

God's Daily Love

by Elder Don McWilliams
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"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4: 19).

Paul, in Ephesians 3:16-21, is trying to bring this fact to the surface in the minds of God's people when he tells them, "That he (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

What a sad state the world has come to in our present day society. Everywhere you turn, (on TV, in newspapers and news magazines), we hear endless arguments about separation of church

and state. The thinking of a few fools, (Psalms 14: 1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God!") has brought this nation to a point where we cannot have prayer in schools or state-run places, no show of any religious display of any kind so as not to offend these people. As for me, I am greatly offended that this condition has come to pass. The morality of our country is fast approaching disaster and destruction!

I say these things because of great concern for our young people who must witness these happenings. Too many are led to believe that no show of anything pertaining to God or His beloved Son is the norm. Perhaps just as sad is the fact that many of these same young people see no show of piety in their own homes.

As to the Scripture first written in this article, please think of what God has given us in His dear Son, Christ Jesus. God's Son was given because of a love which passeth human knowledge which is exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think. Our finite minds cannot even begin to fathom the breadth,

length, depth, or height of God's great love which is in Christ Jesus for us.

It is a spiritual tragedy that so many people use certain seasons of the year for every purpose except for what it should be used. Many are taken in by satan's devices and lies and led into a season of drunkenness, revelling, adultery, fornication, idolatry, etc., etc. Many tragedies and broken families happen because of these sins. Sometimes this is done under the guise of the Christmas spirit. How sad.

However sad these conditions are, it is also sad that many of God's own people are guilty of waiting until this season of the year to make their annual or semi-annual appearance in the house of worship. God's blessings are NOT seasonal, but a constant blessing, ever present in our lives.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

God grant that His Spirit may dwell in your hearts richly, and that you may comprehend how great God's love is for His children.

For Friends of the Aged

(A clipping found in the Bible of Sis. Mabel Hinson who went home to be with the Lord after 84 years of faithfully serving Him here on the earth.)

Blessed are they who understand
my faltering step and palsied hand.

Blessed are they who know that
my ears today must strain to
catch the things they say.

Blessed are they who seem to know
that my eyes are dim and my
wits are slow.

Blessed are they who looked away
when coffee spilled at the table today.

Blessed are they with a cheery smile
who stop to chat for a little while.

Blessed are they who never say
'You've told that story twice today.'

Blessed are they who know the
ways to bring back
memories of yesterdays.

Blessed are they who make it known
that I'm loved, respected
and not alone.

Blessed are they who know I'm
at a loss to find the
strength to carry the Cross.

Blessed are those who ease the
days on my journey Home
in loving ways.

Wif You, Daddy

by Pastor, Dewayne Smith
Waycross, Georgia

I'm a pretty good father. I think I do most things a father should do. In fact it seems like God gave me an instinct to be able to enjoy father-type things and activities. However, every now and then, my self-ascribed halo glows a little less brightly when some unexpected lesson gets laid on me. Let me explain how that happened once.

You see, I was raised on my dad's homespun wisdom and "Dr. Dobson". I thought I knew what it would take to raise two little boys and make them happy. I had worked hard and got me one of those high profile respectable jobs. It required a lot of time, and some odd call-in hours did take me away from my family activities from time to time. On one such occasion, I was planning a little fishing trip with the boys, but had to finish mowing the grass before we could go. I was getting her done when the old push mower sputtered and quit on me. I had to use some of my shade-tree mechanic skills to find out what was wrong and get her going again. I had the parts and was closing in on finishing up, when the phone rang. That high profile, very important job was calling, and they just couldn't

get through the day without me. I assured them I'd be there just as soon as I put the "old smoker" back together. I was concentrating on the task at hand when a little voice called out, "Daddy"? I said, "Yes son".

"Daddy, was that your work calling"?

"Yes, son, it was".

"Daddy, does this mean we can't go fishing"?

"I'm sorry boys, but..."

I looked their way and two sets of eyes (one brown set and one blue set) were giving me the old stare-down. Now I'd been down this road before, and these two manipulation artists were not going to get the best of me. Besides, I had read some geniuses' book, and he said, "Don't just tell your kids no, tell them why, and it will be Ok". I thought I'd give it the old John Wayne, "Well boys, this is just how it is" speech.

I said, "Boys, do you like your Nintendo"?

"Yes sir"!

"Do you like your Sega games"?

"Yes sir"!

"Do you like your radio controlled

trucks"?

"Yes sir"!

"Do you like your Big Wheel tricycles"?

"Yes sir"!

"Well, boys, daddy has to go to work so you guys can have those toys. You can play with those without daddy. Now let me finish this old mower so I can go to work". I turned, thinking that was the end of it. The last bolt was in place and I was wiping the grease from my hands, when I heard the clacking of Big Wheels and that little voice behind me again.

"Daddy"?

Not looking up and with a somewhat irritated tone, I said, "Whaaat".

"Daddy"?

I looked around at brown and blue eyes. Each had their little arms just as full as they could get them with Sega, Nintendo, Atari and radio controlled trucks.

Brown eyes said, "We want to go fishing, daddy"!

Blue eyes said, "Wif you daddy"!

Brown eyes said, "Daddy! Let's have a yard sale"!

LOVE

by Elder W. H. Durrence
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Love is a subject that cannot be completely covered in the short space of this study. Its references are many, and they cover pages in an exhaustive concordance. In an entire lifetime, we could not fully comprehend this grand and most important subject. Nevertheless, this study is devoted to the subject of love and to the pursuit of a greater understanding of it. In this study we shall consider three forms of love: (1) love of God, (2) love for God, and (3) love for others.

We must first consider the love of God, for it is the highest and purest love that has ever been known or experienced by mortals in this world. It is the foundation of all love and the example by which all other love is to be measured. All the great doctrines of God are viewed upon the screen of love. God made choice of Israel as His special nation and blessed it above all other nations, favoring the Israelites as He did no others. To what can we attribute those favors and blessings of God? The Bible declares that God was motivated by love when he said "...the Lord loved you..." (Deut. 7:8). Even so, God's love caused Him to make choice of a people among the Gentiles (Eph. 1:4). Many cannot understand why God loved some and not others, but my difficulty is in understanding why God loved any of us. Yet the truth remains that He did. In fact, He loved us so much that His love will last forever. He said, "... Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31:3). This marvelous promise is to the objects of divine love both in the past and present, for neither God nor His love ever changes (Mal. 3:6). He said, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us..." (1 John 3:16). In perceiving His love,

we clearly see that love is most beautifully expressed by action. We should also understand that love in action is love that gives.

John wrote of this giving kind of love, saying, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Love was manifested not only by the first person of the Godhead, the Father, but also by the Son. God the Father sent His Son (1 John 4:10), but Jesus the Son loved us enough to come and to die for our sins. Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). The love of Jesus caused Him to take our place on the crucifixion cross, and He died for each one of us personally. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). God's love is great enough to reach down to sinners. Paul said, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The knowledge of such enormous love should be a constant source of joy and blessing to us. These words of the Apostle John should always echo in our minds: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (1 John 3:1).

