we** are now a living temple of God. "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth

unto an holy temple in the Lord: **In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.**"

The purpose of the stone temple has passed with all its types and shadows as a picture of the Christ that was to come. When Jesus came to this earth, God was in the body as we find in Hebrews 10:5, "A body hast thou prepared for me."

When the work of Christ was done, he ascended back to His Father in heaven. As was referred to in Ephesians 2:22, **our** bodies are builded together for a **habitation of God** through the Spirit. Now look again at the original Scripture. Are we sometimes slack in preparing ourselves for the habitation of God? When we feel He has a work for us to do, are we fearful we won't be able to complete it? God has never given one single, solitary individual person a job to do in this earthly kingdom of His without first giving him the grace to finish the job.

Consider Nehemiah and the great

task he felt led to do in rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Opposition and discouragement was at an all time high. Sanballat and Tobiah were greatly opposed to this rebuilding. However, Nehemiah had great faith in God's guiding hand and found grace to carry on with his mission in the face of discouragement!

In Nehemiah 4:6, we find, "the people had a mind to work." When God gives us a mind to work in His Kingdom, we are to go forward regardless of opposition or discouragement. God's word warns us that Satan will always put pitfalls and stumbling blocks in our path. Again, from the book of Ephesians, we are admonished to put on the whole armor of God to stand against Satan's wiles.

I've heard over and over when some large undertaking comes before the church, "We just won't be able to do it." "O ye of little faith!" Pray that God will give us grace and courage to prepare our bodies for His service and habitation for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

"Remember Them That Are In Bonds"

by Elder William M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia

The word of God makes several exhortations or commands in Hebrews, chapter 13, and **each** one is of utmost importance. But the central theme of each command is BROTHERLY LOVE! In Hebrews, chapter 13, beginning with the first verse, we find these words recorded:

1. "Let brotherly love continue!"
2. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unaware."
3. "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."

Verses one and two are often heard quoted. "Let brotherly love continue." We need to show more brotherly love! I Corinthians 12:25 says, "**That there should be no schism in the body;** but that the members should have the same care one for another." Regardless of how you feel you have been offended by someone, do not let pride and the devil destroy your life! "**LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE!**" Verse two says, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." **ENTERTAIN STRANGERS.** Strangers can be people you have just met for the first time; or they can be people to whom you no longer feel close! One-time friends can today be strangers; **Entertain** them! (See Matthew 5:46, 47.) It is not uncommon to entertain friends and relatives. We love them and want to be with them and enjoy their fellowship. **But how often do we entertain strangers?** During this week, entertain a stranger, even if it is a person you once knew very well, but have ceased to have fellowship with him. Entertain strangers!

Now look at verse 3 of Hebrews 13. "**Remember them that are in bonds,**

as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." Read and re-read this verse in its entirety! Meditate on the deep meaning of this command!

Let us concentrate our thoughts on the first six words of the verse: "**REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS.**"

"**Remember them that are in bonds!**" The natural tendency of mankind is to remember and think about our own problems, ailments, and afflictions. We find ourselves sometimes depressed because of our difficult lot in life. We remember our own times of trouble, and if someone starts telling about their sickness, or hospital confinement, or financial trouble, sometimes we hope they will hurry and finish so we can tell about how much worse our problems are, or have been.

Listen again to the text: **REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS!!!** Literally, a bond is a shackle or a band like which is put on a prisoner. You remember the Apostle Paul was thrown into prison on several occasions because of preaching the gospel. Physical oppression was experienced by most of the apostles and many Christians through the years! Paul went forth **knowing** that bonds and afflictions were going to come! (See Acts 20:22, 23.) He speaks much about the bonds or shackles that were put upon him as he wrote to the Church at Philippi. (See Philippians 1:7-16). Then he asked the Church at Colossi to **REMEMBER HIS BONDS!** He was asking for them to pray for him as he was in bonds. (Colossians 4:3-18). Many saints have lain in a cold, dark, wet prison, bound in shackles and chains, because of their faithfulness to God. How thankful we should be for religious freedom in our nation today!!!

Though we may not know of individuals who are in physical bonds today, there are multitudes who are plagued with disabilities, impediments, or hardships! They are the ones we should be REMEMBERING today!

**THEY ARE IN BONDS!
REMEMBER THEM THAT
ARE IN BONDS!**

If we would **concentrate** on REMEMBERING THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS, there would be many saints **in bonds** who would be comforted and strengthened in their afflictions! Think of it!!! Our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in BONDS will be rejoicing and praising God because this one verse was upon the hearts and minds of each of us! You see, we cannot meditate and really think about those that are in bonds without DOING something for them! If we can really REMEMBER them that are in bonds, and not help them, we are a useless, rotten, hunk of flesh that is good for nothing but to be trodden under the foot of man!

**REMEMBER THEM THAT
ARE IN BONDS!**

Do not start thinking about your own afflictions or problems. Regardless of your circumstances or condition; no matter how difficult **your** times are, REMEMBER **THERE ARE OTHERS** who are worse than you.

You might be at home sick and unable to go anywhere, but REMEMBER **THOSE WHO ARE IN BONDS** in the hospitals, or nursing homes who do not have the privilege of being at home!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!!!

There are patients in nursing homes who are not so SELF-PITYING that they sulk away in their problems. Every nursing home seems to have patients who are obeying the Scriptural command: REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS! And they go visit and help

other patients.

My heart rejoices in nursing home patients helping other patients. **There** is a picture of one who is in bonds helping someone else in bonds! **WE ALL HAVE BONDS** of one kind or another, but we all have the ability **to help** those who are in bonds!

There was a sister to one of the members of our church who was a beautiful example of **REMEMBERING THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS!** This lady, this dear saint of God, lay in a nursing home, unable to get out of bed. She was unable to even feed herself, almost blind, and hard of hearing; oh, brethren, **SHE WAS IN BONDS! But she helped others** who were in bonds! In spite of all her problems and troubles, though her body was practically gone, **SHE REMEMBERED THEM THAT WERE IN BONDS!**

You might say, "Well, what in the world could an invalid who couldn't send cards, or call, or visit, or teach, or go to church, or help anyone financially, or prepare meals; what in the world could she do for anyone?"

SHE PRAYED for those who were in bonds! **SHE PRAYED!** That's all she was capable of doing. **SHE DID ALL SHE COULD POSSIBLY DO!** That is all that was required of her.

Now we might say, "Well, I pray for those who have problems: those that are in bonds." Well, if you cannot write, or walk, or talk, or feed yourself; if you are totally incapacitated, then praying may be all that is required of you.