Following the love of God for man, it is now appropriate to study man's love for God. John said, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The source of our love for God originates from His work of grace in us. Because God loved us and saved us by His grace, sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, we have become new creatures that love God. Therefore it is

comely for the objects of God's love to declare their love for God. As we both declare and manifest our love for God, His love is thereby reciprocated.

When the Ten Commandments were reduced to two, Jesus commanded us to love God and one another. There were originally four commandments which dealt with our duty toward God. They required us to have no other gods, not to worship idols, not to take God's name in vain, nor violate God's holy day of worship. Jesus reduced them to this simple statement of love: "... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Mt. 22:37).

You see, when we love God completely, we will not want to break His laws or do those things that dishonor and displease Him. Since God's love for us was seen by His work of salvation, so our love for God can be seen by the way we live and what we do. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Also He said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words ...He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings..." (John 14:23, 24). We are daily challenged to prove our love for Jesus and God the Father. This we do by obeying Their words of commandment; thereby the measure of our love is revealed. Our love is not perfect, so it must be measured as it is made manifest. The more we love Him, the more we will obey Him. Peter, who denied the Lord Jesus three times, made this discovery as he listened to the searching words of the Savior. "...Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs" (John 21:15). We should all recognize that it is not enough to say

we love someone; love needs to be proven, regardless of whether it is the love of our companions, or even our friends. If we say we love God, we must also prove it. Paul said, "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love" (2 Cor. 8:8). Jesus loves us and, even though we have not seen Him (1 Peter 1:8), we have seen and felt His love; therefore, the love we have for Him can and must be seen. Let us manifest it daily by a devoted heart and a life dedicated to His service.

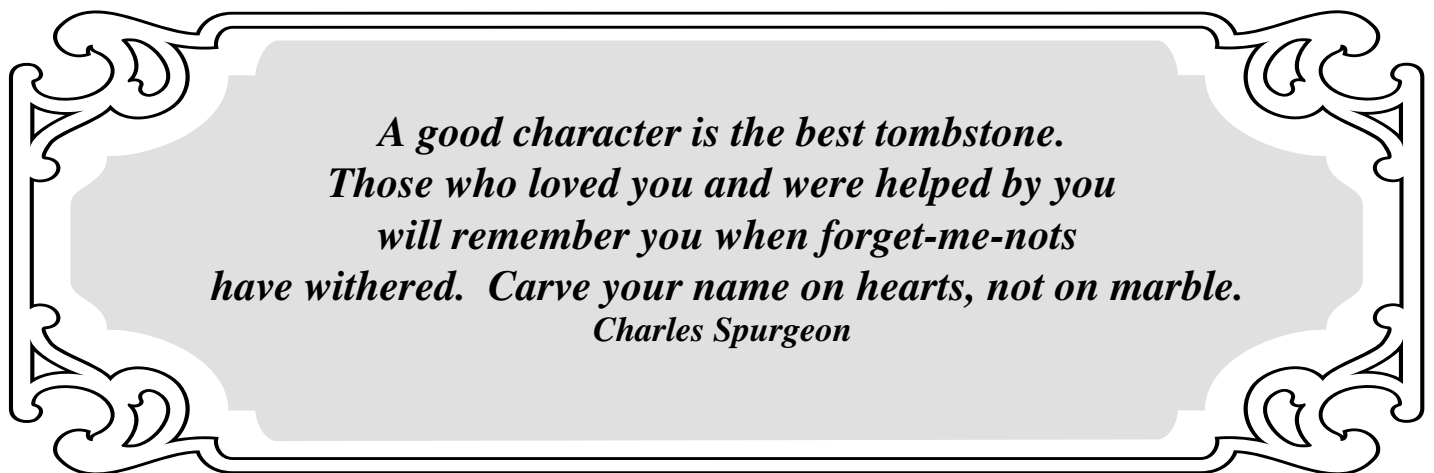
In the third and last division, we need to consider the love of our fellowman. Remember that Jesus said first to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; then He added, "... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mt. 22:39). As our love for God governs our behavior toward Him, so our love for others will drastically affect our actions toward them. Since all four Commandments about our responsibility to God were reduced to love, even so the six Commandments about our relation to others were also reduced to one commandment of love. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the application of this command is with regard to our enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Mt. 5:44). All who have endeav-

ored to love an enemy recognize that it is a difficult task, yet a very important one. It may help if we understand that while the commandment still holds true, there are varying degrees and different kinds of love. Our love for God is certainly different from our love for our companion or children. The love of friends and associates may even vary drastically; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that there will be some difference in the nature of our love for an enemy and love for a brother in Christ, but we are to love both as our fellowmen.

It seems to me that God acknowledges the existence of a very special love which ought to exist among the kindred in Christ. Jesus said, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15: 12). He set before us no easy task, for it requires that we put them ahead of ourselves and love them in spite of all their faults and failures, as Jesus did when He died for us. Because of our love for the brethren, we have the assurance that we have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14). Yet without such love, we have no assurance at all, for John wrote, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). If we love God, we love His people and ought to manifest that

love in every word and deed (1 John 3:18). The deeds of our lives will prove how genuine our love really is. We are to love the family of God in a very special way, and it should not diminish in strength nor ever fade away. Paul said, "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1), and if we show it daily, it will always continue.

In conclusion, let us share an observation God inspired Paul to make. He examined faith, hope, and love only to discover that love is the greatest of the three (1 Cor. 13:13). Its greatness lies in the fact that without God's love, heaven would never be our home, and without love for one another, this life would afford us little happiness. I simply cannot imagine what this world would be like without love, but I am certain that I would not want to live in it. Let us be thankful that God not only created the world but also gave us love to share. Endeavor to love God more completely and your neighbor more deeply. The more love you give away, the more love you will gain in return. Paul said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Annually the earth reminds us of the truth of this Scripture as it yields its abundant harvest. If you expect to reap love in abundance, then you must now begin to plant the seeds of love in the lives of others. By loving, you assure yourself of love, so love people more and love God most; then enjoy the fruits of a blessed harvest.



Things to Remember

by Elder W.M. Mullis
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REMEMBER THAT THERE SHOULD BE MOCKERS!

“But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.” (Jude 17,18).

“Remember that there should be mockers in the last time.” Reference is made to mockers or mocking about fifty times in the Bible. And though there are eleven different Hebrew and Greek words which are translated as “mock”, the meaning is usually about the same in each case.

Listen closely to some of the definitions or meanings of the word “MOCK” to laugh outright; to make mouths at; to throw out the lip; to jeer at; to teach falsely; to scorn, deride, ridicule, mistreat, and abuse.

Well, have there not always been people who would mock others? Indeed, we find throughout the pages of God’s Holy Word that there have been mockers of the saints of God! When the people of God follow God’s ways, they will live and act differently from others. The result will always be mocking from those who do not really KNOW or FEAR GOD!!! So we ought not to think it strange when we are mocked! We ought not to be offended or become depressed when we are ridiculed, scorned, mistreated, and abused! This is a part of the trials and sufferings which will be found in all true disciples of Christ. And the closer we walk to Christ, the more we will be mocked.

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with

exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified!” (I Peter 4:12-14)

The Apostle Peter, by inspiration of God, warns us that reproach, fiery trials, and sufferings (such as mockery) are going to come if we follow after righteousness! Peter does not say fiery trials might come! He says, “Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to come! It is to come, and we ought not to think it strange when we are mocked because God has forewarned us that it would be so!!

When we are mocked, we should not be depressed or discouraged, “But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings!” A part of the sufferings of Christ Jesus was to be mocked! Yes! Christ Jesus is spoken of as being mocked more than any other in all the Bible! Listen to some of the times when Jesus Christ was mocked: In Matthew, chapter 20, Jesus told the twelve disciples he was about to be mocked.

Read Matthew 20:17-19. “And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again.”

Jesus declared that he was going to be mocked! He knew He was to be mocked, so it did not surprise Him when it came to pass! Looking further in the sequence of events, we see Jesus being mocked in a horrible way: (Matt. 27:29-31). “And when they had plotted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right

hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and MOCKED HIM, saying, HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. Oh, how our Lord and Saviour was ridiculed, abused, jeered, and scorned! HE WAS MOCKED for our sakes! He was mocked for our iniquities! He was mocked for our sins! As He was later hanging on the cross of Calvary, we read in Matthew 27: 39-44: 39. “And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyed the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. IF THOU BE THE SON OF GOD, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I AM THE SON OF GOD. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth!”

We find in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, it is recorded at least eleven times that Jesus was mocked! Do you see that when we are mocked for following after righteousness, we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings!!

Remember that mockers should come! Be expecting mockers if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ! God cannot lie! They will come, and come more boldly and in increased numbers the more dedicated you become in your service to God. If you are only mocked occasionally, it is an evidence you are following Christ afar off, and you are in great danger!!! If you are mocked weekly, you are drawing nigh to Him,

and I encourage you to keep on laying aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us keep on running with patience the race that is set before us, ever looking unto Jesus! "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Hebrews 12:1-3). If you are mocked daily, remember the words of Jesus in His sermon on the mount: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you! (Matt. 5:11,12)

We have seen that Christ Jesus was mocked, but were the prophets mocked, too?

Jeremiah cried out to God, "Every-one mocketh me!" (Jeremiah 20:7) As Jeremiah the prophet was cast into prison, he continued to warn of God's wrath being poured out, and the people mocked him the more! While he was in prison, King Zedekiah asked Jeremiah what should be done. Jeremiah's reply basically was to obey God! And King Zedekiah was afraid to obey God because he was afraid of being mocked! (Jeremiah 38:19)! Likewise, today, there are many who are not fearing God but are fearing men! And because they are afraid of being mocked, they are not putting away the worldly lusts and desires and following God with all their heart! We ought to obey God rather than men!!! (Acts 5:29)

The true prophets of God were mocked! This was the case over and over. In II Chronicles 36:15-16, we read, "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them (Judah) by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, till there was no remedy!!!"

Sometimes, we find the people of God are mocked as they work, as we

read about Nehemiah and the children of Israel were rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and were mocked. (Nehemiah 4:1-3). In other situations, we read of the saints of God being mocked for worshipping God in the spirit! This was the case on the day of Pentecost, for the Scriptures say, "Others, mocking said, these men are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13). And when truth is spoken, there are those often who will mock as they did when Paul preached about the resurrection! (Acts 17:32).

When we do that which God commands we will be mocked! Mocking has always been found, because God has always had a remnant who kept His commandments. They have always been and always will be mocked!

"Remember that there should be mockers! But listen again to a part of the verse we could consider in closing. "Remember that there should be mockers in the last days!" We know there have always been mockers, but in the last days of a nation, we find that mockers abound! In the last days of the Jewish dispensation, just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, mockers abounded!

"Remember that there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts!" You can tell the last days of a nation are drawing nigh when the people do not seek after God! Rather, the people are found going to hear the preaching, and then walking after their own ways.

This condition will be found in the last days of a nation, and even in the last days of a local church! When a local church body begins to be infected and infested with evil and ungodliness, there will be individuals who will mock the true teachers and followers of God. The minister of the gospel can preach, teach, warn, exhort, and even beg the brethren to repent, but too often they continue in their evil, carnal walk. Peter says "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (II Peter 3:3).

The word scoffers used by Peter here comes from the exact same Greek word

as the word mockers in Jude 18!!! One of the most prominent ways of mocking is for the people of God to come to the house of God, hear the word of God, and then to go back to living like they were before they heard!

(To those of you who will take the time to carefully study and pray, there is an amazing and shocking comparison of Scripture in II Peter, chapters 2 and 3 with Jude!)

A preacher's heart is grieved when the people do not take heed what they hear and take heed how they hear! "There shall come, in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts!" That is, they come, they hear, then they scoff and mock by simply continuing to walk in their own way rather than repenting and walking in God's way! Unless those individuals repent, or unless the church puts those individuals away from among themselves, that local church body is in the last days! God is not mocked! He will not always strive with man! Except that church repents, God will remove His candlestick. May God help us to examine ourselves and consider our ways!!!

"Remember that there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts!"

ARE WE WALKING IN GOD'S WAY, or are we walking after our own lusts? Can it be that we are actually mockers?

Oh, brethren, listen to what God says will happen to those who walk in their own way rather than walking after God! (Please read Proverbs 1:24-29). "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge; and did not choose

the fear of the Lord!"

People will cry out to God, but He will not answer! People will seek God, but they shall not find Him! When God begins to pour out His wrath, then all His people will be ready to Hear and Obey, but it will be too late!

There is a time to seek the Lord, and there is a time when seeking the Lord will be to no avail! "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found! Call ye upon Him while He is near!" (Isaiah 55:6).

"Remember that there should be mockers in the last time, who should

walk after their own ungodly lusts!"

Are we walking after the flesh or after the spirit? If you are walking after the flesh, repent! If you are walking after the spirit, remember, you are going to be mocked!!!

Grow in Knowledge

1. The Lord hath _____ my supplication; the Lord still receive my prayer."
2. Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy _____, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years."
3. "For thou, O God, hast heard my _____; thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name."
4. "How long shall I bear with this evil, _____ which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me."
5. "And God heard their, _____ and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."
6. "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and _____ it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord! and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him."
7. "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his _____ Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction."
8. "In my _____ I called upon the Lord and cried to my God; and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears."
9. "I _____, the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."
10. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my _____."

Samuel Adams

Signer of the Declaration of Independence

"Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt." (1749)

Benjamin Franklin

Signer of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence

"Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters." (1787)

What Are the Purposes of the Bible

by Elder Billy Mullis
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It is important to periodically review what God says are the reasons He gave us the Bible. Some people generally summarize that the Bible is to tell God's people what He has done, is doing and shall do for His people; and to tell His people how they are to live to honor and glorify Him with their lives. It also gives a history of what has happened from the creation of this world until about 70AD, a period of about 4,000 years. The Bible shows how God deals with His people when they walk in obedience, as well as when they disobey him.