But if you can go buy your own groceries, or go fishing, or go to work, **PRAYING IS NOT all GOD REQUIRES** of You! Remember Luke 12:48 says, "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required!" God requires His people to **SERVE HIM!**

Are you a religious person?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world!" (James 1 :27) There is God's

definition of religion!

Again, **examine yourself** and see if you are a **religious person**. Are you keeping yourself unspotted from the world? **DO YOU LIE, OR CHEAT, OR STEAL ?**

Are you ever seen in places that a Christian should not go?

Do you have ill feelings toward someone?

ARE YOU VISITING LIKE YOU SHOULD? Again, I ask, are you a religious person? **REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS!**

In writing to the saints at Rome, Paul says, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15: 10).

Please turn in your Bibles now and read Matthew 25:33-46. Read these verses carefully and pray for God to bless you with wisdom and understanding as you read.

We see a picture in these verses of God judging His people. In the judgments (as can also be seen in the two previous parables of this same chapter), God is blessing the faithful, obedient, doers of His word to enter the **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**. Those who did not take heed and look for the coming of their Lord, were cast away and punished. **Wilful disobedience** will always result in a **fiery indignation** which **shall devour the adversary!** (See Hebrews 10:26-31).

Were the ones who were cast into the fire (as recorded in Matthew 25:41) getting drunk? Were they committing adultery? Were they killing or stealing? **NO!** They were **cast into the everlasting fire because they did not help those in need!!!** They did not remember them that are in bonds!

Listen again to the words in verses 41-46. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, **ye cursed**, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a **stranger**, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me

not: sick, and in **prison**, and **ye visited me not**. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me! **And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:** but the righteous into life eternal." (Matthew 25:41-46).

In verse forty-three, Jesus said, "I was a **stranger** and ye took me not in!:" **Be not forgetful** to entertain **strangers!** How long has it been since you entertained a stranger?

He goes on in verse forty-three to say he was "**sick, and in prison**, and ye visited me not!" There are many kinds of prisons! There is the prison of ignorance! Have you visited someone in the prison of ignorance this week? What about today? There is the prison of loneliness! Have you visited someone in that prison this week? There are prisons of doubt, and prisons of fear --and the list goes on!

If Jesus Christ was in a hospital in your hometown, would you go to see Him?

If Jesus was in a nursing home in your community, how often would you take Him something?

Would you neglect and ignore your Lord and Saviour today? Have you neglected Him already? What is the result of **NOT REMEMBERING THEM WHICH ARE IN BONDS?** The first and great commandment is Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. The second is like unto it, Thou shalt **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.**

"LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE"

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares!"

"**REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS!!!** As bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being

yourselves also in the body,"
During this coming week, REMEMBER THEM THAT ARE IN BONDS!

VISIT THEM; HELP THEM; FEED THEM; LOVE THEM!
Then, when you have done it this

week, do it every day the rest of your life.

The Perfect Church

submitted by Sister Mildred Stanley
Moneth, Ohio

If you should find the perfect church,
Without fault and smear,
For goodness sake,
don't join that church,
You'd spoil the atmosphere.

To tread upon such Holy ground;
You'd be a misfit there.

What fools we are to flee our post,
In that unfruitful search,
To find at last where problems loom,
There God builds His church.

If you should find the perfect church,
Where all anxieties cease,
Then pass it by, let joining it,
You'd mar the masterpiece

But since no perfect church exists,
Composed of imperfect men,
Then let's cease
looking for that church,
And love the church we're in.

So let's keep working in the church,
Until the resurrection,
And then we'll join
God's perfect church,
Without an imperfection.

If you should find the perfect church,
Then don't you ever dare,

Of course, it's not a perfect church,
That's simple to discern.
But you and I and all of us
Could cause the tide to turn.

Anonymous

SPREAD THE TRUTH

We receive numerous letters from people who read THE TRUMPET OF TRUTH in hospitals, doctors offices, nursing homes, etc. Will you distribute ten in your community each month. If you'll make that commitment, we'll be happy to send you the extra copies each month! Let us hear from you today!

*The easiest thing in all the world is to flow with the tide.
Anybody can float downstream. It takes a real man, a real woman to go against the tide,
against the wave of popular opinion. Raymond Barber*

*Courage is not having the strength to go on;
it is going on when you don't have the strength.
Theodore roosevelt*

The Ministry of Christ

by Elder W. H. Durrence
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At best, we know only scattered bits and pieces of the life and labors of our Lord. To those of us who love Him, they are precious gems of truth that glitter and shine in the darkness and ignorance that surround most of His life. Many Bible scholars believe that Jesus died at approximately thirty-three years of age. Most of that which is written concerning Christ deals with His public ministry and sufferings.

As we begin our study, let us briefly look at four stages of His existence which are more obscure than His ministry. (1) The earliest knowledge we find reveals Him as the Pre-existing Christ. We know that Jesus did exist with God the Father, long before He was born of the virgin Mary and had a body of flesh (John 1:1,5). (2) We are also able to view the Christ of Prophecy. Throughout the Old Testament, writers under the inspiration of God foretold the coming Messiah (Isaiah 53). (3) We may even have glimpses of the Christ of Obscurity. Scriptures record the prenatal events such as the angelic visitation to Mary and Joseph. Later shepherds heard the angels herald His birth, as He was born in Bethlehem. Following this hallowed event was His presentation in the temple where He was seen by Simeon and Anna. Then came the visit of the wise men followed by the flight to Egypt. After the return to Nazareth, we know nothing until He appeared again in the temple at age twelve. Afterwards, there were again many silent years. We would like to know more of the events that transpired in that period, but God chose not to record them in the Bible. During approximately eighteen more silent years, Christ grew into manhood. These were evidently years of preparation. (4) When he was about thirty years of age, the public ministry

of our Lord began. This fourth phase of the existence of Christ shows Him as the Ministering Christ. Of the remaining records of the life of Christ, about half deal with His ministry.

While the ministry of Christ lasted only about three years, more is recorded about those three years than about the previous thirty years. As we study the ministry of Christ, it can be conveniently broken down into three parts: (1) the year of inauguration, (2) the year of popularity, and (3) the year of opposition. We cannot give attention to all events of the ministry of Christ, but we should consider some of the high points along the way.

The first year of His ministry was the year of inauguration, during which our Lord began His ministry by being baptized (Mt. 3:13-17). Following His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness where He was tempted for forty days (Mt. 4:1-11). Shortly thereafter, Jesus performed the first miracle of His ministry by turning water into wine at the wedding feast (John 2:1-11). He later cleansed the temple (John 2:13,17) and then gave a discourse to Nicodemus on the new birth (John 3:1,21). The other miracle of this period was the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54). Following the inauguration were the years of popularity and opposition. Since these last two periods form the mainstream of the public ministry of Jesus, let us look at the varied works and teachings which filled those two years of our Lord's ministry.