Though there are many other general statements which might be made to describe the purposes of the Bible, it is more important to state what God specifically says are the reasons He gave us His Holy Word. For example,

The Word of God says:

1. "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, throughly furnished unto all good works." II Timothy 3:16,17 (See also Titus 2:15; Matthew 22:29; Deuteronomy 4:10.)

2. "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Timothy 3:14,15

3. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4

4. "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." I John

1:4 (See also Jeremiah 15:16.)

5. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:" I Peter 2:2 (See also II Corinthians 9:10.)

6. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21 (See also #14.)

7. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:31 (See also Acts 18:28.)

8. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." I Corinthians 10:11

9. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Psalm 119:11

10. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

11. "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psalm 19:8 (See also II Peter 1:19; Proverbs 6:23; Psalm 119:130.)

12. "Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." Jeremiah 5:14 (See Jeremiah 23:29.)

13. "So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone." Ezekiel 37:7

14. "For I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Romans 1:16 (Connect to James 1:21 and I Thessalonians 2:13; Psalm 19:7 as contrasted with II Chronicles 36:16; Isaiah 30:9; Hosea 4:6; Amos 2:4; Mark 7:9.)

15. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." I John 5:13

16. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

17. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" Ephesians 6:17

18. "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." Acts 5:20

19. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3 (See John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; I Peter 1:22; Ps. 119:9.)

20. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them." Exodus 24:12 (See also Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:19; II Chronicles 17:9; Nehemiah 8:13; Isaiah 2:3.)

The above tests tell us some of the purposes of the word of God. In the next several issues, we will examine one at a time. Please prayerfully study each of the above Scriptures and meditate on them.

Thanksgiving

Why should we give thanks to God?

- 1. Everything we have that is good came from Him!
 - a. James 1:17
 - b. Psalm 68:19; 65:9; 107:8,15,21,31
 - c. Matthew 25:15 (talents)
 - d. Romans 12:6; I Cor. 12:4 (gifts)
 - e. Ephesians 2:4-10
 - f. John 10:28; Romans 6:23 (eternal life)
- 2. He is worthy of thanksgiving, praise, and honor!
 - a. Psalm 100
 - b. Revelation 4:9-11
 - c. Ephesians 5:18-20
 - d. Col. 3:17
- 3. We are not worthy of the blessings He gives us!
 - a. Romans 3:9-12,23
 - b. Genesis 32:10 (Jacob)
 - c. II Samuel 7:18 (King David)
 - d. Matthew 8:8 (Centurion)
 - e. Matthew 15:21-28 (Syrophenician Woman)
- 4. There are serious consequences to NOT giving God thanks for His blessings!
 - a. Romans 1:21-31
 - b. Isaiah 5:1-7
 - c. Matthew 21:43
- 5. Jesus set the example of giving thanks!
 - d. II Timothy 3:1,2
 - a. Matthew 11:25
 - b. Matthew 26:27
 - c. John 11:41
- 6. The Heavenly Host gives thanks!
 - a. Revelation 4:9
 - b. Revelation 7:11,12
 - c. Revelation 11:16,17
- 7. God commands us to give thanks!
 - a. Psalm 50:14; 100:4
 - b. I Thessalonians 5:18

Answers to Grow In Knowledge

- 1. Psalm 6:9 Heard
- 2. Isaiah 38:5 Prayers
- 3. Psalm 61:5 Vows
- 4. Numbers 14:27 Congregation
- 5. Exodus 2:24 Groaning
- 6. I Samuel 7:9 Offered
- 7. Genesis 16:11 Name
- 8. II Samuel 22:7 Distress
- 9. Psalm 34:4 Sought
- 10. Psalm 40:1 Cry

Quotes from Our Founding Fathers

GEORGE WASHINGTON

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible. Do not ever let anyone claim to be a true American patriot if they ever attempt to separate religion from politics.”

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

“The first and almost the only Book deserving of universal attention is the Bible.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated through this Book; but for the Book we could not know right from wrong. All the things desirable to man are contained in it.”

CALVIN COOLIDGE

“The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.”

Titus, A Competent Pastor

by Elder W. A. Mullis
(Deceased)

II Corinthians 8:6: "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also".

II Cor. 8:23a. "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you". Titus 1:1a: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ,...

Titus 1:4. To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

6. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

7. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

8. But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

9. Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

10. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

11. Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

Titus 2:7. "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.

8. Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." "Titus, A Competent

Pastor." As we begin the study of this subject, let's first consider the definition of the words "competent" and "pastor". Webster defines the word "competent" as that fitted to meet the requirements; capable or fit. The people of God should always be keenly conscious and desirous of following the truth of God in every phase of our lives, because when we individually and collectively walk or live in the light of the truth, there is none occasion of stumbling, as when we walk in darkness. When we as individuals or churches depart from the truth, we are walking in darkness and know not where we go because the darkness hath blinded our eyes.

We should never lose sight of the fact that for a pastor to be "competent", he must be called and gifted of God and must meet God's requirements or qualifications! We may be sure of three things here: (1) God has never called a man to preach that did not meet the qualifications He has set up. (2) If a man does not meet God's qualifications, God has not called him. And (3) although every man God calls does meet the qualifications when called, he himself does sometimes disqualify himself by his conduct! When we as a people lose sight of these three things, we shall stumble and fall. God set forth the qualifications for a bishop or elder in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. If a man meets these qualifications to be fit to be ordained, he MUST maintain these qualifications in order to continue in the work! When a man disqualifies himself, the church and people should acknowledge the fact and not dishonor God and the cause of Christ by ignoring it. Let's just briefly consider a few of the qualifications in the light of God's word: "A bishop then MUST (compare this word "must" with the same word in John 3:7, for these

are not qualifications that it would be "good" for him to have, but the word of God says he MUST) be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, not a novice. Moreover he MUST have a good report of them which are without. (I Timothy 3:2-7 in part.) What sobering words! Please remember that God would not have inspired these words and then call a man who was not qualified, regardless of what we think or feel.

Now let's consider the word "pastor" since our lesson is about a "competent pastor". The word "pastor" means shepherd, spiritual leader, one given charge of a church of Christ to care for their spiritual needs and feed their souls with spiritual food. No pastor can completely fulfill his obligations to God and the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer, unless the flock cares for the financial needs of him and his family properly. Neither can he be a true pastor without living among the sheep. Now before being too critical of this statement, consider the basic meaning of this word "pastor"; it is, "shepherd". A man may be able to be a preacher, but fail as a pastor. Can a shepherd be a true shepherd without dwelling among the sheep? Consider this prayerfully please. The apostles said to the disciples in Acts 6:4: "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

The pastor, as a shepherd, is to lead the flock in the light of the word of God, and is not to allow the flock to lead him into the error and traditions of men. He must have a sufficiency of God's grace at all times to be steadfast in the truth,

otherwise he will find himself compromising with error, and will thereby cease to be the servant of God. He must have the love, confidence and prayers of the flock BEFORE they will be willing to follow him. If he is seeking to lead them in the light of the truth and the flock is unwilling to follow, they are walking on dangerous ground.

The pastor is to be an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity (see I Corinthians 13:4-6),

in spirit, in faith, in purity (I Timothy 4: 12). He is to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. He is to do as Paul instructed Timothy, "take heed unto thyself the doctrine; CONTINUE IN THEM: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and unto and them that hear thee." He is to feed the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever God has commanded. Please consid-

er that your pastor's first duty is to God and then to you as one of God's children. He watches for your soul as one that must give account to God. Love him, pray for him, support him in every righteous endeavor, that his labours may not seem to him to be in vain. His life, like Titus', even at that will not be an easy one, but it will be a rewarding one to him and to the church.

Sins That Cripple the Church

1. **Absenteeism** "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..." (Heb. 10:25).
2. **Indifference** "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot..." (Rev. 3:15).
3. **Worldliness** "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world..." (I In. 2:15).
4. **Unfaithfulness** "...Thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).
5. **Selfishness** "...look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil. 2:4).
6. **Neglect** 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...' (Heb. 2:3).
7. **Compromise** "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the lord" (II Cor. 6:17).
8. **Contention** "...That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (I Cor. 1:10).
9. **Ignorance** "...And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

The Christian Life is Compared to -

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. An eagle hastening to the prey (Job 9:26). | 10. A vapor (Jas.4:14). |
| 2. A pilgrimage (Gen. 47:9). | 11. A shadow (Eccles. 6:12). |
| 3. A tale told (Ps. 90:9). | 12. A thread cut by the weaver (Isa. 38:12). |
| 4. A swift post (Job 9:25). | 13. A weaver's shuttle (Job 7:6). |
| 5. A swift ship (Job 9:26). | 14. A flower (Job 14:2). |
| 6. A hand-breadth (Ps. 39:5). | 15. Grass (I Pet. 1:24). |
| 7. A shepherd's tent removed (Isa. 38:8). | 16. Water spilled on the ground (II Sam. 14:14). |
| 8. A dream (Ps. 73:20). | 17. Wind (Job 7:7). |
| 9. A sleep (Ps. 90:5). | |

***We need not concern ourselves with the 'new and improved',
but with the ancient and approved. (See Jer. 18:15.)***

Watchmen on the Wall

by Dr. Richard Land
Nashville, Tennessee

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” (Jer. 6:16).

If America dies, she will perish from self-inflicted wounds. It has always been the case and always will be that nations, great nations, die from within, not from without.

That is surely what God’s Holy Word is telling us in Jeremiah 1. God sent His prophet Jeremiah, and there can never have been a more direct command to go than the one Jeremiah received from God. Beginning in verse 5, God said, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (KJV). And then Jeremiah said that God put forth His hand and touched his mouth (v. 9). After God put His own words in Jeremiah’s mouth, He sent him out to speak them to His people, who were in rebellion and in the grip of pagan idolatry.

In Jeremiah 6:13-17 we hear these words: “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore, they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visited them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But

they said, We will will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, we will not hearken.”

In Jeremiah’s day the only real earthly protection that could be afforded to a city was to fortify itself with a wall and place watchmen on it. They would watch through the night and through the day, scanning the horizon. The watchmen were issued trumpets, and at the first sign of trouble, they were to pick up those trumpets and blow a warning blast. The people knew that was their signal to awaken from their slumber or stop their daily activities and defend their homes and families.

In effect, Jeremiah was saying that God’s prophets were his watchmen. They had scanned the horizon looking for any threat, but they had turned and seen that the real threat was inside the walls. The watchmen had taken up their trumpets and blown the warning blasts, telling the people to take notice of what was around them, to ask about the old path and look for the good way, then to find rest by walking in it.

Several years ago a reporter asked me, “We’ve heard a lot from you about what’s wrong with America. What would America look like if it was the way you wanted it to be?” And I replied, “Well, a good place to start would be America in 1955, without the racism and the sexual discrimination against women.”

America in 1955 was a place where the following things did not happen, as they do now:

- Less than half of our children currently grow up in intact families. The divorce rate in America is 45-50 percent for first marriages, 60-67 percent for second marriages, and 70-73 percent for third marriages.
- Every year in the last ten years there has been a 400 percent increase

in child abuse significant enough to require a doctor’s attention.

- Every hour our children watch 20 violent acts on television.
- Every day in America nearly 2,800 teenage girls get pregnant.
- Every day in America 1,106 of those girls snuff out the lives of their unborn children through abortion.
- About 8 out of every 100,000 teenagers committed suicide in 2000. For every teen suicide death, experts estimate there are 10 other attempts.
- By the time they graduate from high school, 54 percent of our teenagers acknowledge that they have used one or more illegal drugs.

And we are being inundated with a tidal wave of moral relativism that centers on human sexuality.

- At 13.3 billion dollars a year, the 2006 revenues of the sex and porn industry in the U.S. are more than the revenues of professional football, basketball, and baseball combined. Worldwide sex industry sales for 2006 are reported to be 97 billion dollars. To put this in perspective, Microsoft, which sells the operating system used on most of the computers in the world (in addition to other software) reported sales of 44.8 billion dollars in 2006.
- One out of every 4 girls and 1 out of every 6 boys in the United States will be sexually molested by the time they reach their 16th birthday.
- Somewhere in America, a woman is raped every 46 seconds. Every day 4 women are killed by their domestic partner.
- Prior to 1960 there were only two significant sexually-transmitted diseases: syphilis and gonorrhea. Both were easily treatable with antibiotics. In the next two decades this began to change. Today there are approximately 25 STDs, and a few can be fatal. Ap-

proximately 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 are currently infected with one or more STDs, and 12 million Americans are newly infected each year. That's nearly 5 percent of the entire American population. Of these new infections, 63 percent are in people under the age of 25.

Yes, things have changed since 1955. That time certainly had its own problems, but this moral filth was not being poured out into our culture.

When I was a Royal Ambassador growing up in a church in Houston, one of the first passages of Scripture I learned was Ephesians 2:8-10, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

What Ephesians 2:10 tells us is that God has a plan and God has a purpose for every single human life that is conceived. But we are like the prodigal son. We as Americans have aborted nearly 50 million babies since 1973. Have we aborted the next great evangelist? Have we aborted the one that God sent to find a cure for cancer? Have we aborted the next great military mind, the next great president, the next international peacemaker? Each of those American babies was a child—a child with a future and a purpose, sacrificed to the pagan gods of social convention, career advancement, and material well-being.

I can still remember as a young man in Sunday School having a Bible lesson about how the children of God had become so paganized that they went down into the valley of Gehenna and sacrificed their little children to the pagan god Molech. How could I have ever imagined as a young boy that I would live to see the United States of America offering up its unborn children as pagan sacrifices because they are too expensive, to embarrassing, too ill, or too inconvenient! God help us!

We are the prodigal son. We have taken the inheritance of our unborn children and gone to a far city where we have wasted that inheritance in riotous living. And now we are reduced to feeding among the swine for the husks of life. There is only one hope for America, and that is for us to come to our senses as did the prodigal and shake the filth from ourselves and determine to go home to the Father who is scanning the horizon, waiting for His people to come home.