During the ministry of our Lord, there were many who were miraculously healed by Him. Some of these incidents are listed with Scripture references for your further study. Jesus healed: a demoniac (Luke 4:33,37), Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39), a leper (Luke 5:

12,13), a paralytic (Luke 5: 18,26), the man at the pool (John 5:2-9), a withered hand (Luke 6:6,10), many near Galilee (Mt. 12:15), the centurion's servant (Luke 7:2-10), a dumb demoniac (Luke 11:14), two Gergesenes' demoniacs (Mt. 8:28,34), the woman afflicted with an issue of blood (Mt. 9:20-22), two blind men (Mt. 9:27,31), a dumb man (Mt. 9:32-34), the daughter of the Syrophenician woman (Mk. 7:24-30), the deaf and dumb man (Mk. 7:32-37), the blind man (Mk. 8:22-26), the demoniac son (Mt. 17: 14,21), ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19), the man blind from birth (John 9:1,41), the woman bowed over with infirmities (Luke 13:10-17), the man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6), and Bartimaeus the blind man (Mk. 10:46,52). In addition to these listed, there were many others; for "...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

In addition to the miraculous healings, there were also many parables which He taught as He preached the Word of God. Often His discourses on various subjects included parables as illustrations. Some of the most familiar have been selected for future reference and study. The parables were: The Sower (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23), The Wheat and Tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43), The Mustard Seed (Mt. 13:31-32), The Leaven (Mt. 13:33), The Hidden Treasure (Mt. 13:44), The Goodly Pearl (Mt. 13:45-46), The Fishing Net (Mt. 13:47-51), The Unmerciful Servant (Mt. 18:23-35), The Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16), The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), The Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-20), The Wise Steward (Luke 12:41-48), The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9), The Great Supper (Luke 14:7-24),

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7), The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), The Prodigal Sons (Luke 15:11-32), The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13), The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-9), The Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14), The Ten Pounds (Luke 19:11-27), and The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-16). While all these are great messages, none can equal the greatest sermon which Jesus preached, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). No wonder that it was written "...For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:29).

His authority was manifested not only by the healings and parables but also by many other miracles which our Lord performed. Peter said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know..." (Acts 2:22). Our Lord performed the miracles of calming the stormy sea (Mt. 8:24-27) and walking upon the water (Mt. 14:22-33), proving Himself unquestionably the Master

of the universe. He fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes (Mt. 14:15-21). Later He fed another gathering of four thousand with seven loaves and a few fishes (Mt. 15:32-38). No wonder He taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6: 11). He proved Himself able to feed us.

He was able not only to feed the hungry, but also to raise the dead to life again. Jesus said, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21). He repeatedly proved His ability to do so, by raising the widow's son (Luke 7:12-16), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:41-56), and finally Lazarus (John 11:1-16). He even took life again after His death by crucifixion (John 10: 18), thereby assuring us of the resurrection of our physical bodies at His second coming (1 Cor. 15:17-20). He was also transfigured before His disciples that they and we might have a glimpse of our future state in glory (Mt. 17:1-9).

In conclusion, I readily acknowledge that not all aspects of His ministry have been covered. John said, "And there are also many other things which Je-

sus did, the which, if they should be written everyone, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25). Though many events were left untouched by the writers of Scripture, I have endeavored to cover some of the most important of those which have been recorded and have cited scriptural passages for your future reference and study. I admonish you to read the biblical record of these events so that you may rejoice again and again in the ministry of Christ. There are many other wonderful happenings such as Christ's forgiving the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11), so that we too may hope in God's forgiveness of our sins. Although His ministry lasted only about three years, these were important years to God and should be of special interest to us. The events of His short ministry were divinely recorded to bless human hearts throughout the ages. In time and for eternity, the ministry of Jesus Christ meets the needs of God's elect. My prayer is that those of us who love Him may be found serving Him until He comes again or until we go by death to be with Him.

Grow in Knowledge

1. "Offer unto God _____; and pay thy vows unto the most High."
2. "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and unto his courts with praise: be thankful unto _____, and bless his name."
3. "And when ye will _____ a sacrifice of thanksgiving unto the Lord, offer it at your own will."
4. "But I will _____ unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed..."
5. "Be _____ for nothing: but in everything by prayers and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."
6. "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the _____ unto our God."
7. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will _____ him with thanksgiving."
8. "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful _____ unto him with psalms."
9. "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and _____ his works with rejoicing."
10. "Continue in _____, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

He Pleased God

by Elder Greg Phillips
Chattanooga, Tennessee

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5 KJV).

Among the heroic saints listed in Hebrews, chapter eleven, one common characteristic shines forth—faith. "Through faith" or "By faith" precedes the account of the deeds these men and women did. Among these listed, Enoch stands unique in that "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death..." The Greek word rendered translated implies a sudden removal from mortality without death to immortality. He did not die, but God took him to a state of blessedness without obliging him to pass through death.

Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He has, even today, the testimony of Scripture; the Greek perfect tense implies that this testimony continues still: "he has been testified of."

He had also this testimony from God in his own conscience. God communicated to Enoch that he was pleased with his devotion. Like those faithful servants in Jesus' parable of the talents, Enoch heard the Lord say, "...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21, 23).

Enoch had a positive testimony from God, and not merely an absence of guilt. Many seem to assume that God is pleased with their life because they feel no guilt nor condemnation of conscience. We can be deceived by our own heart. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

The Apostle Paul said, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the

latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (1 Timothy 4:1-2). As faith and a good conscience are joined, so hypocrisy (that is, unbelief,) and a bad conscience. The English Version, "seared," implies their extreme insensibility; the effect of cauterizing being to deaden sensation. The Greek, however, primarily means "branded" with the consciousness of crimes committed against their better knowledge and conscience, like so many scars burnt in by a branding iron. After numerous "brandings" the conscience becomes unfeeling, therefore the absence of a guilty conscience is not necessarily an indication that God is pleased with the individual.

God was actually pleased with Enoch himself. In Ephesians 1: 3-6, Paul wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:3-6). The Greek word accepted, according to Strong's Dictionary means to grace, that is, induce with special honor:--make accepted, be highly favored. Those who are in Christ are, by grace, highly favored and thus pleasing to God in a legal sense.

Enoch doubtless pleased God in this sense. In addition, he pleased God because of his personally seeking God's will and walking therein. Genesis 5:22 tells us that he "walked with God." This denotes a state of friendship between God and him, and of course

implies that his conduct was pleasing to God. Amos asked, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). The answer is obvious. There can be no walking together without agreement.