America is not the America of the fifties. The reporter asked me, "Was it really that good in 1955, or do we just know more now?" And I realized that I might as well have been talking about the time of Louis XIV. The reporter was born some 10 years after 1955, while I was nine years old in 1955. Today's young people have never experienced America when it was far more right than it is today. And unless we take the initiative to lead them back to the old ways, to the old paths, then surely we will proceed at an ever-accelerating pace toward destruction. If the present trends continue unabated, think about what America will be like 30 or 40 years from now! I become uncomfortable when I read the Corinthian letters because more and more we find ourselves in the same situation in which the Corinthian Christians found themselves—awash in a tide of moral relativity, a tide of sexual paganism, a sexual abyss.

In 1947, C. S. Lewis described the proper composition of a human being in a little book called **The Abolition of Man**. He said that the head ruled the belly, which was the sensual appetite, through the chest. Lewis defined the chest as consisting of the higher emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments—in other words, being taught the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions. Lewis went on to say that the higher emotions of the chest were the absolutely essential liaison between the cerebral and the sensual, and without the chest, human be-

ings became worshipers of their own minds, their own appetites. Lewis also said that moral relativism tears out the chest and removes moral character.

"In a sort of ghastly simplicity, our culture removes the organ and demands the function," Lewis wrote. "We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked when we find traitors in our midst. We castrate and then bid the geldings to be fruitful." I can think of no better diagnosis for what has happened to a generation and a half of Americans whose fathers and mothers and aunts and uncles and grandfathers and leaders lost their moral compass and lost their moral way and are adrift on a turbulent ocean of relativism.

Yet when we believers try to stand up and speak the truth, we are told, "Oh, you can't do that! That's a violation of separation of church and state!" Nonsense! Foolish and dangerous nonsense!

John F. Kennedy once said the greatest enemy of truth is often not the lie—deliberate, contrived, and dishonest—but the myth—persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. And it is a persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic myth to say that you can't legislate morality. All law is the legislation of someone's morality.

Romans 13 says that we are to have civil government to punish those who do evil and reward those who do right. You have to legislate morality in order to do that. When we pass laws making murder and theft and rape and racism illegal, we are not so much trying to impose our morality on murderers and thieves and rapists and racists as we are trying to keep them from imposing their immorality on their victims. That is not only our right; it is also our obligation.

When Abraham Lincoln was running for the presidency of the United States in another time of great moral crisis, he got a lot of criticism for making slavery an issue. Here's what he

said in 1860, in the midst of the presidential campaign: "You will not let us do a single thing as if it was wrong: there is no place where you will allow it to be even called wrong. We must not call it wrong in the free States, because it is not there, and we must not call it wrong in the slave States, because it is there; we must not call it wrong in politics, because that is bringing morality into politics, and we must not call it wrong in the pulpit, because that is bringing politics into religion..." Lincoln concluded by saying, "There is no single place, according to you, where this wrong can properly be called wrong." I'm glad Abraham Lincoln didn't listen to his critics.

We have allowed ourselves to believe this lie that somehow Christians don't have a right and an obligation to be involved in public policy, and we have withdrawn and left the field to those who do not care to hear our faith-based convictions. And we are reaping the consequences. There was a study done several years ago to determine which were the most religious countries in the world. They came to the conclusion that India was the most religious country in the world and Sweden was the least religious country in the world. When Peter Berger, the famous sociologist, was told of this, he commented that if India is the most religious country in the world, and Sweden the least religious, then America is a nation of Indians ruled by Swedes. There's a great deal of tragic truth in that. Do you know whose fault that is? It's our fault! It's our fault for not being willing to get involved and to be part of the process.

Jesus told us we are the salt and the light of the world. Salt is a purifying agent and a preservative, but it must come into contact with that which it would purify and preserve. And it not only purifies and preserves, it also stings and irritates. That's why when Jesus said we were to be salt and light, He preceded it by saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and per-

secute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5:11).

I grew up in Southern Baptist churches where it was often said, "Now, we're Christians. That means we don't get involved in anything controversial. We just preach the Gospel." Folks, that's an oxymoron. And as a graduate of Oxford, I want you to know that an oxymoron is not a moron who went to Oxford. An oxymoron is when you take two seemingly contradictory descriptions and use them to describe the same thing. Take "humble Texan," for example. It is just as much of an oxymoron to say "noncontroversial Christian." If we're being salt and light then we are going to be controversial. Jesus intended for us to be controversial! In the first century Christians were known as the people who turned the world upside down, which means they were turning the world upside right.

There has been a conscious, concerted, and clever attempt by some in our country to marginalize Christians and drive them from involvement in the public policy of this nation. We must not allow them to keep us from our rightful place in the public square.

We must convince Christians to run for elected offices at every level, then encourage them to act on their faith-based convictions while they are in office. We must walk, talk, and vote our values. We must elect those who will appoint judges who understand that the Constitution is what governs us, not judges' opinions about the Constitution.

We must have revival. America is too far gone for anything else to save us. We must have a heaven-sent, Spirit-filled, Christ-centered, Cross-focused, life-changing revival, or we are doomed.

I hope you are familiar with the song "Statue of Liberty." It has special meaning to me. I had been back in America for three days after three years in England. I had moved to Dallas to take a position at Criswell College, and I was

taken to Family Night at the Music Hall at Fair Park. They were having their God-and-Country celebration, and it culminated with a rousing rendition of that great song, which says "A rugged cross is my Statue of Liberty." As the screen showed the Statue of Liberty, the song talked about the blessings of being an American. I just broke down and wept.

We live, by the grace of God, in the most blessed country on earth. God has blessed us wonderfully. But He has often blessed us in spite of ourselves. Our salvation will never be in America but in the Cross of Jesus Christ. We must have a revival, and it must be a revival, a revival that blossoms into an awakening and becomes a reformation. It's too late for just a revival. The revival has got to come first, but the revival and the awakening have got to be applied to our government and to our culture. It has to be from the inside out! It has to be a regeneration of our nation through a regeneration of its people that culminates in a reformation that shakes America as Luther and Calvin shook Europe and Whitfield and Wesley shook England and Edwards shook Colonial America for Jesus Christ.

Government can't save us. Government is usually part of the problem, not part of the solution. King Josiah is the perfect example that the government cannot bring revival. King Josiah heard the Word of God, and it broke his heart. He called for reforms. He instituted right and holy worship in the temple. He got rid of pagan excesses. He instituted true religion. And what happened? All of Josiah's reforms died with him because only the king's heart was changed. The people's habits were changed, but their hearts were not. When the king died, the reforms died.

We have a right, we have a responsibility, and we have an obligation to be involved in the civic process. Jesus commanded us to be salt and light. But we must always remember that while the salt of the law can change ac-

tions, only the light of the Gospel can change attitudes. The salt of the law can change behaviors, but it is only the light of the Gospel that can change beliefs. The salt of the law can change habits, but it is only the light of the Gospel that can change hearts.

My dear brothers and sisters, when we are in crisis there is always a danger that we will turn to the government and try to make the government our ally. And it is a danger to say, "If we can just get the government to sponsor our religion, we can bring about revival." That always has been and always will be a fatal bargain. When the government sponsors religion, the government thinks it owns religion. When the government puts its arm around you and embraces you, it's like being squeezed by a python. You lose all life and vitality and eventually drop dead.

Government-sponsored religion is government-dictated, government-de-luded religion. We don't want the government to sponsor religion! We want the government to quit suppressing our right to be involved. We want the government to guarantee a level playing field and then to get off the field! Does that mean that false religions have the same rights to express their opinions and their beliefs as we do? Sure. Let them come. I never saw Elijah backing away from a confrontation with the prophets of Baal. He just showed them the power of the One True God!

Let us never forget our Baptist heritage. America will never get the proper role of religion in society right without Baptists and our heritage. It's in our genetic code to mistrust government when they come to us and say, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help you." With government sponsorship, with government favoritism, comes government control. The Baptist Faith and Message says the church

should never resort to the state to do its work. It's our job. It's our privilege. It's our work to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But when we preach that Gospel, and God has blessed it and people's hearts and minds have been changed, then they have the right as citizens to come forth in the public arena and say, "This is wrong, and we want it stopped."

For example, abortion is the murder of babies, and we want laws to change it. When we convince a majority of Americans that we are right, that's not called a theocracy, that's called the democratic process.

God knows that I love my country, but Christians, our hope is not in America. America's hope is in Christ. Ask not what your country can do for God. Ask what God can do for your country. And the answer, of course, is everything.

Christians, let's heed the call to stand in the gap and repair the hedge and claim the promise of God when He said, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14). May there be a new birth of freedom, may there be a new birth of morality, may we stand in the ways and see the old paths and heed the watchmen on the wall.

The Bible says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). The vision is the Chazon, the entirety of the Word of God, and it is our job to proclaim and preach the Gospel. It is no one else's responsibility. It's the job of those who name the name of Christ. The Cross is our liberty and our salvation.

God bless you, God bless your family, and God bless the United States of America.

(Richard Land is president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. His most recent book, *The Divided States of America? What Liberals AND Conservatives Are Missing in the God-and-Country Shouting Match!* (Thomas Nelson, 2007) is available at Christian bookstores and online at www.familybookstore.net.)

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2 National Incidence Study [online] 2006 [cited 22 April 2007].

3 Children and Television Violence [online] 15 April 2007 [cited 22 April 2007].

4 Statistics on Teens [online] 20207 [cited 22 April 2007].

5 Teen Statistics [online] n.d. [cited 22 April 2007].

6 Teen Suicide Statistics [online] 2005 [cited 22 April 2007].

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8 Statistics and Information on Pornography in the US [online] 2005 [cited 22 April 2007].

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10 Stop Violence [online] 2006 [cited 22 April 2007].

11 The Epidemic of Sexually Transmitted Diseases [online] July 2002 [cited 22 April 2007].

12 Abortion in the United States: Statistics and Trends, National Right to Life [online], n.d. [cited 2 April 2007].

13 John F. Kennedy [online] 21 April 2007 [cited 22 April 2007].

14 Slavery the Snake of the Union Bed Speech at New Haven, Conn. March 6, 1860 [online] 2007 [cited 22 April 2007].

15 Philip E. Johnson. Books in Review: The Culture of Disbelief [online] December 1993 [cited 22 April 2007].

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Know Jesus, Know Peace
No Jesus, No Peace see I John 3:24

Walk In the Narrow Way

by Bro. Richard Lee
Waycross, Georgia

First, familiarize yourself with the following Scripture where Jesus spoke this in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it.

God is unchanging. The ways that He would have His people to go are the same today as they have always been. Now think about the people of this world and how we have changed. The people of this nation, in the beginning, were blessed to overcome many obstacles to establish this nation. Even the very purpose of breaking away from England was so they could have and enjoy the freedom to worship God, so there is no doubt that these people were walking close with God. I believe these people knew and understood their need for God and for His protection so they stayed close to God, they feared God and followed his commandments, and they were blessed. These people were on the straight and narrow way that leads to life.

Most of us are descendants of these people. Contrast our way of life, our dedication to service of God, our feeling of the need for prayer, how thankful we are when a prayer has been answered, etc. to the way of those who came before us. Have we followed in the same path that they were traveling? We must be careful to be sure our path falls in line with God's word, but also, we should consider the ways of our forefathers. In order to keep a path in sight or defined with an edge or boundaries, we must continue to use

this path. If each generation following the founders of this nation had followed in the exact foot steps of his father, the path would be well worn and easy to see. In fact, the path would be so smooth and deep that one would immediately fall when he stepped out of the path, there would be such a noticeable difference.

However, because we have the flesh to fight with, we often get off the path, we have widened the area that we walk so much that we have trampled the border to the point that it is hard to recognize when we are on the path and when we are not.

This results in some children of God straying from the path into the wilderness and getting so far from the path that they never find the path again. They are on the "broad way that leads to destruction". These people experience a "soul death" which is a separation from God. What initiated this? The child of God was tempted by the devil to step off the path to maybe experience a little bit of the world, but kept walking away from the narrow path. God did not lead them that way. We must remember to not stray from this close walk with God else the path, though it never moved, will become lost to us, and we will never be able to find it again without God's help. When reading Matthew 7:13,14, I get the sense that the gate to the narrow way that leads to life is not easily found. "Strait" is sometimes defined as a difficult situation or a close place. I don't believe that we can even recognize the entrance to the strait gate without God's help. I think we must first walk with God, fearing God and keeping His commandments before He will even show us the way to the strait gate. God

has reserved this way for His obedient children.

I can't help but think about how we as humans act in the wilderness. We are sometimes carefree, running and playing, going about life like we did not have a care in the world. Then we come to an obstacle, maybe a fence or a mountain too steep to climb. Maybe there is a small gate in the fence or a pass in the mountain. If you notice, during these trying times, if we are blessed to find the way, there is a well-worn path there. We will be content and will rejoice when we can walk together on this path. We are comforted by the close fellowship with God's people. I am sure we can all remember where we were on September 11, 2001. During this tragedy, many Americans were caused to humble themselves, seek God, turn from their wicked ways, and pray for help. I believe during this time, many of God's people found themselves coming together on one common path under the protection of God's wing. While this event was terrible, the people of God were, for a few days united, seeking protection on that path that our forefathers used.

How can we more easily find the path that we should travel? Read Proverbs 3: 5, 6 and Psalms 119:105.

It is my hope that we could conduct ourselves in a manner that we could be shown the entrance that leads to the strait gate. When we are blessed to find the narrow path, may we stay on the path and lead our children and the generations to follow through this close walk with God, which leads to life, abundant life in the kingdom of heaven while we live here on this earth. What a blessing to have life NOW!

The Slow Erosion of Sin

There is a legend about Duchess Isabella wanting to obtain some object, but she did not know how. She went to the court astrologer and asked him how she could obtain the object.

The astrologer told her to kiss a certain beautiful picture for a hundred days; then she would receive the fulfillment of her wish.