To walk with God, is to set God always before us, and as those that are always under his eye. It is to live a life of communion with God, and to make God's word our rule, and his glory our aim, in all our actions; it is to make it our constant care and endeavor in every thing to please God.

Faith was the basis upon which his communion was derived. His faith was mature, full and rich by reason of his constant communion with God. Faith moved him to seek communion with God, and communion with God strengthened his faith.

Enoch was, as Elijah, "a man subject to like passions as we are" (James 5:17). That is to say, that he was human as we are with human faults and failures. Yet, he pleased God. Every born-again child of God has the ability, by faith, to please God.

The name, Enoch, signifies to instruct, to initiate, to dedicate. From his conduct we are authorized to believe he was early instructed in the things of God, initiated into the worship of his Maker, and dedicated to his service. This gives us a strong clue as to the requirements for pleasing God. Unless we are instructed in the things of God, initiated into the worship of Him, and dedicated to His service we cannot please Him.

The first requirement, however, for pleasing God is faith. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). One must believe that He is, that God exists. That seems very obvious, but many give mental assent to the fact of God's existence without any firm conviction of the fact. We cannot

come to Him in an acceptable manner if we doubt his existence. We do not see Him, but we must believe that He is; we cannot form in our mind a correct image of God, but this should not prevent a conviction that there is such a Being. The declaration here implies more than that. There should be a general persuasion of the truth that there is a God. It is necessary that we have this belief in lively exercise in the act of drawing near to him, and that we should realize that we are actually in the presence of the all-seeing JEHOVAH.

It is necessary as well to have a strong conviction "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." If we do not believe that God will hear and answer our prayers, there can be no encouragement to call upon him. The desire of the reward may seem to many to be a poor motive for seeking God, but what is the reward? "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29). "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). The reward is God Himself. When we seek Him with all our heart, we are rewarded with the manifest presence of God and communion and fellowship with Him. God is not only the rewarder, but the reward. "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1). David said, "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot" (Psalms 16:5).

The writer of Hebrews said, "...he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Moses said, "...thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." God, through Jeremiah, said, "...ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Some seek God in a casual, half-hearted manner and cannot find God. They conclude that God cannot be found. Some seek God with all their heart, but when He is not immediately found, they think God has failed them. We must diligently seek Him, in assurance that He may be

found, and seek until we find Him.

To seek God, and thus to please God, there must be a commitment, a determination of the mind and the will, on the part of the individual. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Luke adds, daily (Luke 9:23); not once, but all the time. Jesus also said, "...he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:38). Those who do not take up his cross is not only unworthy of Christ, he is displeasing to Christ.

The principles of the God-pleasing Christian life are established in Jesus' words. There must first be a sincere desire to belong to Christ. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me..." Will in this passage means to be willing; to choose or prefer. It denotes a deliberate choice.

We must then renounce self-dependence, and selfish pursuits: "Let him deny himself." We cannot depend upon our own power, nor can we seek our own will. We must surrender to God our will, affections, body, and soul. We must not seek our own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all, and lay down our life also, if required. The life of disciples of Christ is one of self-denial. We should consider all crosses, all things grievous to flesh and blood, as opportunities of embracing God's will at the expense of our own.

We must next embrace the condition which God has appointed, and bear the troubles and difficulties we may meet when walking the Christian road: "Let him take up his cross." Modern religion says, "Just accept Jesus and He will give you your heart's desire." There message directly contradicts the words of Paul, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12). The Christian walk is not always easy, but it is always blessed.

Finally, we are to imitate Jesus, "Let him follow me." When Christ called his disciples, His word of command was, "Follow me." A true disciple of Christ is one that follows him as the sheep after the shepherd, the servant after

his master, the soldiers after their captain. To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe his doctrines, to uphold his cause, to obey his precepts, and to do it though it leads to the cross.

"And follow me" is in a verb tense that means keep on following. It is a lifetime commitment, and the constant aim of life. Enoch walked with God 300 years before his translation.

Paul prayed for the church at Colosse, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Colossians 1:10-13). Their goal was to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." That is, they were to walk so as to please him in all things. They were to endeavor not in one thing only, or in few things, but in all areas of their lives to find acceptance with their Lord and Master.

To the Thessalonians Paul said, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more"(1 Thessalonians 4:1). It ought to be the aim and ambition of every Christian to please God and to be accepted of him. We should not be men-pleasers, nor flesh-pleasers, but should walk so as to please God. God sets no bounds to the communications of his grace and Spirit to them that are faithful. And as there are no bounds to the graces, so there should be no bounds to the exercise of those graces. No man can ever feel that he loves God too much, or that he loves man too much for Christ's sake.

The age in which Enoch lived was undoubtedly one of great wickedness. He appears to have spent his life in publicly reproving a sinful generation, and in warning them of the approaching judgment, (See Jude 1:14,16). There

could have been no greater motivation for him to stand firm than to have "this testimony, that he pleased God."

Enoch's experience shows that God regards his friends, and that their fidel-

ity and holy living please him; and that in the midst of a wicked and a scoffing world, it is possible to live a life that pleases God. The conduct of this holy man, therefore, is an encouragement

to us to do our duty, though we stand alone; and to defend the truth, though all who live with us upon the earth deny and ridicule it.

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------|----------------|
| 1. Thanksgiving | Psalm 50:14 | 6. Harp | Psalm 147:7 |
| 2. Him | Psalm 100:4 | 7. Magnify | Psalm 69:30 |
| 3. Offer | Leviticus 22:29 | 8. Noise | Psalm 95:2 |
| 4. Sacrifice | Jonah 2:9 | 9. Declare | Psalm 107:22 |
| 5. Careful | Philippians 4:6 | 10. Prayer | Colossians 4:2 |

A Mother's Presence

submitted by Sis. Vicki Raines
Thomaston, Georgia

And the children said, "You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates." And they stood and watched her as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a memory. She is a living presence..."

Your Mother is always with you... She's the whisper of the leaves as you walk down the street; she's the smell of bleach in your freshly laundered socks; she's the cool hand on your brow when you're not well. Your Mother lives inside your laughter. And she's crystallized in every tear drop. She's the place you came from, your first home; and she's the map you follow with every step you take. She's your first love and your first heartbreak, and nothing on earth can separate you.

Not time, not space...not even death

Home is where your story begins.

Author unknown

*This is all the inheritance I give to my dear family.
The religion of Christ will give them one which will make them rich indeed.
Patrick Henry*

Purposes of the Gospel

Profitable...Perfecting...Good Works

by Elder W. M. Mullis
Waycross, Georgia
(2nd in a series)

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable** for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all **good works**” (II Timothy 3:16,17).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God!

The Bible is the word of God. Though some only view it as the compilation of the writings of men, it is in fact the Holy Word of God. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:20,21). Some people actually use some portions of the Bible as an excuse not to carry out other portions of God’s word. There are no contradictions in the word of God. Taking the words of Jesus as an excuse for not following the words of Paul is a gross distortion of the truth. We must always seek God’s guidance in order to be able to rightly divide the word of truth, and see how it all harmonizes.

The Apostle Paul thanked God for the saints at Thessalonica because they did not hear his preaching merely as the words of men, but as the word of God! “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (I Thessalonians 2:13). May God help us all to understand that the Bible is the word of God, and it effectually works

in those who really believe it is the word of God! We state in our Articles of Faith, “We believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (in English, we believe the King James translation to be the best) to be the inspired word of God, and that they alone are to govern God’s people both in faith and practice.” God inspired His Holy Word to be written to His honor and glory, and for the good of His people. It is a spiritual message, from the spiritual God, to His spiritual people.

The word of God “is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness!”

It is profitable, beneficial, for our good, and very useful! If we realized how profitable it really is for us, we would all spend much more time in diligent study of His Holy Word. I Samuel 3:1 says, “The word of the Lord was precious in those days.” In those days, the people of God realized how profitable His word was to them. They learned about God through His word. They also learned what God required of them in their daily lives. The word of God was precious, of great value, dear to their hearts, and an important part of their lives. The more we learn about the importance of God’s word, and the more we see how it can be very beneficial in our lives, the more we will say, “The word of God is profitable!”

It is profitable for doctrine. What is doctrine? The word “doctrine” simply means “teaching”. Biblical doctrines are teachings from God. How wonderful it is to be able to actually be able to look at the teachings from God. We are not interested in the teachings of men, or the commandments of men, but in the teachings, statutes, and command-

ments from God. Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for holding to the traditions of men and the doctrines of men, but ignoring the doctrines and commandments of God.

“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? ...But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:3,9). There are fundamental doctrines (teachings pertaining to the eternal salvation of God’s people), and there are practical doctrines (teachings which tell us how to live our daily lives and have fellowship with God while we live here in this world.) May God help us to study His word to be able to know the difference in the traditions and doctrines of men, and the true doctrines of God.

The word of God is profitable for reproof. Reproof is defined as rebuke and conviction. Usually when one is reproofed, he is confronted with sin in his life. Jonah was reproofing the Ninevites. Jesus was often reproofing the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites. From time to time, we all need reproof from the word of God. We need to look at our lives in the mirror of God’s word, and we will see that there are areas we need to change, be reproofed, to save us from the error of our way.

The word of God is also profitable for correction. Correction is referring to improvement of life and character. Sometimes, our beliefs and thoughts are not in harmony with truth. Therefore we need correcting in our beliefs. By comparing our beliefs to the word of God, we sometimes find they are not the same. We need to change our beliefs and actions to conform to the

word of God! When in error, we need to be corrected, and the word of God is profitable for correction!

Correction is referring to "improvement of life and character." Sometimes, our beliefs and thoughts are not in harmony with truth. Therefore we need correcting in our beliefs. By comparing our beliefs to the word of God, we sometimes find they are not the same. We need to change our beliefs and actions to conform to the word of God! When in error, we need to be corrected, and the word of God is profitable for correction! To me, correction is much less intense than reproof. Correction usually has reference to addressing an issue about which someone has no understanding. One might simply not know the Bible taught something, and they need to be corrected by gently, prayerfully showing them the truth in the word of God. Many of God's dear children know nothing about election, predestination, and the difference between the kingdom of heaven and eternal heaven. They need correcting or teaching. Often, there are new people who come to worship with us who do not know about disciplining their children, do not understand church discipline, and do not understand God disciplining His children. Their concept of God and love are very distorted. They need correcting. The only tool of real value in correcting God's people is for them to see what God says. Our opinions do not matter. One person's thoughts and feelings are as good as another's. However, when we look at the word of God, THAT is the true authority whereby we are to govern our lives. When our ways differ from God's ways, then we need correction from the word of God. It is profitable, good for correction.

The word of God is profitable for instruction in righteousness. As Christians, there are many teachings in the word of God that show us the things God would have us to be doing. Right ways to talk, to walk, to think, to feel in our hearts are set forth in the word of

God. We need instruction in righteousness because our ways are completely contrary to God's ways. If left to our own understanding, we would always do things the wrong way. We need instructions from the Master builder. Just as we sometimes ignore instructions for putting material things like toys together, and they do not work correctly, we need instructions for our personal lives, our families, the church, and our nation. God's instructions for righteousness are of vital importance to our success and fellowship with Him each day. Thank God He has given us His instruction manual, the Bible. In building the tabernacle, God told Moses, "...See ...that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5). God gave him a pattern or instructions to follow. He has given us a pattern or instructions for righteousness. Thank God for Him instructing us in righteousness in His Holy word. May we use His instructions for our good and His glory!

All Scripture is given "That the man of God may be perfect."

Notice carefully that the word of God is given "that the man of God may be perfect." The Bible is not given to cause people to be born of the Spirit of God, not given to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, and not given for those who are not God's people. The word of God is given for the man of God. Only the people of God who have already been born of the Spirit of God are able to hear, believe, and understand the word of God. They are the only ones who can "profit" from the word of God. The Bible is a spiritual message, from the spiritual God, to His spiritual people

When God has quickened one of His chosen ones, that child of God needs to grow, needs to improve, needs to change his lifestyle, needs "perfecting" in order to live a life that will honor God in this world. Thus, the word of God is given that the man of God may be perfect. Hopefully we all understand that

in this life, we will never be absolutely perfect. We will only be absolutely perfect when we are changed by God before we enter the eternal heaven, conformed to the image of His Son. In the eternal heaven, we will be absolutely perfect, but not until then. However, God's people can reach a perfection while we live here on the earth. The word of God says Noah was "perfect in his generations" (see Genesis 6:9). "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). Were these men really perfect? Yes, but not absolutely perfect! There is a perfection we can reach when we follow God's word. In fact, one of the purposes of preaching the word of God is for the "perfecting of the saints" (Ephesians 4:11,12).

In the letter to the saints at Philippi, Paul made a clear distinction between the perfection we will not be given until the eternal heaven, and the perfection we can attain now. He speaks of absolute perfection which he had not reached in Philippians 3:12 when he says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." He then speaks of the perfection we can attain by serving the Lord when he says in verse 15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded." There are those children of God who follow the word of God and are already perfect in their generations. They know they will never achieve absolute perfection here in this life. But, unless we set the high standard of continuously reaching forth, pressing on the upward way each day, we will not ever be found growing and going on unto perfection. What a blessing it is that God has given us His Holy word "that the man of God may be perfect."

The Scriptures, the word of God, the gospel is given that the man of God may be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

"Thoroughly," within and without, completely, thoroughly we know all the

good works God would have us to be doing while we live here because He has told us everything we are to be doing in His Holy word! God judges His people according to their works while they live here in the earth. We are commanded to maintain good works.

What are some of the things God tells us are "good works?" In the book of James, verses 25-27, we find these words: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Look at some of the "good works" mentioned here: studying the Bible, doing what the Bible says, bridling our tongue, visiting, and keeping ourselves morally clean. The Scriptures tell us about so many good works we can do to serve the Lord and please Him. By looking at

Matthew 25:34-40, we can see many more good works described by Jesus. The important thing to remember is that we must study the word of God in order to know what He says are good works. We cannot lean to our own understanding or just do what feels right or good.

Sometimes, God's people are busy doing works they think are good, but are not actually pleasing to God at all. For example, churches often have fund-raising events, bake sales, garage sales, and other things to raise money to help the financial condition of the church. Where does the word of God ever call for such things? What causes the church to need more money? Greed and covetous among the members of the church often keep them from giving as the word of God declares they should. The only scriptural authority for money to be brought into the church is through tithes and offerings. (See Matthew 23:23; I Corinthians 9:7-14; 16:1,2; II Corinthians 9:6-14; I Timothy 5:17,18.) When the people of God do not do as He describes they should, other substitutes are not good works. We cannot alter

God's method of bringing in the money necessary for the church to function as she should. Jesus condemns those who turn the house of God into a house of merchandise. Though it is often done through much zeal, God says "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (See John 2:13-17.) Through ignorance of the word of God, the people of God often are doing things they think please God, but they are not. It is important to search the Scriptures to find out if what we are doing is exactly the way God says it should be done.

Why has He given us the Scriptures? "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." May God help us all to know what the good works are, then may we look to Him for the strength and grace to do His good works.

We have looked at one of the purposes of the word of God as described in the Scripture. The Lord willing, we will continue a series of studies over the next several months considering what God says are the purposes of the gospel, the word of God, the Bible, the Scriptures. Thank the Lord for His Holy word!

Precious Promises

by Sis. Kim Kiser
Loganville, Georgia

*Knock and it shall be opened to you
Is His precious word to me.
My Savior, my Jesus, who died upon that tree.
Buried, then risen. He took my punishment, so
Eternity I may spend with Him.
Righteousness I received by His blood,
Love so great, a gift so freely given.
Yet, even now, until I see His glorious face,
Know I, that I can find Him
In my prayers and in my thoughts.
Seek and ye shall find
Exhorts my Lord, and I
Rejoice with Him in His kingdom here on earth.*

Homophobia

by Dr. Chip Woodruff
Douglas, Georgia

Today, our society says that any sex act is acceptable as long as nobody gets hurt. However, in the long run (and often in the short run) sin hurts people, individuals, families, and whole societies. Blind, ignorant & foolish is the people who assume they can disregard God's standards of decency and morality and not pay the price for their brief and fleeting time of pleasure. Leviticus 18:22 states, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind, it is abomination." Man may challenge God's law of sowing and reaping, but he is spitting into the wind. It always comes back on him. God usually allows us to make our own choices, even against His will, knowing that in time we will become slaves to our own supposed independence and freedom not to sin. To some, life without God looks so good and free, but there is no slavery worse than slavery to sin. Such is the plight of so many, especially this group who say they are an "oppressed minority."

Erroneously they call themselves "gay". Hollywood, the media, the U.S. government (in general), the Democratic party (by their own platform), tell us that homosexuality is nothing more than an alternate lifestyle, a harmless activity between two consenting adults. What does the timeless Word of God say?

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27).

We who raise objection to the pro-

moting and publicizing of this "death-style" or their insistence that they be considered a traditional family, are said to have a disease called "homophobia". In light of their decadent, death style way of living, I can't think of anything healthier than being "homophobic". In this day of AIDS, may God give us more men, women and children who fear homosexuality. The reckless, debauched practices of the "gay community", the Sodomites, especially those who frequent the bathhouses, are some of the most unsanitary, unhygienic, and despicable activities on the face of God's planet earth. Even other members of the animal kingdom know better than to engage in such debauchery. Pigs demonstrate more self-respect, "morality", sense and decency than some people. Only man practices that which is disgusting and shocking. They say their desires are normal, God-given and they have a right to flaunt their "values". But God does not oblige nor encourage any of us to fulfill all of our desires -even if they are normal. Even heterosexual sex need not be broadcasted and spotlighted. What we all need is a little old fashioned modesty. In the old days, folks had a little shame about being naked (or nearly) in public. A little bit of old fashioned "shame" and decency is healthy.

But to this, crowd, the Sodomites, part of the "fun" is going against God's law, the community moral standard. Part of the thrill is to fly in the face of traditional values, to push and challenge even their own sense of right or wrong. That is what makes sin, especially sexual sin, so attractive to many, the fact that it is "forbidden". Understandably many find adultery, fornication, homosexuality exciting and adventuresome for this reason, at least for awhile.

Probably one of the most disconcerting aspects of the gay agenda is the fact that they are after our children. They don't just want equal rights, they want us to accept and/or embrace their way of thinking.

They don't merely want the freedom to practice their deathstyle, they want the taboos and discouragement of that practice removed from our schools and curriculum. They want this generation to be brought up "brainwashed", if you will, that it is just as acceptable and normal as the traditional family that has been basic to our society since creation. They want our children. In the "gay pride" march in New York City, they displayed their banner, "Man-boy: love is beautiful". Their motto, "Sex before eight or else it's too late."

The militant, gay activist, Michael Swift says, "We shall sodomize your sons" and hopes to see laws activated that will close down all churches that opposed the gay agenda. You say it would never happen? You would have said the same thing 40 years ago if you had been warned that one day they would take the Bible and prayer out of the schools or make it unconstitutional to pray at a football game or a graduation.

In the March 26, 1992 edition of the Sentinel, a Los Angeles gay publication, the editor defends pedophilia (sex with a child) saying that the love between a man and a boy is the foundation of homosexuality."

Legislation is being passed that gives the same rights to homosexual couples that are enjoyed by married couples (child support, alimony, adoption, Medicaid, Social Security, etc.). Is it surprising that the main sponsors of these bills are the Chappaquiddick killer, Ted Kennedy, and the blatant, militant Representative from Massa-

chusetts, Barney Frank. You may recall that it was Barney Frank that was found to be involved in a "callboy"

prostitution ring and who bragged that he engaged in homosexual sex in front of the president's locker. Understand-

ably, America should be mourning for our dirth in leadership.

I, for one, thank God that there are still a few of us who are "homopho-

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Growing Up Without

by Bro. Marty Mullis (written at age 17)
Tifton, Georgia

Often times I am asked, "What is it like growing up without Santa Claus, a Christmas tree, the tooth fairy, or the Easter Bunny?" In I Timothy 1 :4, Paul says, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do." Parents, when you hint that Santa Claus is coming tonight, you are giving heed to fables and are ministering questions in your child's mind, A common question that comes to a child's mind is, "Why are my parents lying to me? I know there is no Santa Claus, but I will go along with them," In my younger years of growing up with these pagan gods, I had a sense of instability. But my parents felt a burden to tell my younger sister and I the truth about these gods and what the real meaning of these seasons are, Since then, I have a great respect for my parents and have found a stability concerning these seasons. WE are happier concentrating on the spiritual rather than the carnal.

My family has lived without a television for the past twelve years. Many times we are mocked and questioned with, "Man, how can you live without a television?" The truth is, we are able to get much more accomplished each

day without being mesmerized by "the tube". I know if we had a television, each one of us would sit with our eyes glued to it every chance we got. By not having a television, our family is able to enjoy a quiet and peaceful atmosphere in which we can study, or discuss the problems and activities of the day, or just sit around and talk which we do every day.

I have also been asked, "What is it like having a preacher for a father who is so strict?" My father is very strict, but for some reason I still love him. He didn't let me stay out all night at the Junior-Senior Prom either year, he didn't let me go on the Senior Cruise, I have to be in at a very respectable time (his definition not everyone else's), and he doesn't fork out money every time I ask for it. I am a three-year letterman in baseball and football and because of this I really get picked on. After each football game, some student would throw a party. My record for attending these parties was 0-30. I know if my father had allowed me to attend any of these parties, I probably would have engaged in ungodly acts. So why do you attend them. Is it to have fun? If so, I know of other ways to have a lot more fun. And while having this fun, I don't

have to: wake up the next morning with a hangover, worry about getting caught dealing with drugs or alcohol, or worry about getting a girl pregnant.

I am not saying that television is an evil thing. But I am saying that how it is used can be ungodly. I am not saying that there is a certain time or curfew that all teenagers should have to follow when coming in after a date. But parents should use the wisdom God has blessed them with and set a curfew for their teenager and enforce it. I am not saying that all parties are ungodly, but before going to one, you should know if it is going to be properly chaperoned and what all is going to go on. In I Thessalonians 5:22, Paul says, "Abstain from all appearance of evil." We, as teenagers and as parents, need to do a better job of shunning the appearance of evil.

Though I grew up without many of the goods of this world, I grew up with a lot of love! My mother stayed home to raise her children rather than seeking fulfillment in a career. My parents were always there to help me with my problems. I am thankful God blessed me with parents who tried to follow God's ways rather than the ways of the world.

* * * * *

YOUR FINANCIAL HELP NEEDED!

If you are able to help with the expenses of printing this magazine and duplicating tapes of preaching, it will be greatly appreciated! We need more churches to make a monthly contribution. We also need more individuals to help bear the financial burden. Let's all work together to spread the truth of **SALVATION BY GRACE!**

Self Control

by Bro. David Durrence
Waycross, Georgia

What is self control? Self control is keeping one's self under control, and staying within certain boundaries without the direct control of anyone else. Our entire life is filled with some type of rules, regulations, commandments, laws, etc. which mandate compliance. As a child we had a lot of help from our Moms and Dads. Our parents had "rules of order" for their homes, and we were required to comply with those rules; or suffer the consequences. Speaking for myself, I would often get "out of control", that is; I would break the rules that my mother and father had set up. Mom and Dad were there to straighten me out, and bring me back under control. The rod of correction from a stiff hand would generally help to teach me what things were acceptable, and what things were not acceptable. You might say that most of our homes had a set of "house rules" and those rules controlled our lives, for the most part; as we grew up. Most of the rules in my home were based on a "thus saith the Lord": rules like, don't steal, don't lie, don't cheat, honor your parents, do unto others as you would have them do unto you, etc. That training was preparing us to learn how to control ourselves, and how to control this old fleshly body that we live in, and that is a good thing! By the way, this training is still needed today.

As we mature physically, we eventually outgrow our parental control; and we leave home, and begin establishing our own homes, and our own set of rules. In a civilized culture we still can't just do anything that our old flesh would desire to do. We have local, state, and federal laws that we must follow. Laws are actually good for us, If the training that we received as children; found lodging in us, we will have much less difficulty in following the laws of the land. We desperately need laws to help keep us in check, and to help maintain a civilized world in which to live. Unfortunately, even though we have laws, we sometimes find ourselves breaking the laws, especially when we fail to see the value in them. We even sometimes get by with breaking the laws. Occasion-

ally, we get caught and have to pay the penalty. Have you ever found yourself speeding; not wearing seat belts; rolling through stop signs; shoplifting; drinking alcohol and driving (DUI); giving somebody else your prescription medication; to save them some money, or taking someone else's medication, and the list goes on. Don't bring open shame and reproach upon the cause of Christ in the earth. We who call ourselves Christians must be "Christ-like". We must exercise "self control" in all that we do. We are commanded to watch over one another for good, and rebuke one another; and these things we should do, if we love the brethren. But let's be honest. None of us have someone watching every move that we make. It behooves us to exercise "self control" and live within the laws of the land, and watch every thing that we do. We must learn the ways of God, and put ourselves under subjection and exercise "self control" based on the word of God, for God sees and knows all that we do or think. Consider these scriptures: **Luke 16:15 "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts"; Job 24:1 "times are not hidden from the Almighty"; Num 32:23, "behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out"; Gal 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap".**

We fear men, we fear being caught by men, and having to pay man's penalty by law. Sometimes it seems that we fear men more than we fear God. God is greater than man God is able to do abundantly and exceedingly more to us for breaking His commandment and laws than man can do. Remember the scripture in **Matthew 10:28, "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".**

Sometimes we try to look Holy and show off our Godliness to others. Sometimes our self-control is just an outward show, and not really from the heart. Remember, we try to be pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God. This ought not to be, brethren. We must learn to

exercise temperance and control of ourselves because we love God, and out of that deep love we desire to crucify the flesh, and put on the new man, and walk in a newness of life. If our self control is not tempered by our love for God, and the love of His laws, then we have an outward show of religion. We are no different than the Scribes and the Pharisees. Consider these scriptures **Matt 23:25, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. 26] Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. [27] Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. [28] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.**

God is not pleased with us as superficial Christian. God requires that we become a new creature in Christ Jesus, putting away the old man and putting on the new; exercising control over our lives, and growing in greater service to Him; who has loved us when we were unlovable. Please prayerfully read II Peter 1:3-8 and Romans 6:12.

Do you lack self control? Do you have some self-control but you want to improve your commitment to Godly service and resist temptation. Let me suggest that you begin with the mouth. You might say, "Why the mouth?" God said this concerning the words of our mouth: **James 3:2, "in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body".**

May we all love God more and strive to please Him in all that we do. We must have control of our own lives in accordance with the teachings of God's Holy Word, and by the help of God's Holy Spirit. May God bless you in your efforts to put Satan behind you, and follow God in all His ways.

Bible Reading Calendar for October

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

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Ezek. 10,11,12	Heb. 11:1-19
17	Ezek. 13,14,15	Heb. 11:20-40
18	Ezek. 16	Heb. 12
19	Ezek. 17,8,19	Heb. 13
20	Ezek. 20,21	Jas. 1
21	Ezek. 22,23	Jas. 2
22	Ezek. 24,25,26	Jas. 3
23	Ezek. 27,28	Jas. 4
24	Ezek. 29,30,31	Jas. 5
25	Ezek. 32,33	I Pet. 1
26	Ezek. 34,35	I Pet. 2
27	Ezek. 36,37	I Pet. 3
28	Ezek. 38,39	I Pet. 4
29	Ezek. 40	I Pet. 5
30	Ezek. 41,42	II Pet. 1

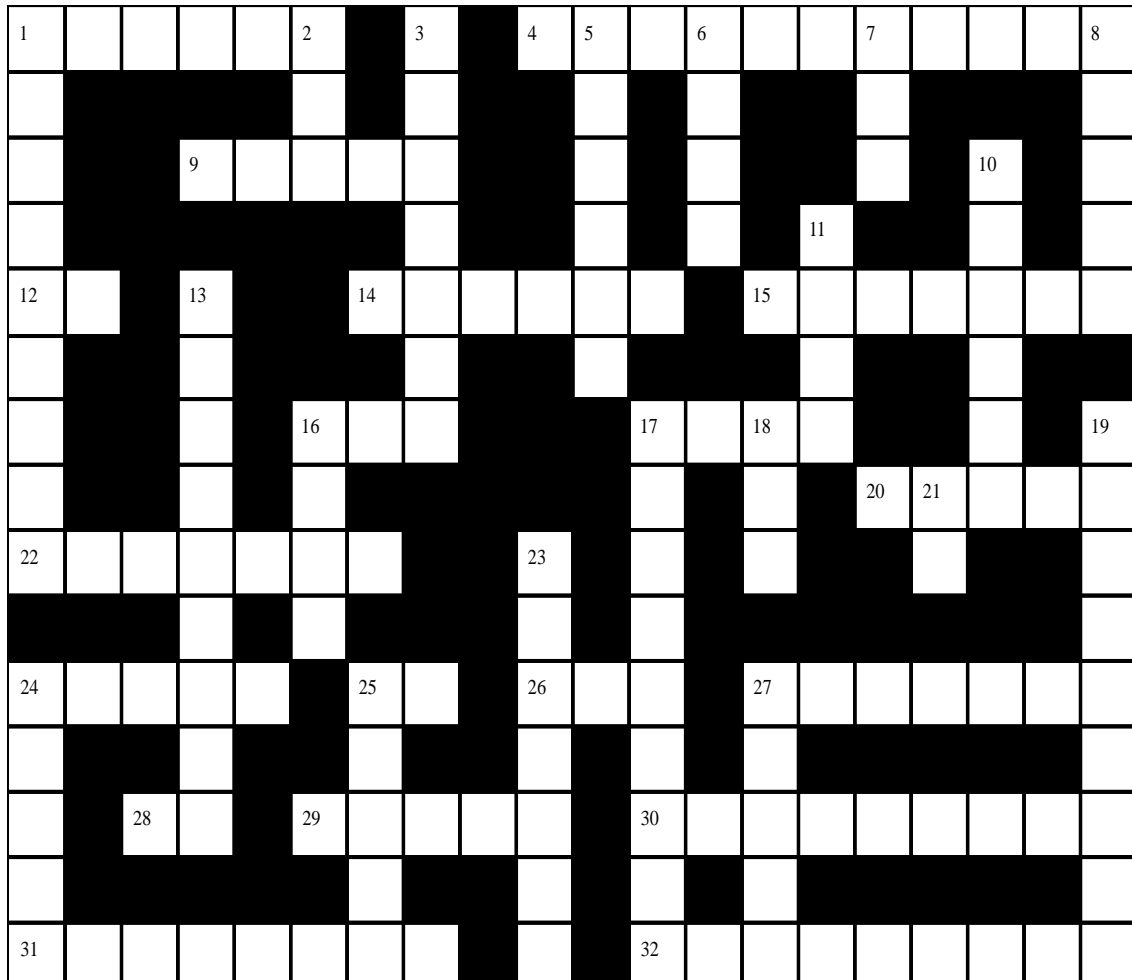
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE VOLUME
XXIII OCTOBER
2007**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "Ye then that are _____ ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." 4. "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of _____: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." 9. "The Lord shall _____ his people." 12. "... for the people had a mind _____ work." 14. "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy _____ in the Lord:" 15. "_____ from all appearance of evil." 16. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to _____ her away privily." 17. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publican the _____?" 20. "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make _____ to help me." 22. "For I have not shunned to _____ unto you all the counsel of God." 24. "...Remember my _____" 25. "And now behold, I _____ bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,..." 26. "...whom do _____ say that I the Son of man am?" 27. "And let us consider one another to _____ unto love and to good works:" 28. "He saith unto them, But whom say _____ that I am?" 29. "For this _____ God gave them up unto vile affections..." 30. "Be not forgetful to _____ strangers'..." 31. "In whom ye also are builded _____ for an habitation of God through the Spirit." 32. "all _____ is given by inspiration of God,..."



DOWN

1. "To him that _____ out the earth above the water: for his mercy endureth for ever." 2. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living _____." 3. "God is our refuge and strength, a very _____ help in trouble." 5. "...for thereby some have entertained _____ unawares." 6. "Neither _____ heed to fables and endless genealogies,..." 7. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the _____;" 8. "...For unto whomsoever much is _____, of him shall be much required:..." 10. "O give _____ to the Lord of lords: for his mercy endureth for ever." 11. "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not _____ to look up;..." 13. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with _____ and understanding." 16. "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am _____ from the blood of all men." 17. "Now therefore ye are no more _____ and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" 18. "That the man of God _____ be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 19. "For we know him that saith said, _____ belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord..." 21. "Remember them that are in bonds, _____ bound with them;..." 23. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep _____ unspotted from the world." 24. "So _____ we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof:..." 25. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of _____,..." 27. "And Simon _____ answered and said Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."