It was a sinister trick, for the picture contained a subtle poison which stained her lips with every salutation. Little by little the golden tresses of the queenly woman turned white, her eyes became dim, her color faded, her lips became black; but because she was so infatuated, the suicidal kiss was continued until the royal dupe lay dead.

So we yield ourselves to the sorcery of sin. Despite many warnings, we persist in our fellowship with what seems truth, beauty, liberty, pleasure, until our whole soul is poisoned and destroyed. Sin when it is finished, brings forth death.

Bible Reading Calendar for October

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
1	Isa. 19,20,21	Eph. 2
2	Isa. 22,23	Eph. 3
3	Isa. 24,25,26	Eph. 4
4	Isa. 27,28	Eph. 5
5	Isa. 29,30	Eph. 6
6	Isa. 31,32,33	Phil. 1
7	Isa. 34,35,36	Phil. 2
8	Isa. 37,38	Phil. 3
9	Isa. 39,40	Phil. 4
10	Isa. 41,42	Col. 1
11	Isa. 43,44	Col. 2
12	Isa. 45,46,47	Col. 3
13	Isa. 48,49	Col. 4
14	Isa. 50,51,52	I Thess. 1
15	Isa. 53,54,55	I Thess. 2

DATE	MORNING	EVENING
16	Isa. 56,57,58	I Thess. 3
17	Isa. 59,60,61	I Thess. 4
18	Isa. 62,63,64	I Thess. 5
19	Isa. 65,66	II Thess. 1
20	Jer. 1,2	II Thess. 2
21	Jer. 3,4	II Thess. 3
22	Jer. 5,6	I Tim. 1
23	Jer. 7,8	I Tim. 2
24	Jer. 9,10	I Tim. 3
25	Jer. 11,12,13	I Tim. 4
26	Jer. 14,15,16	I Tim. 5
27	Jer. 17,18,19	I Tim. 6
28	Jer. 20,21,22	II Tim. 1
29	Jer. 23,24	II Tim. 2
30	Jer. 25,26	II Tim. 3
31	Jer. 27,28	II Tim. 4

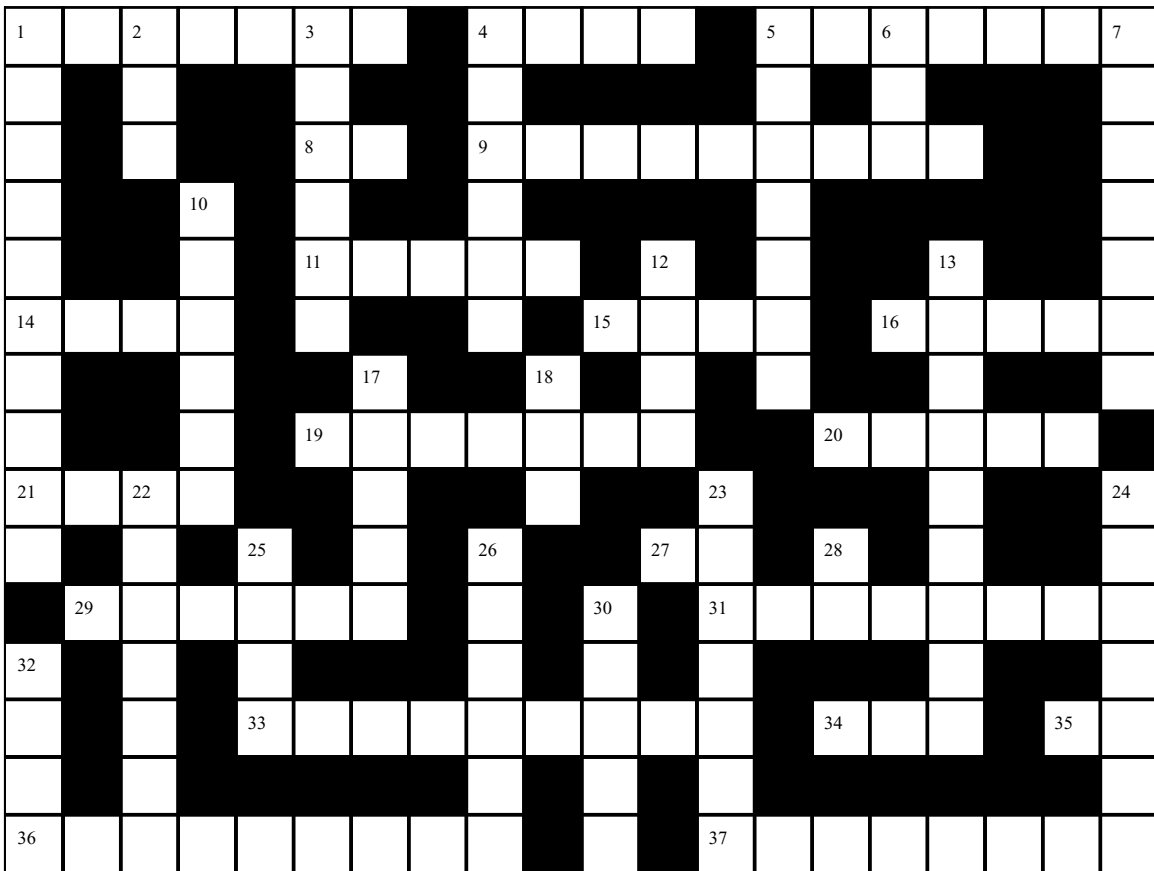
**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE VOLUME
XXIII SEPTEMBER
2007**

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1. "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, _____, sincerity," 4. "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no _____ thing to say of you." 5. "Because I have called, and ye _____; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 8. "The Lord is _____ shepherd; I shall not want." 9. "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and _____, specially they of the circumcision:" 11. "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy _____;" 14. "I _____ will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;" 15. "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my _____; of whom shall I be afraid?" 16. "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth _____." 19. "Every good gift and every _____ gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." 20. "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me _____, but they shall not find me:" 21. "And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall _____ again." 27. "Which having _____ guide, overseer, or ruler," 29. "For this cause left I in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and _____ elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:" 31. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; _____ her ways, and be wise: 33. "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, _____;" 34. "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from _____ the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." 35. "But, beloved, remember _____ the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;" 36. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve _____ apart in the way, and said unto them," 37. "Nevertheless I have _____ against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."



DOWN

1. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the _____." 2. "And we know that _____ things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." 3. "And saying, Thou that destroyest the _____, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." 4. "Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and _____, said," 5. "And they that passed by _____ him, wagging their heads," 6. "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, _____ filthy lucre's sake." 7. "He trusted in God; let him _____ him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." 10. "For that they hated knowledge and did not _____ the fear of the Lord:" 12. "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of _____ or unruly." 13. "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a _____; when distress and anguish cometh upon you." 17. "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had _____, so he would also finish in you the same grace also." 18. "But ye have _____ at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:" 22. "Behold, we go up in Jerusalem; and the son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the _____, and they shall condemn him to death," 23. "How that they told you there should be _____ in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." 24. "Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the _____." 25. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, _____ the same in his teeth." 26. "He saved _____; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." 28. "Paul, a servant of God, and -apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness." 30. "_____ up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." 32. "The slothful hideth his _____ in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth."