



STANDING IN THE GAP

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL STANDING IN THE GAP LECTURESHIP

“Practical Truths for Christians”

Friday, January 29, 2010 – Sunday, January 31, 2010

TIME	TOPIC	SPEAKER
Friday 9:00 A.M.	The Christian and Time Management	Bobby Liddell
Friday 10:00 A.M.	The Christian and Worship	Garland Elkins
Friday 11:00 A.M.	The Christian and Evangelism	Billy Bland
<i>Lunch provided by the Nesbit congregation</i>		
Friday 1:00 P.M.	How Christians Handle Church Problems	Gary Colley
Friday 2:00 P.M.	How a Christian Man Can Serve God	Jason McDade
Fri. 2:00 P.M. (Ladies)	How a Christian Woman Can Serve God	Maggie Colley
<i>Dinner break</i>		
Friday 7:00 P.M.	The Christian's Abhorrence of Evil, Love for Good	B. J. Clarke
<i>Break until Saturday afternoon</i>		
Saturday 2:00 P.M.	Practical Advice for Young Christians	Scott Cain
Saturday 3:00 P.M.	The Christian's Study Habits	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Saturday 4:00 P.M.	The Christian Man and the Home	Dave Leonard
Sat. 4:00 P.M. (Ladies)	The Christian Woman and the Home	Irene Taylor
<i>Break until next morning</i>		
Sunday 9:00 A.M.	The Christian's Conduct in the Kingdom	Robert Jefferies
Sunday 10:00 A.M.	How Christians Deal With Problems	Keith Mosher
<i>Potluck Lunch</i>		
Sunday 6:00 P.M.	The Christian and His Influence	Wade Webster
Sunday 7:30 P.M.	The Christian's Hope	Curtis Cates

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HOW A CHRISTIAN MAN CAN SERVE GOD

Jason McDade

I. MOTIVATED PERSONALLY

A. Categories of Christians

1. Those that make things happen.
2. Those that watch what happens.
3. Those that don't even know what happened!

B. Concepts of Christians

1. Some think busy Christians are "Professional Christians."
2. Busy Christians know the joy of service: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

II. MOTIVATED BY A PROPHET (Hag. 1:1-11; Ezra 6:15)

A. Excuses of the Israelites for not building the temple (Haggai 1:1-6).

1. Aimlessness of the people: "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (Hag. 1:2).

a. Remnant returned from captivity to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:3).

1) They looked to God (Ezra 3:1).

2) They laid the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:10-11).

b. Remnant that returned ceased in rebuilding the temple (Ezra 4:24).

1) They lacked focus (Hag. 1:2).

2) They lost conviction (Ezra 4:23, Neh. 4:16-18).

2. Appraisal of the people: "Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Hag. 1:3-6).

a. Procrastination of the people (Hag. 1:2b).

1) Do we procrastinate doing the work of God because we lack the necessary:

i. Skills? (Matt. 28:19-20; II Tim. 2:15)

ii. Strategy? (Mark 16:15; Heb. 4:12; Gal. 6:10)

iii. Support? (cf. Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 10:13-15)

b. Preoccupation of the people (Hag. 1:3-6).

- 1) Have we become preoccupied with the following, thus hindering our service in the kingdom?
 - i. Materialism (Hag. 1:3-6a; Lu. 12:15-21).
 - ii. Money (I Tim. 6:9-10).
 - iii. Mundane (Rev. 3:14-19).
 - iv. Merriment (II Tim. 3:4).
- B. Exhortations from Haggai to the Israelites to build the temple (Hag. 1:5-2:9).
 1. Admonition to the people
 - a. They were to consider their ways (Hag. 1:5, 7; II Co. 13:5)
 - b. The consequences of their ways (Hag. 1:9-11; Gal. 6:7-10)
 2. Activities of the people
 - a. They were to be fervent in the Lord (Hag. 1:8).
 - b. They were faithful to the Lord (Hag. 1:12-14).
 - c. They feared the Lord (Hag. 1:12b).
 3. Assurances to the people
 - a. Their favor from the Lord (Hag. 2:1-9; Matt. 28:20b).
- C. An Exhortation for us
 1. Admonishment from Paul: “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb. 6:9-12).

III. MOTIVATED BY PRECEPT (Matt. 28:18-20, Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47)

- A. Aim: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).
- B. Agree to carry out the command: “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality...And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord” (2 Cor. 8:1-2, 5).
- C. Aware: “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Rom. 10:1).
- D. Attitude: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). “For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren” (Rom. 9:3).

E. Areas of Work: The primary mission of the Church is to evangelize. Every area of service supports that goal and thus every member should think of the service they render in terms of evangelism.

1. Evangelize the lost. (Mk. 16:15)
2. Extend good will to all men. (Gal. 6:10)
3. Edify the brethren (1 Thess. 5:11).

F. An Advisement

1. The answer to the question what can a Christian man do to serve God has more answers than we can discuss in one study. The main factor is the desire the brother has to serve. The reason some Christians are more active than others is that busy Christians find good works to be involved in and do what they can to help. How do they find these good works? They see a need and fill it. If a need does not present itself they ask how they can help and get to work.
2. One important service that a Christian man can do to further the cause of Christ is contribute to a brotherhood evangelistic work. Evangelistic works such as Spiritual Sword Media need funds to operate. The dollars committed to works like these go straight to evangelism, which is the faithful Christians primary concern. The economy is down and Spiritual Sword Media is hurting yet the theaters and restaurants stay packed with patrons. If the average person can scrounge enough to see a movie or eat out at a nice restaurant once a month, then he also has the ability to scrounge enough to help save a person from eternal doom! If one does not have the ability to give with his current standard of living and is committed to putting the Lord first he can take on more work and contribute that or he can volunteer his serves by making himself available to help in things that he *can* do.
3. If you make the decision that your household will contribute 10 dollars every week to Spiritual Sword Media or another good brotherhood work it will help keep that work going and growing into the future indefinitely. If every Christian man made that commitment, reaching the entire world (all 6.5 billion people) with the saving gospel of Christ would be well within reach! The success of these works relies on you and without production studios like Spiritual Sword Media and outlets like GBN we will not reach the world in our lifetime. Though every evangelistic work in the

brotherhood is needed we cannot afford not to use mass media. Mass media is the only tool we have that touch every soul in the whole world with the truth of Jesus Christ and we will be held accountable for it in the Day of Judgment. Let us use the tools we have wisely.

HOW A CHRISTIAN WOMAN CAN SERVE GOD

Maggie Colley

TEXT: Titus 2:3-5

INTRODUCTION:

1. This is a study that should interest every Christian lady.
2. Our world has little interest in subjects of this nature.
3. The work of Christian ladies is so very important!

I. WHO IS A CHRISTIAN LADY?

- A. She is one who obeys the first principles of the Gospel to become a Christian (faith, repentance, confession, and baptism).
- B. She is one who rises from baptism to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4).
- C. She is one who makes right choices as she lives for the Lord.
- D. She is one who adds the Christian virtues or graces daily to her life (II Pet. 1:5-11).

II. HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE THE HEART OF A SERVANT?

- A. We must love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matt. 22:37-39).
- B. To be a faithful Christian, we must be a faithful steward (Lk. 12:42).
 1. The Lord entrusts us with “talents” (Matt. 25:1-13).
 2. We are not rewarded for having talents, but for using them.
 3. A steward is one who oversees faithfully the things of another (I Pet. 4:10).
 4. We must realize that all we have belongs to God (I Tim. 6:6-8).
- C. We need to develop the attitude of the Prodigal Son returning home (Lk. 15:14-19).
 1. This is the attitude of a “hired servant” working in the Lord’s vineyard, the church, as a member of the vine (Jn. 15:1-6).

III. HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN WOMAN SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY?

- A. As her greatest responsibility she can raise her children correctly (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4).
 1. If we fail in this we have failed in a most important part of life.
 2. Noah was a success in that he saved his family (Heb. 11:7).
- B. She is especially instructed to love (have care and concern for) her husband.
- C. She is also instructed to love (have care and concern for) her children.

- D. She is to be discreet (sober minded).
- E. She is to be chaste (not chased), in her words, actions, and dress.
- F. She is to be a keeper (worker) at home.
- G. She is to be good (kind).
- H. She is to be obedient to her own husband, that the word of God be not blasphemed (cf. Qualification of elders and deacons wives--I Tim. 3:11).

IV. WHAT CAN A CHRISTIAN WOMAN DO IN SERVING GOD IN THE CHURCH?

- A. She must be faithful to all the services of the church, even Ladies Bible Classes, Gospel Meetings, VBS, etc. (Heb. 10:23-25).
 - 1. In this way she is a proper example to her family and friends.
- B. She should visit the sick.
- C. She should show empathy and sympathy in weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice (Rom. 12:15).
- D. She can write cards to shut-ins, and those absent from services.
- E. She can teach ladies and children's classes.
- F. She should welcome, encourage, and invite visitors at worship services to return.
 - 1. She should inquire about teaching ladies in a private Bible Study.

CONCLUSION:

1. Let us do all in the authority of the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:16-17).
2. Let us as Christian ladies respect and uphold the hands of the elders, preachers, and Bible class teachers in the church (Heb. 13:17).
3. Let us look forward with anticipation the blessings of Heaven (I Jn. 2:25; Rev. 14:13).

HOW CHRISTIANS HANDLE CHURCH PROBLEMS

Gary Colley

TEXT: Ephesians 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

1. Unity and harmony are needed in the body of Christ, the church.
 - A. Ephesus had unity, and were instructed to keep it in the bond of peace.
2. The “unity of the Spirit” has seven parts: One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God.
 - A. The church of Christ established on Pentecost were of one heart and one soul (Acts 2:46; 4:32).
 - B. Denominations deny each of the units of the Spirit’s revelation.
3. The first church of Christ was guided by inspired men; Therefore it is the ideal and pattern for all things (Acts 2:42).

I. MANY DANGERS CONFRONT THE LORD’S CHURCH.

- A. Anything that is a threat to the souls of men is a danger to peace in the church. (Matt.16:24-26; II Cor.11:28)
 1. Moral degeneracy (Tit. 2:11-12).
 2. Doctrinal degeneracy (II Jn.9-11)
 3. Forewarned is to be forearmed! (I Cor.15:58).
- B. We must remember that Satan and his ministers are always a threat (I Pet. 5:8).
- C. Some brethren and some churches have clearly fallen into apostasy! (Heb. 2:1-4; II Pet.2:20-22)

II. WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CHURCH PROBLEMS?

- A. The church at Ephesus had peace because they had one Head, Jesus the Christ (Eph.1:22-23).
 1. They all therefore had one authority for all to live by in unity (Jn.17:20-21;Rom.16:17-18; I Cor.1:10-15).
- B. Where there is a lessening of respect and appreciation for the New Testament, there will be problems.
 1. All who add to, or take away from God’s Word are under condemnation (Rev.22:18-19).
 2. Some throw up a smoke-screen appeal for “relevance.”
 3. This is an accusation that the Gospel is not “up-to-date!”
 4. These want to sing “happy birthday” at baptisms; Women to lead in worship services; “New” translations; broader fellowship; etc.

5. These deny that we have a pattern in time and purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper (Matt.28:20; Acts 2:42; 20:7).

III. HOW ARE WE AS CHRISTIANS TO HANDLE CHURCH PROBLEMS?

- A. We must be noble in searching the Scriptures like the Bereans!
(Acts 17:11)
 1. We must be good soldiers in the Lord's army (Eph.6:10-17; I Tim.6:12).
 2. Let each Christian "Stand up, Stand up, for Jesus!" (Matt.7:21; I Cor.16:13-14).
- B. Elders in the church, who continue in "the apostles doctrine," are the first line of defense (Acts 20:28; Tit.1:9-11).
- C. When church problems arose in the early church of Christ, the brethren appealed to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15).
- D. Judaizing teachers had tried to make the Old Law binding on those becoming Christians, especially the act of circumcision, thus making the Gospel simply an extension of the Old Law (Matt.5:17, 20; Col.2:14).
 1. God, through Peter's teaching and baptizing Cornelius, showed that Gentiles could obey the Gospel without observing the Law of Moses (Acts 10:1-48).
 2. The church in Antioch suffered from Jewish teachers who then attempted to enforce circumcision after one became a Christian (Acts 15:1).
 3. These teachers did not respect the authority of Paul the apostle, and their actions showed they thought the apostles in Jerusalem had more authority than Paul and would agree with them.
 - a. These are identified as being Pharisees who had believed or had obeyed the Gospel (Acts 15:5).
 - b. Paul said they were "false brethren who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal.2:4).
 - c. Further he said, "to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal 2: 5).
 4. The church in Antioch handled the problem by sending Paul and Barnabas "and certain other of them" to Jerusalem, where they were received by the church, the other apostles, and the elders (Acts 15:4).

5. Peter spoke first (Acts 15:6-10). Then Barnabas and Paul spoke, and after them, James closed the matter, or brought it to a conclusion (Acts 15:12-19).
 6. The decision resulted in a letter being sent to the churches with four points of things they were to abstain from, none of which pertained directly to the Old Law:
 - a. Pollutions of idols
 - b. Fornication
 - c. Things strangled
 - d. From blood
- E. Judas and Silas who were Jews and prophets, and “chief men among the brethren” (Acts 15: 22, 32), accompanied Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch with the letters.

CONCLUSION:

1. When the church read the letters, they “rejoiced for the consolation” (Acts 15:31).
2. Peace was restored, and the question never arose again concerning the problem.
3. How the early church dealt with “church problems” should be followed by all congregations today.
4. Knowing and living in the Truth brings peace and harmony to the Lord’s church (Jn.8:31-32).

HOW CHRISTIANS HANDLE PROBLEMS

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Problems often occur suddenly, without warning, and can lead to crises in the actions and thinking of Christians.
2. The aged are often neglected; some folks are lonely; children are not taught nor reared in the admonition of the Lord; many are losing their jobs; divorce is rampant; attacks on Christianity are on the rise in this country; jealousy rages; and discontent with life is major.
3. Are there any biblical answers for Christians when dealing with life's problems?
4. This sermon is designed to suggest some solutions and mind-sets that will somewhat help in meeting the challenges all face in this world.

DISCUSSION:

I. CHRISTIANS MUST REALIZE THAT GOD NEVER PROMISED A PERFECT SITUATION IN LIFE.

- A. The proverb is that "The spirit of man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" (Pro. 18:14).
- B. Deducing from the above proverb, one understands that man can face problems that will break one's spirit, and that God recognizes such difficulties for man.
- C. Trusting God, even though times are tough, is a difficult task for many, and is the consequence from lack of faith in His promises: "Casting all your care on him, for he careth for you" (1 Pet. 5:7).
- D. God has promised the following: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do to me" (Heb. 13:5-6).
- E. Given the above promise that God never forsakes His children, when a problem arises, should not a Christian turn to His Father? "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

II. CHRISTIANS MUST REALIZE THAT CHRIST HAS INSTRUCTED THEM ON THE HANDLING OF PERSONAL AFFRONTS.

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

gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Mat. 18:15-20).

1. The above commands from the Christ concerning personal trespasses is often overlooked by brethren -- Often the one injured tells everyone else except the person who trespassed.
2. Note that if the one who trespassed did not listen and repent, the offended brother is required to find two or three who can go and hear the problem; but the witnesses are not to be informed ahead of time.
3. The third step in handling personal conflicts is rarely ever practiced: The entire congregation is to be told of the matter and then all those brethren are to go to the brother who trespassed and exhort him to repent.
4. If the brother who trespassed fails to repent, he is to be thought of as a heathen -- That is, the congregation is to withdraw itself from the offender.

B. There are also instructions from the Christ as to what to do when one is the offender.

1. See Matthew 5:21-24 and focus especially on verse 24: "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."
2. The obligation to settle personal trespasses, whether one is the offender or the one offended, rests on that individual.
3. Note from Matthew 5:24 above that no worship is to be attempted, if personal problems exist between brethren.
3. It is the case that even marital disputes cause the prayers of Christians to lose all effectiveness. "Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7).

III. CHRISTIANS WHO KNOW THE BIBLE HAVE THE GREATEST HELP OF ALL IN HANDLING LIFE'S PROBLEMS.

A. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11).

B. Much of the Bible is concerned with crises. (Think of Adam and Eve; Cain, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Samson, Jephthah, Saul, David, Elijah, Daniel and a host of other figures who faced severe problems.)

C. Jesus Himself faced the crucifixion, and everyone of His disciples faced crises.

1. In fact, Paul wrote his epistles to individuals and congregations who were facing difficulties.
2. Note Hebrews 11 and the following summary: "And what shall I more say...others were tortured, not accepting deliverance...And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented: (Of whom the world was not worthy)..." (Heb. 11:32ff).
3. Contemporary writers have identified three types of personal crises: Accidental or situational; Developmental; and Existential.
 - a. Accidental crises are unexpected -- Compare Job.
 - b. Developmental crises occur in the normal course of living -- For example one may go off to college, lose one's job, or face death of self or friends.
 - c. Existential problems occur when one is forced to face some truth about oneself such as: I have failed; I am too old to reach my goals; I have been "passed over" for promotion; I am single again; My life has no purpose; My illness is incurable; I have no faith; I lost everything in a fire; I am retired; or I have been rejected because of my nationality, skin color, or creed.
4. David, during a personal crisis wrote: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health (Hebrew, help, K.M.) of my countenance, and my God" (Psa. 43:5).

D. The causes of being unable to handle problems are manifold.

1. There can be genetic or physical problems and many suffer difficulties from improper diet, lack of sleep, and even chemical imbalances -- The Christian turns to medical help in such cases.
2. Sometimes, wrong thinking about past experiences leads to the inability to handle life's problems. Paul wrote that the one who has a proper idea about what the Christian life is, can overcome: "...but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience (hupomene, steadfastness, K.M.); "And patience, experience" (dokimeen, proof, K.M.). (The term, dokimeen refers to a state of mind that has stood the test. A Christian who got through one trial is armed for the next one!) Paul adds that "experience" brings "hope" (Rom. 5:3-4).

3. A recent idea about the mishandling of life's problems is that most like to be "in control" and when actions seem to be futile one is most likely to quit.
 - a. However, the Hebrews writer (as noted above) insisted that God does not quit on us (Heb. 13:5-6); and Paul declared that any trial in life is common to all (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - b. So why think that one's problems are "special," when everybody has difficulties?
4. No matter the promises made by God, some will still think negatively, get angry about the problems because of self-pity and just know that nothing works!
 - a. For all those negative thinkers who read this outline, there is a suggestion.
 - b. Please read and follow Philippians 2:14.
5. Perhaps one of the strongest feelings to overcome when trying to face problems is guilt.
 - a. However, the forgiven man is a forgiving man (Mat. 5:9-15).
 - b. The forgiven do not find it necessary to be harsh judges of others.

IV. CHRISTIANS LEARN TO RECONCILE PROBLEMS AND DO NOT THINK IN TERMS OF "RESOLVING" SUCH.

- A. The greatest problem ever is sin -- God did not "resolve" the sin problem, but He did reconcile it (2 Cor. 5:18-21).
- B. When problems arise many want to resolve them, but humans do not have erasers in their brains so that hurts and such are forgotten.
 1. However, one can reconcile with another, and the problem will not exist again if not rehearsed.
 2. Two little boys were fighting and yelled at each other that they would never play together again. The mother of one overheard the statements, but as she looked out to the yard the very next day, the boys were again playing together. The mother asked her son about what she had heard each say about never again being playmates. Her son replied, "Aw, me and Johnny are good forgetters!"

CONCLUSION:

1. Life was not promised to be perfect.
2. Christ has given explicit instructions as to the handling of personal problems.
3. Those who know the Bible are well fortified when problems arise.
4. Reconciliation is the answer to problem solving.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

Scott Cain

INTRODUCTION:

1. "Practical" indicates that which is manifested in practice or action, capable of being put into use, and which is more than theoretical or ideal.
 - A. "Advice" is information given regarding some subject, or a recommendation regarding a decision or a course of conduct.
 - B. A "young Christian" is a Christian who is either young in age or young in the faith: a babe in Christ.
 - C. "Practical Advice for Young Christians" is useful information for the day-to-day lives of new converts of all ages.
 - D. Knowledge is nothing if it is ignored, and useful advice is not useful to the hearer until he puts it to practice (James 1:22; 4:17).
2. The most practical advice usually begins with "keep your eye on the..."
 - A. Staying focused is pivotal in the Christian's relationship with Jesus (I Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10).
 - B. Christians who stay focused stay faithful (Hebrews 12:1-2).
 - C. The Christian who loses focus on the strait and narrow way is likely to run into a ditch, and he will often take others with him.
 - D. The world is a forest; who runs through a forest with closed eyes?
3. Some have said, "I would not want to be a teenager these days," or, "I would not want to be a new Christian with the world like it is today."
 - A. It is always better to be a new Christian than an old sinner.
 - B. Today's challenges vary in intensity from those of yesteryear, but they are the same challenges God's people have always faced (Ecclesiastes 1:9).
 - C. Those who become overly focused on their trials are more prone to sin (I Corinthians 10:12-14).
4. If any person in the New Testament knew the importance of focus, it was Peter.
 - A. There was a time when Peter took his eyes off of Jesus (Matthew 14:28-31).
 - B. Peter's eyes saw Jesus teach, tend to the sick, tread on water, transfigured, taken into custody, and tried by the Jews, yet he still lost sight of what was important (Luke 23:61).
 - C. One problem was that Peter was not yet converted (Luke 22:31-32).
 - D. A person must change his mind before he can change his life (Acts 3:19).
 - E. A young Christian will often make the mistakes of Peter until he takes that advice of a much older Peter (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18).
 - F. Years later Peter acted as a hypocrite in Antioch when he lost focus on the truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2:11-14).
 - G. The epistles of I Peter and II Peter are letters of exhortations and warnings intended to keep Christians focused on what is most important.

DISCUSSION:

I. KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE LORD: THE ESSENTIALS

- A. *Look to the Lord* (I Peter 2:20-22).
 - 1. Jesus did not sin because of His suffering.
 - a. Jesus left the perfect example by demonstrating that difficult times do not demand compromised morals.
 - b. Christians are Christ-like (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:5).
 - 2. Jesus did not suffer because of His sins (Hebrews 4:15).
 - a. Sin was never Jesus' last option, nor was it His first choice.
 - b. For the true convert, sin is neither a pleasure to be enjoyed nor an alternative to be employed.
 - 3. Focusing on Jesus is practical when it is put into practice.
- B. *Live for the Lord* (I Peter 1:15-16; 2:1).
 - 1. Christians live holy lives so as to please Jesus, not to please men.
 - 2. Christians die to sin (Romans 6:1-2) and live for God (Romans 12:1).
 - 3. No one can be pleasing unto Jesus while filled with wickedness (malice), lies (guile), two-facedness (hypocrisy), envy, and backbiting (evil speaking).
 - 4. Godly living becomes practical when it is put into practice.
- C. *Learn from the Lord* (I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18).
 - 1. God revealed His Word so that Christians could know how to live for Him (II Timothy 3:16-17).
 - 2. How can anyone expect to understand the Word of truth without spending time in it (II Timothy 2:15)?
 - 3. The exhortation to grow in knowledge of the Word is not reserved for young Christians: some of the people addressed by Peter may have been Christians since Pentecost (I Peter 1:1; Acts 2:8-10).
 - 4. Bible study becomes practical when it is put into practice.
- D. *Lean on the Lord* (I Peter 5:6-7).
 - 1. Prayer is *Retrospective*; look back at the past and give thanks and praise (I Timothy 1:12).
 - 2. Prayer is *Circumspective*; look around at the now, give thanks and praise, and seek God's providence (I Timothy 2:1-2).
 - 3. Prayer is *Prospective*; look forward to the future, give thanks and praise for future blessings, seek God's providence, and trust His promises (Philippians 4:6-7).
 - 4. Prayer is *Introspective*; look inside yourself, examine your priorities, determine if they are in accordance with God's revealed will, and submit your will to God's (Matthew 6:10; James 4:15).
 - 5. No one should make his relationship with God a long-distance relationship, because God is always right there (Psalm 46:1).
 - 6. Prayer becomes practical when it is put into practice.
- E. *Love the Lord* (I Pet. 1:8).

1. Those who love Jesus obey Him (John 14:15; Luke 6:46; I Peter 4:2).
 2. Those that love the Lord observe His worship (John 4:24).
 3. Those that love the Lord love His flock (I Peter 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8).
 - a. Loving Jesus means caring for His sheep (John 21:15-17).
 - b. Anyone who does not love Christians does not love Christ.
 4. Loving the Lord becomes practical when it is put into practice.
- F. Christians focused on the *Essentials* are better prepared to face the *Enemy*.

II. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SATAN: THE ENEMY (I Peter 5:8-9).

- A. Do not listen to Satan; *Christians Must Make Changes* (I Peter 1:14-15; 4:1-2).
1. Growth can often be uncomfortable.
 2. Christ's people submit every aspect of life to Him (Luke 14:27-33).
 3. Christians have agreed to change their lives (Romans 12:2).
 4. The more a Christian grows in understanding of the Word, the more a Christian learns of changes that need to be made in life.
 5. Satan tries to make God's instructions seem restrictive, deceptive, and oppressive (Genesis 3:1-5).
 6. If "God loves people just the way that they are," then why must people *repent* in order to be converted (Acts 3:19)?
 7. The Christian is a *new* creature with a *new* life; nothing is new that stays "the same old same old" (II Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:4).
- B. Do not listen to Satan; *Christians Will Meet Challenges* (I Peter 4:16).
1. Fiery Trials awaited Christians in the first century (I Peter 4:12).
 - a. Christians will face hardships in and from the world.
 - b. Satan wants people to believe that suffering is an indication that God does not care (Job 1:9-11).
 - c. Jesus promises an abundant life (John 10:10) and a light burden (Matthew 9:30), but that does not mean that there will never be difficulties (Revelation 2:10).
 - d. Worldliness has always been directly opposed to godliness, and it always will be (I John 2:15-17).
 - e. Christians today may not face the kind of trials discussed by Peter, but the modern world has its own snares.
 2. Former Friends call it strange when Christians change (I Peter 4:4).
 - a. The world wants the saved to return to their former sins.
 - b. Former "best friends" will remind a Christian of past sins in hopes that the guilt will cause him to return to sin.
 - c. New Christians are often accused of being "stuck-up" or "too good" because they no longer take part in iniquity.
 - d. There is no place for being condescending toward non-Christian friends: all Christians are former non-Christians, and none were converted by condescension.

- e. God's people must be a good influence on bad company, not vice versa (I Corinthians 15:33 – this verse also applies to negative influence from those who claim to be Christians).
 - f. Do not simply abandon previous friends without giving them the opportunity to hear the Gospel, too.
3. Family Members can often present a challenge (I Peter 3:1).
 - a. The Christian should not be surprised by family members who refuse to believe his repentance or to accept Jesus; even Jesus faced this situation (John 7:5).
 - b. Making the commitment to follow Jesus will not please everyone, just those that matter most (Acts 8:39; Luke 15:7, 10; I Timothy 2:4).
 - c. Family members that refuse to listen to the Gospel message may be more apt to pay attention to a living example than to a lesson explained (I Peter 3:1-2).
 4. False Doctrines are on Satan's list of favorite tactics (I Peter 2:1).
 - a. The truth is not determined by the popular vote of the religious majority (Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23).
 - b. Christians CAN know the truth (John 8:32).
 - c. Christians CAN know the Lord (I John 2:3-4).
 - d. Christians CAN know they are saved (I John 5:4).
 - e. Perverted forms of the Gospel lead people from salvation to damnation (II Peter 2:19-22).
 - f. Just because a person is religious does not mean he is right.
 - g. Christians must be careful with the religious material we receive and then forward to others (especially e-mails).
 5. Faithfulness (or the lack of it) among some "church members" will be a discouragement (I Peter 5:9).
 - a. Peter knew that some had succumbed to Satan's ploys and encouraged the faithful not to make the same mistake.
 - b. A Christian whose faith relies solely on the perfection of anyone besides Christ is bound for disappointment.
 - c. With God's Word as the standard, Christians must be strengthened by seeing the right actions of brethren yet avoid stumbling over the wrong actions of others (I Corinthians 11:1).

C. Do not listen to Satan; *Christians May Miss Chances.*

1. There is a difference between "mistakes" and "failure."
2. Even an experienced apostle made a mistake (Galatians 2:11-14).
3. Peter sinned and was corrected by Paul, but he did not let his public error lead to a permanent failure for the Lord.
4. His commendation of Paul shows his penitence (II Peter 3:15-16).

5. Christians must be willing to repent rather than allow their past mistakes and shortcomings stand between them and the Lord.
- D. The person who focuses on the *Essentials* and faces the *Enemy* is able to look forward to the *End*.

III. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE LORD'S RETURN: THE END.

- A. *The Promise Is Reserved* (I Peter 1:4).
1. This world is decaying, dirty, and temporary, yet the heavenly inheritance is perfect, pure, and permanent.
 2. NEVER be ashamed of looking forward to heaven.
 3. Heaven is a reality, not an imagination; it is a real destination and a reasonable desire provided by God.
 4. By looking forward to heaven, Christians are willing to live *for* God here in order to live *with* God there.
- B. *Perseverance Is Rewarded* (I Peter 1:7; 4:12-13).
1. When Jesus returns, it will have been worth the wait (I Peter 1:7).
 2. Those who endure hardness for Christ today will enjoy happiness with Christ at His return (I Peter 4:12-13).
 3. Paul had this in mind at the end of his race because it had been in his mind from the beginning (II Timothy 4:7-8)
- C. *Preparation Is Required* (I Peter 1:13).
1. To “gird up the loins” means to get prepared for action or activity (I Kings 18:46; Ephesians 6:14).
 2. The mind that is focused on heaven is the mind that strives to be ready to go there upon Jesus’ return.
- D. *The Priority Is Righteousness* (II Peter 3:10-14).
1. Too many people see heaven as a place where they can shed sin; sin must be discarded here because God does not let it enter there.
 2. How can a person who is continuing in sin look forward to Jesus’ return (II Thessalonians 1:7-10)?
 3. At Jesus’ return, time will have expired.

CONCLUSION:

1. Soul-threatening challenges lie ahead for young Christians and new Christians.
2. Losing focus can cause a Christian can lose sight of God, be blindsided by Satan, and run blindly into destruction.
3. The person that lives life keeping his eye on the Lord and an eye out for Satan is the person who can look forward to the reward of Heaven.
4. Knowing is only half of the battle: doing is the other half (II Peter 3:17).

THE CHRISTIAN AND EVANGELISM

Billy Bland

INTRODUCTION:

1. "In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:31-35).
 - A. The theme of this year's lectureship is; "Practical Truths for Christians."
 - B. According to Oxford's Dictionary, the word "practical" means "of or concerned with practice rather than theory," "likely to be effective in real circumstances; feasible," (Oxford University Press, Corel WordPerfect X3).
 - C. All the information we receive is of no real value **IF** we do not put it into practice (action).
 - D. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).
2. The text:
 - A. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman. John 4:5-30
 - B. The disciples encourage Jesus to eat food. 4:31-33
 - C. Jesus explains His food is to do the will of Him that sent Him and to finish His work. 4:34
 - D. Jesus then encourages diligence in evangelism. 4:35
 - E. Both the sower and the reaper rejoice together. 4:36

DISCUSSION:

I. WHY THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO BE EVANGELISTIC.

- A. Because souls are lost.
 1. What does it mean to be lost? Luke 16:19-31; Mat. 25:30, 46; Mark 9:44, 36, 48
 2. People (souls) are lost right now – see Luke 19:10: "was lost."
 3. Do we really believe souls are lost?
- B. Because of the great value of the soul. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat. 16:26).
- C. The majority of people believe they are going to Heaven when they die.
 1. In contrast, Jesus says; "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: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Mat. 7:13-15, cf. Luke 13:23-24).

2. People need to know that outside of Christ, they are lost.
 3. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).
- D. Because false teachers are leading souls away from God and His truth.
1. Jesus warns - "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Mat. 7:15).
 2. We can be asleep to the fact that false teachers are sowing their seed: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way" (Mat. 13:25).
 3. Paul warned about the false teachers as well - "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).
 4. False doctrine will be sown till the end of the world: "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels" (Mat. 13:39).
 5. Christians need to be teaching the truth, until the end of the world (Mat. 28:18-20).
- E. Because Christ has **commanded** us to teach the lost.
1. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. **Go ye** therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mat. 28:18-20).
 2. "And he said unto them, **Go ye** into all the world, and **preach** the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).
 - a. It is not the great "permission."
 - b. It is the Great commission.
 - c. Notice the authority behind the commission "all authority," "Go ye therefore."

II. HOW DO WE ESTABLISH BIBLE STUDIES WITH THE LOST?

- A. Jesus said, "lift up your eyes." John 4:35-36

1. Don't say four months then comes the harvest (don't delay).
 2. "Lift up your eyes" - First aorist active imperative - a deliberate looking.
 3. There is a vast harvest with few workers. Mat. 9:36-38
 4. Illustration: Workers looking at rice field and never gathering the rice. Owner of rice field asked what is wrong? Workers respond, "We don't know where to begin." Owner replied, "Begin where you are!!"
- B. Where does one obtain contacts for Bible studies?
1. Residents within our community. (A survey revealed that 70 to 80 percent of people chose a particular church because they were invited by friends, neighbors, or family (Mac Layton, "How to Build a Great Church").
 2. Visitors to the services. (Welcome them; Visit them)
 3. Family members of fellow Christians (spouse and/or children)
 4. Unfaithful members. James 5:19-20; 2 Peter 2:20-22
- C. How do we develop interest?
1. Search (lift up your eyes) for opportunity to discuss Bible. (Discuss the Bible class, a sermon recently preached, etc.).
 2. Develop interest by using open ended questions (What, why, where, etc., cf. Mat. 16:13, 22:42)
- D. Conduct the study with person, using sound materials and/or methods (materials - "Search For Truth" 12 lessons, "You Can Be Sure" 3 lessons, etc.).
- E. When conducting the study:
1. Take pew Bibles that are all alike, if possible. This way you can tell the person the page number where the passage under discussion is located.
 2. Allow the one with whom you are studying to read the passage.
 3. Make sure the person understands the point before moving on to the next point.
 4. When you get to the question dealing with baptism, do not tell the student the purpose of baptism yet. If you tell the student that baptism is "for the remission of sins," likely he will tell you he was baptized for the remission of sins even if he was not scripturally baptized.
 5. When you are convinced the person knows what he or she should do to be saved, exhort the person to obey the Gospel: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:11).
 6. In the Bible study do not seek to prove "you are right and he is wrong." Rather seek to convince the person that the Bible is

right: "For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth" (Psa. 33:4).

III. THE JOY ASSOCIATED WITH EVANGELISM.

A. The joy of the one who is saved.

1. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. **And there was great joy in that city**" (Acts 8:5-8).
2. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and **he went on his way rejoicing**" (Acts 8:35-39).

B. The joy of the one who wins souls.

1. "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:4-6).
2. "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost (Luke 15:8-9).
3. "And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:23-24). "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:32).

C. The joy in Heaven.

1. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).
2. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10).
3. Heaven rejoices when **one** sinner repents!

CONCLUSION:

1. We have a great and wonderful work to accomplish.
2. Jesus instructs us to "lift up your eyes." John 4:35-36
 - A. Don't say - "four months..." (Don't delay)
 - B. "lift up your eyes." (Imperative) -- a deliberate looking.
 - C. "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mat. 4:19).

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS INFLUENCE

Wade Webster

INTRODUCTION:

1. When Jesus was preparing to leave, the disciples desperately wanted to go with Him (John 13:36-37; 14:1-6).
 - A. Although Jesus loved them dearly, and wanted them to be with Him eternally, He needed for them to stay in the world and to continue the work that He had started.
 - B. He prayed that God would keep them from evil, but not that God would take them out of the world (John 17:15).
2. In like manner, Jesus needs us in the world.
 - A. He needs us to exert a powerful influence over the world in which we live.
 - B. In the Sermon on the Mount, He addressed the matter head on.
3. The word "influence" comes from the Italian word "influenza."
 - A. Influenza refers to "the influence of the cold."
 - B. Usually today, the word is simply shortened to flu.
 - C. When we think about the flu, we probably think about that which is powerful, albeit in a bad way, and we think of that which is contagious.
 - 1) In like manner, the way that people act, talk, and think is both powerful and contagious.
 - 2) I once saw a bulletin board that read: "Attitudes are contagious, is yours worth catching?"
 - 3) You may recall the influence that the ten faithless spies had upon the children of Israel as they prepared to enter the Promised Land (Deut. 1:28).
4. Of course, influence can be powerful in both a negative way and a positive way.
 - A. Sam Levenson, a well-known comedian told the following story about his first day in kindergarten:
 - 1) His mother was anxious about him being in school so she took him to class the first day and insisted on meeting his teacher.
 - 2) Sam's mother told the teacher that if Sam did anything wrong that she was to spank the boy next to him.
 - 3) When the teacher corrected her and said, "Don't you mean Sam?"
 - 4) Sam's mother responded, "No, I mean the boy next to him; After all, my son learns by example."
 - B. The truth is, we all learn by example. Example is a powerful force (1 Cor. 15:33).

C. Benjamin Franklin wanted to convince the citizens of Philadelphia of the benefits of street lighting.

- 1) Unlike today, there were no lamps to light the traveler's way.
- 2) Franklin didn't call a town meeting or take out an ad in the newspaper.
- 3) He simply purchased the nicest lantern that he could and hung it each evening outside of his own front door.
- 4) He made sure to keep it shined and burning brightly.
- 5) Within a short time, people began to gather on the street in front of his house to talk, and it wasn't long before he noticed others hanging lanterns outside of their houses.
- 6) Without saying a word, he convinced the citizens of Philadelphia of the benefits of street lighting.
- 7) Augustine once declared, "Preach the gospel at all times, if necessary, use words."

D. A few years ago, Monterrey, California was facing an environmental disaster.

- 1) For years, the fishing industry of Monterrey was booming.
- 2) In fact, John Steinbeck talked about it in Cannery Row.
- 3) However, overfishing and regulation caused the industry to decline.
- 4) One by one the canneries closed their doors.
- 5) During the booming years, a huge pelican population developed in Monterrey.
- 6) When the fish were cleaned, the scraps were cast into the water and the pelicans thrived on the free food.
- 7) Over time, the pelicans of Monterrey lost their ability to fish.
- 8) When the canneries closed, no scraps were being thrown into the water, and the pampered pelicans didn't know how to fend for themselves.
- 9) Starvation and disease were on the horizon.
- 10) A group of experts were called in to see what could be done.
- 11) After careful study, someone suggested that pelicans from another area be introduced to the native population of Monterrey.
- 12) The pelicans that were introduced had grown up fishing to survive.
- 13) When they were relocated in Monterrey, they did what they had always done -- They went out in search of fish.
- 14) Within a short time, the native pelicans of Monterrey began to follow their lead and an environmental disaster was avoided.
- 15) In like manner, many people in our world have forgotten how to live.
- 16) It behooves us to show them how again.

DISCUSSION:

I. TWO DESCRIPTIONS

- A. Jesus used many things to picture His people – sheep, branches, leaven, etc.
- B. Two descriptions, more than any other, seem to connect to the matter of influence.
 - 1. Ye are the salt of the earth.
 - 2. Ye are the light of the world.
- C. Salt and light held in high esteem by the Romans.
 - 1. Except for the sun, the Romans held that nothing was more valuable than salt (MacArthur).
 - 2. Roman soldiers were partially paid in salt.
 - 3. Sometimes a man was “not worth his salt.”

II. TWO DANGERS

- A. Jesus often warned His disciples of dangers.
 - 1. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Mt. 7:15).
 - 2. “But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues” (Mt. 10:17).
 - 3. “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Mt. 16:6; cf. 16:11-12).
 - 4. “And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces” (Mk. 12:38).
 - 5. “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk. 12:15).
- B. Relative to salt and life, Jesus noted two dangers.
 - 1. The salt could lose its savor.
 - 2. The light could be hidden from view.
- C. The church is more influenced by the world today, than the world is by the church -- We are becoming worldly, rather than helping the world to become holy.
 - 1. “By definition, an influence must be different from that which it influences, and Christians must therefore be different from the world they are called to influence” (MacArthur 240-41).
 - 2. To exert influence, we must be different. Peter wrote, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

3. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law" (Gen. 19:14; cf. 19:1-9).

III. TWO DUTIES

- A. Jesus gave those that followed Him duties to fulfill.
- B. Salt and light have duties that must be fulfilled.
 1. Salt must preserve.
 2. Light must illuminate.
- C. To better understand these figures, consider how they relate to Christ and His work.
 1. Jesus described Himself as the Light of the World: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12; cf. 1 Pet. 2:21; John 14:6, 8-9).
 2. He came to show us the way - to show us the Father.
 3. Although never called the salt of the earth, Jesus came to keep us from perishing: "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; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9).
- D. The pronoun "you" is emphatic.
 1. Unless we fulfill our duty, there will no halt in the decay or break in the darkness.
 2. It should be noted that salt must come in contact with that which it is to preserve.
 3. Furthermore, light must be visible to help men find their way (cf. John 5:35).
- E. The "you" is plural.
 1. It is the duty of all Christians to be salt and light.
 2. It is not the duty of the preacher, the elders, or a few members.
 3. Grains of salt or rays of light working together can exert a greater influence than could ever be done alone.

CONCLUSION:

1. Are you salt and light?
2. Under the Old Testament, meat offerings (sacrifices) were to be offered with salt.
 - A. Today, the same holds true with the offering of our bodies as living sacrifices to God.
 - B. "And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be

lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Lev. 2:13; cf. Mk. 9:50; Rom. 12:1-2).

THE CHRISTIAN AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Bobby Liddell

INTRODUCTION:

1. Why should Christians care about time management?
 - A. For selfish reasons, so we will have more time for the world/flesh?
 - B. Or are we concerned about using every moment, as Christians should, as good stewards, faithful, productive servants, and obedient believers?
2. We need to ask, "Whom do we seek to please in managing our time – God, others, ourselves, or the world?"
3. We must also ask, "What standard for time management shall we use?"
 - A. Shall we compare ourselves to others, competing with them for compliments, number of commitments, or tally of accomplishments?
 - B. Sadly, while we have added years to man's life span, we have not added life to our years, and far too many lose their lives following the standard of the world, striving to make a living, while failing to make a life (Mark 8:34-37).
 - C. So doing, they miss the real joy of living, the satisfaction of accomplishing good, and the blessing of hearing, "Well done" (Mat. 25:21).
4. What steps should we take in order to manage our time properly?
 - A. We must understand the **Paradox** of time.
 - B. We must set proper **Priorities** for our time.
 - C. We must **Plan** how we shall use our time.
 - D. We must **Prepare** ourselves to use our time properly.
 - E. We must make **Practical** application of our plan.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PARADOX OF TIME.

- A. Time is limited – but most spend it as if it were not.
 1. Time has a beginning, and an end (Gen 1; 2 Pet. 3:9-10).
 2. Years, months, days, and hours – all have beginnings and ends.
 3. Life has a beginning and an end.
 4. In view of this, how important do we think time management is?
- B. Time is valuable – but most waste it as if it were not.
 1. We must recognize the value of time.
 2. We all have 24 hours every day of our lives.
 3. When it comes to time, we will "use it, or lose it."
- C. Time is available – but most act as if it were not.
 1. The paradox is this: We have all the time we need to do all that God would have us to do (and in order to have spiritual, physical,

mental, emotional, and relational health), but we do not have a moment of time to waste (Eph. 5:15-17).

2. Thus, we must plan for what time we have, and use it wisely (Psa. 90:10, 12).

D. Time is the problem, or is it?

1. Rushed, stressed, angry drivers tailgate, take foolish chances, and are mad at everyone who is “in their way, making them late.”

2. Some church members habitually arrive late, out of breath, frustrated, and upset, disturb the service, hinder teachers, and having made no preparation for Bible study or worship, sit there wondering why they get nothing out of worship, and why their families do not anticipate “going to church.”

3. Brethren, if we are always (or most often) behind, late, or rushed, so that our lives are filled with stress, frustration, anger, and defeat (knowing we have not accomplished what we should) and we are miserable, whose fault is it?

4. The problem is not time, or a lack of time, but that we did not plan our time and did not make the proper use of time a priority; that is, we did not use our time wisely.

E. To avoid continuing in this sin, let us determine to make time management a priority.

II. PRIORITIES FOR TIME.

A. How do we want our children to remember us?

1. When they think of us, will they remember that we were always rushing, stressed, impatient, too busy to sit down with them, to talk, to play, to pray, to listen?

2. Will they think of us as too often gone, expending our time away from home?

3. Or, will they think of us as too early gone—having departed from this life too early because of our failure to manage our time properly?

4. When my grandson says, “Daddy Bob, play?,” am I too busy?

B. Life is all about choices (cf. Jos. 24:15).

1. Whether we believe it or not, we will choose what is important and what is not important in our lives.

2. Thus, we will choose to do what we REALLY THINK is important/necessary (although that may differ from what we SAY is important).

3. In order to change our use of time for the better, we first need to change our thinking, realizing that choices have consequences (Mat. 16:27; 25:30).

C. We must set proper priorities (Mat. 6:31-34).

1. The truth is we cannot do everything (cf. 1 Kin. 20:40).
 2. We cannot do the impossible, even if our goal is to do more good.
 3. Nor, should we misuse our time doing what others should do (cf. Acts 6:2).
 4. We should not waste our time on things that are trivial, unimportant, and unnecessary.
 5. Thus, we have to choose what has priority; that is, what we must do first, what comes second, third, etc. (cf. Mat. 22:37-39).
- D. Understanding that we have all the time we need, but we have no time to waste, and that we must make right choices of priorities for the orderly, efficient use of time, let us consider how we should plan our time management.

III. PLANNING FOR TIME.

- A. "Time is filled with swift transition" (Pro. 27:1).
1. At best, our days are few (Job 14:1).
 2. Life is "a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Jam. 4:14).
 3. Knowing that time will end for us one day not far hence, let us plan to use what time we have in the best possible way.
- B. Too many plan time as if their job was their "day," and make no plans for the other sixteen hours of the day, as if when their job was done, their day was done.
1. Unplanned time can easily become idle time (Mat. 20:6).
 2. Idle time can become dangerous time (1 Tim. 5:13).
 3. Idle time can bring times of suffering (Pro. 19: 15).
 4. As brother Richard Curry said, "The young man can rob the old man"; i.e., we can too easily waste our youth, lose middle age, and live our last years in regret.
 5. NOTE: We must avoid the false conclusion that time spent for needed rest, recreation, and sleep is a waste of time, or is sinfully idle time (Mark 4:38; but remember Pro. 20:13).
- B. Planning for anything involves organization, order, and efficiency.
1. Planning inherently includes goal setting.
 2. When we plan, we do so in order to achieve goals that we have chosen as important, as priorities.
 3. Goals should be worthwhile, specific, challenging, yet reasonable (reachable), and measurable.
- C. How shall we plan that we might manage our time and reach our goals?
1. We must honestly examine ourselves, asking if we really view our use of time as a matter of eternal consequence.
 2. We must evaluate how we use time now (recording in writing helps).

3. We must identify and eliminate time wasters and time robbers.
 - a. The average American watches three hours of television every day.
 - b. The average American father spends only three and one-half minutes a week in meaningful conversation with his child.
 - c. Imagine the possibilities if we could recover just one wasted hour a day (thirty hours a month), and put that to proper use!
 - d. We would have time to study the Bible, to work for the Lord, and to pray.
 - e. We would have time to spend with our families.
 - f. We would have time to appreciate the little things, the quiet times, time to stop, to think, to meditate.
 - g. We can accomplish this by identifying and eliminating time wasters and time robbers.
 4. We must delegate to others that which they could and should do.
 5. We must designate time for priorities.
 6. We must determine to stick with our plans, even if we have failures and disappointments from which we have to arise and start again.
- D. We will never reach our goals of effective time management if we do not plan properly, but we must also remember that reaching our goals requires proper preparation.

IV. PREPARING FOR TIME.

- A. We must prepare ourselves to accept responsibility.
 1. The easy way is to excuse ourselves by saying things like, "I wish I could (insert here what we should do), but I just do not have enough time" (Pro. 6:6-11).
 2. Weak, half-hearted attempts reinforce negative thinking and actions: "I tried to plan my time, but (insert whining here), so I just could not do that."
 3. We have to accept the responsibility of wise time use (Rom. 14:12).
- B. We must prepare ourselves to choose wisely.
 1. It is easy to take on so many commitments that we find ourselves not doing any of them well, or on time, if we are unable to say, "No" (cf. Acts 18:20).
 2. We must avoid letting others so plan, or control, our time that we lose control and fail to manage time, as we should do (Psa. 37:23).

3. In planning, we can make our “To Do” list overly optimistic and too crowded, so we must choose according to priority and within reason (cf. Ecc. 3:1-8).

C. We must prepare ourselves to overcome failures.

1. Failures will come, in spite of our best efforts.
2. Satan will seek to call us back to the ways of the world (1 Pet. 5:8).
3. Unforeseen interruptions may force us from our plan—briefly.
4. The key is to recover as quickly as possible: for example, if we forget, or are interrupted, so that we fail to brush our teeth one morning, we do not wait a week, a month, or a year to brush them again, but we brush them as soon as we can, and return to our normal schedule of brushing.
5. One of the greatest obstacles is the challenge of overcoming the failures of the past, instead of letting guilt rob us of the possibilities of the present, and the hope of the future (1 John 1:7-10).

D. We must prepare ourselves to appreciate victories.

1. Setting goals, and reaching them, should cause us to rejoice, and should spur us on to the next goal.
2. Reaching goals should also include reward; that is, we plan to reward ourselves for a job well done.
3. Reaching goals should prompt thanksgiving; realizing God has provided us with the ability, but also with instruction and example, to do so.
4. Reaching goals should strengthen us, and encourage us to set our next set of goals even higher, while doing all to the glory of God (Mat. 5:16).

V. PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

A. Now that we have considered the importance of time management, let us consider how to make practical application of our plan—the right way.

1. We must not become time robots, chained to an unbreakable regimen that becomes the end instead of the means.
2. We must not become obsessed with accomplishing so much that we miss the point of living the Christian life.
3. We must not set our sights so high that we are doomed to fail.

B. Get right.

1. We must start with ourselves.
2. We must get ourselves right with the Lord.
3. We must get our hearts and attitudes right.
4. We must start now.

C. Plan right.

1. Plan long term goals.

2. Make a list—a “To Do” list for everyday.
 3. Use a calendar (phone, computer), day planner, etc.
 4. Without reminders, we will procrastinate, or forget.
- D. Start the day right, in that we:
1. Approach each day with a written plan for the day.
 2. Begin with prayer/meditation (Psa. 1; Psa. 119:11).
 3. Remember goals, tasks, and priorities for the day.
 4. Identify possible obstacles, temptations, and interruptions.
 5. Identify time wasters and eliminate time robbers.
 6. Are flexible, but we are not sidetracked.
- E. End right.
1. We must do right things, in right ways, with right purposes, and at right times.
 2. We must remind ourselves why we are seeking to manage time.
 3. We must press on with purpose of heart to accomplish our goals in accordance with God’s will (Acts 11:23).

CONCLUSION:

1. Another important word for our consideration is PERFECT.
 - A. Jesus was the perfect example of time management.
 - B. He had time to do the work the Father had set before him, to teach one person, or thousands, to go to a wedding, or a funeral, to pray, to help the sick, the needy, and the sorrowing, to be with children, to rest, to sleep, to visit with friends, to take care of his mother, and to plan for His work to continue even after His death.
 - C. He calls us to follow Him.
2. One final word important to our study is PATIENCE.
 - A. We need to realize that not everyone will understand our need, or our determination, to manage our time wisely.
 - B. We must not assume an air of superiority that we disdain those who are not convinced as we are, or who do not follow our time management practices.
 - C. We need to be patient with those of our family/friends who may be affected by the changes we make in our lives.
 - D. We need to be patient with ourselves, expect to have to reassess, recover, and restart, but the goal of managing our time as Christians is worth all the effort.
3. What steps should we take in order to manage our time properly?
 - A. We must understand the **Paradox** of time.
 - B. We must set proper **Priorities** for our time.
 - C. We must **Plan** how we shall use our time.
 - D. We must **Prepare** ourselves to use our time properly.
 - E. We must make **Practical** application of our plan.

4. Finally, we must remember that our souls are at stake, for if we do not manage our time in order to serve God acceptably, we will be bad stewards, and we will be lost.

THE CHRISTIAN AND WORSHIP

Garland Elkins

I. THE CHRISTIAN.

- A. "Christian" is the new name that was prophesied by Isaiah in the Old Testament: "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (Isa. 62:2).
- B. To be saved from past sins one must become a Christian (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:22-41, 47).
- C. The word "Christian" appears three times in the New Testament:
 - 1. "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul; And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:25, 26).
 - 2. "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:27, 28).
 - 3. "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name" (I Pet. 4:16).

II. HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

- A. The first step is to hear the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7-9).
- B. The second step is to believe (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24).
- C. The third step is to repent (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
- D. Confession of Christ (Mt. 120:32, 33; Acts 8:37).
- E. Baptism is also a necessary step (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27).

III. WORSHIP.

- A. Jesus defined worship: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 - 1. The word worship means: "reverence paid; act of paying."
 - 2. Thayer defines the word "*proskuneo*" as "to kiss the hand, to fall down upon the knees, homage shown, homage rendered."
- B. Jesus tells us what the components of true worship are:
 - 1. God is the object of our worship.
 - 2. We must worship in spirit – with the right attitude.
 - 3. We must worship in truth (John 17:17).

IV. THERE ARE FIVE ACTS OR ELEMENTS OF WORSHIP.

- A. Giving is an act of worship.

1. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Cor. 16:1, 2).
2. Christians are to give to the Lord and the church upon every first day of the week.
3. We must give as a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7).
4. We must give with purpose (2 Cor. 9:7).
5. We must give according to our ability to give (2 Cor. 8:12).

B. Preaching is an act of worship.

1. Christianity is the religion of preaching (Mk. 16:15, 16).
2. Paul charged Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Cor. 4:2).
3. The content of preaching is very important.
4. The word must mark the content and extent of our preaching.
 - a. The word is the gospel (Mk. 16:15; Rom. 1:16).
 - b. The word is Jesus Christ (Acts 8:5; Mt. 1:21).
 - c. The word is truth (John 17:17; John 8:32).
5. The manner of preaching the gospel:
 - a. There must be readiness: "Be urgent in season, out of season."
 - b. Paul taught the necessity of seizing opportunities (Col. 4:5).
 - c. Paul practiced what he preached (Rom. 1:14).
 - d. He was ready to preach the gospel to anyone and everywhere; high-low; good-bad.
6. Gospel preaching is adaptable.
 - a. "**Reprove**" – "To correct by word; convict."
 - b. "**Rebuke**" – "To charge on pain of."
 - c. "**Exhort**" – "To call upon; admonish."
 - d. Patience and longsuffering.
 - 1) This is necessary in preaching.
 - 2) We must not grow weary nor angry at others' obstinacy (Gal. 6:9).
 - 3) Our work is difficult and often unappreciated (Acts 20:26).
 - 4) A preacher must preach the truth or he will be condemned (Gal. 1:8, 9; 1 Cor. 9:16).

C. The Lord's Supper is an act of worship.

1. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).
2. From this scripture we learn that the New Testament specifies a certain day of the week for the observance of the Lord's Supper:
 - a. "upon the first day of the week"
 - b. The day is clearly pointed out.

3. A certain day of a certain month is never mentioned in connection with the Lord's supper. So it is not a yearly service.
4. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19ff.; I Cor. 11:23-25).
5. The Christians of the first century observed it weekly (Acts 20:7).
6. To know its significance and observe it properly is most important (I Cor. 11:27).
7. The observance of the Lord's Supper, if properly observed by Christians, will result in greater love and appreciation for the Lord; thus we partake of it more worthily, and we will be blessed both now and eternally.
8. It is interesting that preachers and others understand clearly and correctly that I Cor. 16:1,2 authorizes a congregation to contribute into the treasury every first day of the week; yet when Acts 20:7 authorizes the partaking of the Lord's Supper, every week, they do not accept it.

D. Prayer is an act of worship.

1. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayer" (Acts 2:42).
2. Prayer is an act of public worship of the church (I Cor. 14:15).
3. The content of public prayer is:
 - a. Prayers:
 - 1) This is the general term.
 - 2) Includes any one or all of the different forms of prayer.
 - b. Supplications:
 - 1) The word refers to a particular benefit; a request for need. We are taught to ask God for blessings (Mt. 6:11; 7:7; Jas. 4:2).
 - 2) It is found in such passages as: Luke 1:13; Jas. 5:16; I Pet. 3:12; Rom. 10:1, et al.).
 - c. Intercessions:
 - 1) The word literally means, "a falling in with."
 - 2) The idea of freedom and boldness of access is inherent in the word.
 - 3) It is translated: "plead, petition, intercede."
 - 4) From John 17 and Col. 1:9, we learn that it is right to petition God in behalf of others (Gen. 18:25).
 - d. Thanksgivings:
 - 1) The word expresses gratitude for blessings.
 - 2) Gratitude and joy are emphasized; examples may be found in Mt. 15:36; Phi. 4, et al.
 - 3) Thanksgiving is a part of our present Christian life, and it shall continue in heaven (Rev. 4:9; 7:12).

E. Singing is a part of worship.

1. Christianity is the singing religion (Ex. 4:23ff); Moses and Miriam (Ex. 15:1, 21), Daniel (Psa. 95:1ff; 95:1-4).
2. In the Old Testament singing was mainly by priests, and sometimes accompanied by instruments; in the New Testament every Christian, as a priest is to sing, and it is unaccompanied.
3. There is a need to emphasize singing in worship.
 - a. Many do not sing; others do not sing acceptably.
 - b. We need to develop our appreciation of singing and the ability to sing.
4. Singing is an act of praise to God.
5. Singing is teaching (Col. 3:16).
6. Singing teaches and admonishes one another as brethren (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).
7. In afflictions and sorrow we must remember that God "giveth songs in the night" (Job 35:10).
8. We must sing with the spirit (I Cor. 14:15; John 4:24).
9. We must sing with the understanding (I Cor. 14:15).
10. We must sing with grace (Col. 3:16).

V. WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. The first covenant (the Old Testament) had "ordinances of service" (Heb. 9:1).
 1. What happened when the Jews perverted the worship of God? (Lev. 10:1, 2).
 2. "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them" (Eze. 22:26).
 3. Please notice that when they corrupted the worship of God:
 - a. They "profaned" God's "holy things."
 - b. They showed no "difference between the unclean and the clean."
- B. What God wants from his children in worship under the New Testament.
 1. Christ commands Christians to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).
 2. I have already shown that singing (and not instrumental music) is authorized by Christ.
 3. Instrumental music is not a New Testament subject.
 4. We are living under the New Testament, and not under the Old Testament (Heb. 10:9, 10).
 5. To use instrumental music in worship to God is to go beyond the truth, and in doing that one does not have God (2 John 9-11).

THE CHRISTIAN MAN AND THE HOME

Jerry L. Martin

INTRODUCTION:

1. From the time God created the first man, Adam, He intended that the male take the leadership role in emulating godlikeness.
 - A. Each generation is dependent on such spiritual leadership for its survival.
 - B. The leadership role is a responsibility, not just a position.
2. God made sure man had a perfect example to follow.
 - A. Christ has not only revealed the Father's will, but also shown us the Father.
 - B. Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life..." (John 14:6).
 - C. A man who will lead his family to a heavenly home must maintain a Christ-likeness.

I. THE CHRISTIAN MAN WILL LOOK LIKE CHRIST.

- A. A Christian man is one who, through the new birth, has been born into the family of God and, therefore, put on Christ (John 3:3-5; Gal. 3:26-28).
- B. A Christian man is transformed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).
 1. Such a man has taken on the likeness of Christ.

II. THE CHRISTIAN MAN WILL LIVE LIKE CHRIST.

- A. A Christian man is one who is crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20a).
 1. Such a man dies to himself.
- B. A Christian man is one in which Christ lives (Gal. 2:20b).
 1. Such a man lives by "faith in the Son of God" (Gal. 2:20c).

III. THE CHRISTIAN MAN WILL LOVE LIKE CHRIST.

- A. God so loved us that He gave His Son for us (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).
 1. Christ so loved us that He gave His life for us and nothing can separate us from His love (John 15:9-14; Rom. 8:35).
- B. A Christian man is one who loves the way Christ loves (John 13:34, 35; Eph. 5:25).
 1. Such love is demonstrated in one keeping Christ's commandments (John 14:15).

IV. THE CHRISTIAN MAN WILL LEAD LIKE CHRIST.

- A. Christ is the perfect example that can be safely followed (1 Peter 2:21-25).
 1. In order to be Christ's disciple, one must deny himself and follow Christ daily (Luke 9:23).

- B. A Christian man is one who can be safely followed in every sphere of life (1 Cor. 11:1).
 - 1. He is an example as a believer (1 Tim. 4:12-16), as a husband (Eph. 5:23), as a father (Eph. 6:4), and as a leader in the church (1 Tim. 3:1-16; 1 Peter 5:3).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. A Christian man in the home is the composite picture of Christ-likeness.
 - A. He demonstrates Christ-likeness as an obedient son, a protective brother, a faithful servant, a grateful heir, a loving husband, a godly parent, and a model citizen.
 - B. What a powerful influence such men wield in the home, church, and society in general!
- 2. Christian men are desperately needed in the home today -- Will you be such a man?

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN AND THE HOME

Irene C. Taylor

INTRODUCTION:

1. The role and influence of the Christian woman often has been underrated.
2. Since many lessons have been taught regarding woman's role in the home itself, our study will discuss some of the challenges facing today's Christian women.
3. Whether or not she meets these challenges will directly determine the strength and influence of the home.

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE IS THE CHALLENGE OF ESTABLISHING A CHRISTIAN HOME.

- A. She must first maintain her own Christian standards.
 1. If she is to be a part of a Christian home, she must keep herself pure (1 Tim. 5:22).
- B. She must marry a Christian.
 1. It takes two Christians to establish a Christian home.
 - a. She must understand that God's plan demands marriage between a man and a woman.
 - b. These fundamental facts must be instilled in the minds of our children!
 2. Her husband must be one whom she can respect and trust.
 3. She must willingly accept his God-given role as head of the family (Eph. 5:23).
 4. She must be a help meet/partner to him.
- C. The standards of the home must be based on Christian principles.
 1. She and her husband must discuss and come to an agreement on finances, children, discipline of the children, church work, friends, entertainment, etc.
 - a. These matters should be settled on before the marriage.
 - b. She must face her responsibility in the challenge of training the children to be faithful servants of God (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4).

II. THERE IS THE CHALLENGE OF OVERCOMING THE INFLUENCE OF SECULAR EDUCATION.

- A. She must be equipped to counteract the emphasis placed upon humanism.
 1. To accomplish this she must have a knowledge of what humanism is and what it teaches.
- B. She must be able to answer the claims of atheism.
 1. She needs to know of the effort by the religious world to join

creation and evolution via theistic evolution.

C. She needs to be able to answer the challenges from evolution.

D. The above “isms” claim to be the end-all of man’s life.

1. They teach there is no God of Heaven.
2. They teach there is no soul.
3. They teach there is no Heaven to gain nor Hell to shun.
4. They believe there is no moral standard, only “values” determined by human experience.

III. THERE IS THE CHALLENGE OF CONTENTMENT WITH THE ROLE GOD GAVE HER IN THE CHURCH.

A. It is His church; therefore, He has the right to set the pattern of operation (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 12:5; Eph, 5:30).

B. When denominationalists decided to deviate from God’s pattern and insert much of their own, they opened a virtual Pandora’s box (Rev. 22:18-19).

1. Following the rebellion of the misfits among worldly women, disgruntled “Christian?” women began campaigning for an expanded role God never intended for women.
2. Today some congregations claiming to be the Lord’s church have joined the practice of allowing women to fill many roles meant for men.

C. Christian women **MUST** exemplify the beauty and contentment to be found in following God’s way.

IV. SHE MUST FACE THE CHALLENGE OF OVERCOMING THE PRESSURE TO FOLLOW WORLDLY STANDARDS (1 John 2:15).

A. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”

B. She must show the beauty of conduct befitting a woman of God (Tit. 2:3; 1 Peter 3:4, 8-11)

1. Her speech must be pure (Tit. 2:1, 8; 1 Tim. 1:3; Col. 4:6; Prov. 15:1).

C. Her dress must be appropriate.

1. Modest attire is commanded (1 Tim. 2:9).
2. Attire must also be appropriate for the occasion (1 Peter 3:3; Matt. 22:11-12; Exodus 39, 40 (especially 40: 13-14)).
3. Pleasing God is vastly more to be desired than following fashion’s dictates.

V. SHE MUST TEACH AND PRACTICE RESPECT FOR LIFE FROM BEGINNING TO END (Exodus 20:13).

A. Life begins at conception. (Psa. 139:13-15; Luke 1:41).

1. Abortion is murder!
2. It ends the life of a baby, not a mere fetus!

3. We must teach our sons and daughters the truth about abortion.
- B. Handicapped persons are humans.
 1. To deny them life is **SIN!**
 2. To practice assisted suicide is to violate God's law (Mark 12:33; Rom. 13:10).
- C. Euthanasia of the aged is now practiced by some.
 1. Shades of Hitler and the Nazi Germany!
 2. It is God who has the authority to determine the time for life to end (Psa. 104:29).
 3. Aging is part of God's cycle of life (Ecc. 12:3-7).
 4. If we cannot have respect for the life beginning to end----what is next?!

VI. THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP RAISE THE MORAL STANDARD FOR LIVING HERE BELOW.

- A. She must practice morality in the home and in public.
 1. She must teach them in the home (Deut. 4:9; 6:7).
 2. She must encourage their acceptance by those about her.
- B. As Queen of her home, she has the responsibility and opportunity to help maintain Christian standards within the family circle.
 1. Her conduct and teaching should undergird that of her Christian husband.
 2. Her influence for good must radiate through the church.
 3. Her influence for good must shine out in the community and beyond.
 4. The world should be a better place because she lives.

CONCLUSION:

1. God's pattern for woman is beautiful.
 - A. It is powerful.
 1. When wielded as He commands, it will raise the moral standard of society.
 - B. It is her privilege to show the real beauty of a woman of God.
 1. In our crazy, unruly, immoral world, every Christian woman has a vital work to do.
 2. Will we do it?

THE CHRISTIAN'S ABHORRENCE OF EVIL, LOVE FOR GOOD

B. J. Clarke

INTRODUCTION:

1. Christians ought to be the most loving, hateful people in the world.
2. This may seem contradictory, but, properly defined, it is the teaching of the Scriptures.
 - A. Several Scriptures demand that the Christian possess an attitude of hatred toward evil.
 - 1) "Ye that love the Lord, **hate evil**" (Psalm 97:10).
 - 2) "**Abhor** that which is evil" (Rom. 12:9).
 - B. Several Scriptures exhort the Christian to possess an attitude of love toward that which is good.
 - 1) "Hate the evil, **love the good**" (Amos 5:15).
 - 2) "Cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9).
3. Let us consider the two main points that are made in Romans 12:9.

DISCUSSION:

I. "ABHOR THAT WHICH IS EVIL."

- A. Consider **some definitions** of this phrase.
 1. What does it mean to "abhor" that which is evil?
 - a. "Abhor" is from the Greek word *apostugeo*, which means to "hate utterly, shrink away from" (Friberg's Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament).
 - b. Strong's Concordance vividly defines the word to mean "to have a horror of" evil.
 - c. The Dictionary of Biblical Languages defines the word abhor as meaning, "to loathe."
 - d. Louw and Nida provide an extended definition: "to have a strong dislike for someone or something, implying repulsion and desire for avoidance."
 - e. Another lexicon declares that the word means "to hate violently...to be disgusted at..." (Intermediate Greek Lexicon).
 - f. Vine's Expository Dictionary points out that the Greek word is actually a compound word: *apo*="from" and *stugeo*, which means "to hate." He also defines the word as meaning "to shudder."
 - g. A. T. Robertson explains that the word most often used for "hate" in the New Testament is the Greek word *miseo*.

- 1) The word used in Romans 12:9, *stugeo*, occurs regularly in the classics of Greek literature, but only here in the entire New Testament.
 - 2) According to Robertson, the difference between the words is that *miseo* is “a concealed and cherished hatred” whereas *stugeo* conveys the idea of an expressed hatred.
2. What is the definition of evil in Romans 12:9?
- a. Ask the average person to describe an activity which is considered evil, and you will no doubt hear a variety of answers.
 - b. We are interested in the word for evil that Paul used in this text. He used the Greek word *poneron*, a form of the Greek word *poneros*.
 - 1) This word is used over 75 times in the New Testament, with the majority of appearances in the Gospel of Matthew (26 times). In Luke and Acts you will find it nearly two dozen times.
 - 2) The majority of times (51) it is translated with the English word “evil.” More than 15 times it is translated with the word “wicked.”
 - 3) The Greek lexicons define it in the following ways: “morally corrupt,” “worthless,” “malicious,” “bad, base, degenerate, of poor quality.”
- B. Consider **some demonstrations** of how this phrase, “abhor that which is evil,” is depicted in the lives and words of Bible characters.
1. David wrote, “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it shall not cleave to me. A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person*” (Psa. 101:3-4).
 2. The author of Psalm 119 (perhaps David) penned these words: “Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way...Therefore I esteem all *thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way*” (Psa. 119:104, 128).
 3. The author of Proverbs instructs us: “The fear of the LORD *is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate*” (Prov. 8:13).
 4. Jesus is the ultimate demonstration of this principle for He “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” (Heb. 1:9).
- C. Consider **some applications** of this phrase.
1. If we truly abhor that which is evil **we will abhor evil men.**

- a. The imprecatory psalms are psalms wherein the writer calls upon God to curse wicked men (e.g. Psalm 35, 137, et al.).
 - b. The New Testament also shows an abhorrence of evil men (2 Tim. 4:14).
2. If we truly abhor that which is evil, **we will abhor false ways**.
- a. The Psalmist hated every false way because he had chosen the way of truth (119:130).
 - b. Since it is only the truth that can make men free, we must hate anything that would keep men in the bondage of sin (John 8:32).
 - 1) For this reason it is entirely appropriate to hate the existence of denominationalism. I hate the fact that there are so many denominations, teaching so many damnable doctrines (2 Thess. 2:10-12).
 - 2) This is consistent with the character of Jesus. He commended the church at Ephesus with these words: “for this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, **which I also hate**” (Rev. 2:6).
 - 3) I abhor the existence of false doctrine because of the damnable consequences of believing and acting upon error (Gen. 3; 1 Kings 13; Matt. 7:13-20; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:15-18; 1 John 4:1ff).
3. If we truly abhor evil, we will abhor anyone or anything that promotes the spread of evil (Hollywood, Music Industry, Radio shock-jocks, etc.)
- a. I must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11).
 - b. I will not remain silent; I will expose the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11).

II. CLEAVE TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD.

A. Consider **some definitions** of this phrase.

- 1. What does it mean to cleave?
 - a. The Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament gives the following meaning for the Greek word *kollomenoi*: “join closely, glue together, unite.”
 - b. Other meanings, found in various Greek lexicons, are as follows: “cling to, stick to...to associate with, to enter into a close relation with...to bind to.”
- 2. What is the definition of “good” in Romans 12:9?

- a. This Greek word *agathos*, describes “the moral character of persons good, upright, worthy” (Analytical Greek Lexicon).
 - b. It “expresses the significance or excellence of a thing or a person” (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament).
- B. Consider **some demonstrations** of how this phrase is utilized in Scripture.
- 1. The word “cleave” can be used either positively or negatively.
 - a. It is used negatively in the OT to refer to how king Jehoram “clave” to the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 3:3), but is then positively applied to how Hezekiah clave to the Lord (2 Kings 18:6).
 - b. It is used to refer to what the prodigal did when he went into the far country (Luke 15:15).
 - c. It is used negatively in 1 Corinthians 6:16, but positively in the next verse (1 Corinthians 6:17).
 - d. After Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill, many separated from him, but “certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (Acts 17:34).
 - 2. The word “good” is used both of individuals and their behavior.
 - a. It is the word the people used to describe Jesus (John 7:12).
 - b. It is the word used to describe the faithful servant of Luke 19:17.
 - c. It is the word used to describe the good man of Luke 6:45.
 - d. It is the word used to describe Barnabas in Acts 11:24.
 - c. It is used in 1 Pet. 2:14 to describe those who do well.
 - d. It is the word employed in 2 Corinthians 5:10 to describe what will happen on the Day of Judgment.
- C. Consider **some applications** of this phrase to our lives.
- 1. If we cleave to that which is good, **we will seek to imitate the Good One** (Matt. 19:16-17; John 7:12; Heb. 1:9).
 - 2. If we cleave to that which is good, **we will seek the Good Book.**
 - a. This will develop good hearts (Luke 6:45), which will manifest itself in good behavior.
 - b. This will help us overcome temptation to unglue ourselves from that which is good (Matt. 4:1-13).
 - 3. If we cleave to that which is good, we will seek to associate with those who love the Good One (God) and the Good Book (Bible).
 - a. Elders are to be “lovers of good men” (Titus 1:8-9).
 - b. We should seek to be around Demetrius, not Diotrefes (3 John 9-12).

CONCLUSION:

1. We must choose our course of pursuit in life.
2. Let us resolve not to be like the wicked man who “abhorreth not evil” (Psa. 36:4).
3. Rather, let us “hate the evil, love the good” (Amos 5:15); Let us “abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9).
4. Not only will this make our world a better place, more importantly, it will lead us to a better place in another world – the world beyond!

THE CHRISTIAN'S CONDUCT IN THE KINGDOM

Robert Jefferies

INTRODUCTION:

1. It has been said that the way a Christian conducts himself is like a magnet, it can either draw you closer or push you away.
2. During our Lord's ministry, Jesus did not leave His disciples ignorant as to what type of conduct was expected of them: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye **love** one another; as I have **loved** you, that ye also **love** one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have **love** one to another" (John 13:34-35).
3. What is love?
 - A. Is it the gooey, mushy feeling you had back in high school that makes you feel good all over?
 - B. Is it something you fall into or fall out of?
 - C. Is it pure emotion?
 - D. No, love is a pro-active choice and an action.
4. In the New Testament the word "love" is used 247 times.
 - A. It is used 110 times as a noun.
 - B. It is used 137 times as a verb.
 - C. It affects our attitudes and our actions toward other people.
5. What is the great example of love?
 - A. "Husbands, **love** your wives, even as Christ also **loved** the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).
 - B. "Greater **love** hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:14).
 - C. "Herein is **love**, not that we loved God, but that he **loved** us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).
6. Now that we have established the love that God has for us, let's examine what loving one another illustrates.

DISCUSSION:

I. LOVING ONE ANOTHER REFLECTS CHRIST.

- A. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).
- B. What type of love does Jesus have? In Luke 15, we have three great pictures of the love that He has for us:
 1. Lost Sheep
 2. Lost Coin
 3. Lost Son
- C. "This is my commandment, That ye **love** one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

II. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS A FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S LAW.

- A. "Owe no man any thing, but to **love** one another: for he that **loveth** another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as thyself. **Love** worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love** is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).
1. When we really love one another we don't want to hurt one another.
 2. We don't want to bring harm to each other.
 3. "*The majority of murders are domestic disputes*" (A Memphis Police Spokesman).
 - a. There were 167 homicides in Memphis in 2008.
 - b. There were 164 homicides in Memphis in 2007.
 - c. People do not know how to settle their arguments peacefully.
- B. Do we ever hurt each other in the church?
1. Shoot with words that sting?
 2. Attitudes that pierce the heart?
 3. Tongues sharp and full of bitterness?
 4. Wrath and anger that are meant to wound, disfigure, and kill?
- C. What is one of the leading contributors that lead to feelings of hurt in the church today?
1. Gossip
 - a. Slander
 - b. Tale bearing
 2. What is gossip?
 - a. A person who whispers behind your back with the **intention of hurting you.**
 - b. "They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, maliciousness. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips" (Romans 1:29 ESV).
 - c. The words "slander" and "tale bearer" are closely related to gossip.
 3. Other passages to consider on gossip.
 - a. "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer (gossiper) separateth chief friends" (Proverbs 16:28).
 - 1) In a few seconds, gossip can ruin a friendship that took years to build.
 - 2) Not only does gossip ruin friendships, but gossip can do great harm to the church.

b. "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer (gossiper), the strife ceaseth" (Proverbs 26:20).

1) The wise man tells us when you take the gossip away, the strife ceases.

2) A gossip would soon go out of business if there was no market for the product.

4. Quotes on gossip.

a. A great many people, like cats, lick themselves with their tongues.

b. A little girl explained that the teacher had said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gossip."

D. Why is love the fulfillment of the law?

1. Because I am looking out for my brother/sister's best interest.

2. I'm going to be mindful of things that I say and do.

3. We are "swift to hear, slow to speak" (James 1:19).

III. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS A RESULT OF SALVATION.

A. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned **love** of the brethren, see that ye **love** one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter 1:22-23).

1. Two different types of love are mentioned.

a. Phileo → "which is brotherly love."

b. Agape → "which is seeking someone else's best interest."

2. When Christians love one another, we should love one another because we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

B. How should we love our brethren?

1. Unfeigned → "to not pretend, genuine, not hypocritical."

2. Fervently → "deeply and constantly."

IV. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS EVIDENCE OF OUR CHRISTIANITY.

A. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that **loveth** not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should **love** one another" (1 John 3:10-11).

1. If we cannot have love for one another, we have missed the boat as far as Christianity is concerned.

2. We could have done everything else right, but if we do not have love, we have missed the mark.

- B. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and **love** one another, as he gave us commandment" (1 John 3:23).
1. A disciple is one who does what his teacher tells him to do.
 2. A true disciple cannot pick and choose what he wants to follow.
 3. We are to be a reflection of Christ.
- C. Some Christians have the idea that we can pick and choose. Where did we get this idea?
1. From Satan.
 2. Satan wants us to think that we can believe what we want to believe.
 3. Satan wants us to do the things that make us comfortable.
- D. Loving one another is a response to God's love for us.
1. "Beloved, let us **love** one another: for **love** is of God; and every one that **loveth** is born of God, and knoweth God. He that **loveth** not knoweth not God; for God is **love**. In this was manifested the **love** of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is **love**, not that we **loved** God, but that he **loved** us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so **loved** us, we ought also to **love** one another" (1 John 4:7-11).
 2. There is no better testimony for God's existence to a pagan world, than our love to one another within the church.
 3. "No man hath seen God at any time. If we **love** one another, God dwelleth in us, and his **love** is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12).

V. LOVING ONE ANOTHER AS SEEN THROUGH JESUS.

- A. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).
- B. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having **loved** his own which were in the world, he **loved** them unto the end" (John 13:1-2).

VI. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS UNSELFISH.

- A. Some say, "I'll love you if you do this or that."
- B. Jesus teaches us to love without expecting anything in return: "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I **love** you, the less I be **loved**" (2 Corinthians 12:14-15).

VII. LOVING ONE ANOTHER IS UNCONDITIONAL.

- A. Even when His disciples sinned, Jesus still loved them.

- B. "For if ye **love** them which **love** you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:46-47).
- C. It is easy to love the lovable, but difficult to love those who seem to be unlovable.
- D. What do people look for the most in finding a church home?
 - 1. Beautiful building?
 - 2. Programs?
 - 3. The majority want a place where the people love God and one another.

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Christians are eternally committed to Christ and are united to each other through Christ.
- 2. How are believers to live out this unity? The secret is love.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

Curtis A. Cates

INTRODUCTION:

1. In this secular and skeptical age, the doctrines of heaven and hell are ridiculed, even among many falsely so-called "Christian" churches and "theologians."
 - A. Man has no future existence; there is no life beyond the grave, they say.
 - B. We are to them but "molecules in motion," skin-sacks full of chemicals which shall eventually return to and mix forever with the elements; there is no God, there are no absolutes, man is totally material, thus the hopeless despair!
2. The "religion" of secular, atheistic humanism holds that teaching the doctrine of salvation "appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival" (*Humanist Manifestos I and II*, Prometheus Books, 1973, p. 13).
 - A. "As non-theists [atheists--CAC], we begin with humans not God, nature not deity" (p. 16).
 - B. "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves" (*Ibid*).
 - C. "There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body....We strive for the good life, here and now" (p. 17).
 - D. Atheism is a "religion" without hope and antithetical to hope.
3. But, thanks be to the God of heaven (Dan. 2:28), there is hope.
 - A. The existence of heaven is a reality, an actual "Place" (John 14:1-3).
 - B. The Bible gives us a tremendous, beautiful, and encouraging view of heaven.
 - C. We very often sing of heaven; Ada Powell wrote: "Sing to me of heaven,/let me fondly dream of its golden glory,/ of its pearly gleam;/ Sing to me when shadows of the evening fall,/ Sing to me of heaven,/ Sweetest song of all."
 - D. Let us preach and teach on the Christian's hope.

DISCUSSION:

I. IN ORDER FOR PERSONS TO BE HUMAN, WE HAVE CERTAIN BASIC NEEDS; ONE OF THESE IS HOPE.

- A. Once a dog is fed or a deer has a grazing place, it can manage very well.
 1. Human beings are very different.
 2. Only Christianity can meet those basic needs – not the *humanist* philosophy, which is a misnomer.
- B. Hope is what spurs us on and motivates us.
 1. Think of the vital element of hope to a football team, an Olympic runner, a boxer, a student, et al.

2. There are two elements of hope: desire and expectation.
 3. Hope is basic to human life; "While there is life, there is hope."
"Doctor, is there any hope?"
- C. Hope is vital in the face of death.
1. Is it vital to a person on death row, all appeals exhausted? If no hope exists, what is the significance of a steak meal?
 2. What is the importance of the arrangement of furniture on the sinking Titanic or a flight attendant's making sure that all the passengers have been served a meal on an airplane that is surging helplessly toward the ground?
- D. To live on after death is a basic, universal desire of man.
1. Humanism's desire and cry is to destroy this hope – freedom **from** religion, **from** the God of the Bible.
 2. However, life is short; what thinking person does not think of his destiny after life ends for him or her?
- E. The alternative to Biblical hope is **cynicism**.
1. Hopelessness is the only religion they teach – after death, annihilation.
 2. Is there no antidote to old age; shall we never see our grandparents, parents, mates, children, brothers and sisters, friends again? Is it "So long forevermore"?
 3. The secular humanist, the atheist ties his religion to this one despair – **no hope**.
- F. The Christian trusts in the blessed assurance of God's Word.
1. Paul wrote according to faith and knowledge of the truth about the "hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal" (Tit. 1:1-3).
 2. "Happy is he...whose hope is in Jehovah his God" (Psa. 146:5); "And let me not be ashamed of my hope" (119:116); "...in thee, O Jehovah, do I hope" (38:15).
 3. Alexander Pope was correct in writing "Hope springs eternal in the breast" because of Jesus Christ, who is our hope; "...in hope were we saved" (Rom. 8:24).
 4. What folly to reject life after death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ! "...if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17); "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable" (15:19). So called "faith" apart from hope in the resurrection has no moral value!
 5. Hope is the anchor of the soul "within the veil" (Heb. 6:19-20); "...if we hope for that which we **see not**, then do we with **patience** wait for it" (Rom. 8:25).

II. WE HOPE IN HEAVEN, THE ETERNAL ABODE OF THE SOUL, WHERE GOD DWELLS.

- A. Solomon stated, "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house [the temple] that I have builded" (1 Kin. 8:27; 2 Chr. 2:6).
1. Note Paul's affirmation [the evidence is that Paul wrote Hebrews] that God is "Most High" (Heb. 7:1; cf. Gen. 14:18-20). Isaiah wrote, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place..." (Isa. 57:15); "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory" (63:15).
 2. Indeed, "Thus saith Jehovah, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool" (66:1).
- B. That "Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; And his kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. 103:19) caused the Psalmist to exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee" (73:25).
1. From heaven, "the place of his habitation, he looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth" (33:14).
 2. The response of the righteous is to pour our praise and reverence "unto God in the heavens" (Lam. 3:41).

III. OUR HOPE IS IN CHRIST, WHO AFTER DESCENDING FROM HEAVEN ASCENDED BACK INTO HEAVEN.

- A. Christ came to earth, becoming flesh through the virgin birth, and offered Himself as the Lamb of God, making possible man's redemption (Luke 19:10; John 1:1-3, 14; 3:16; Heb. 2; 5:8-10; et al.).
1. Upon being raised from the dead and appearing to hundreds of witnesses during forty days, He ascended to heaven, to the Ancient of Days, to receive a kingdom (Dan. 7:13, 14; Psa. 24:7-10; Acts 2:29-36; et al.).
 2. Notice the affirmation of Paul: "He that descended is the same that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph. 4:10).
 3. Christ "through his own blood [not the blood of animals], entered in once for all into the holy place [heaven], having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).
- B. Read of Christ's ascension in Acts 1:9-11; the apostles, eye-witnesses, were told by the angels that "this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven."
1. He anticipated His going to heaven, the cessation of Judaism [He nailed the old law to the cross, having fulfilled it (Mat. 5:17; Col.

2:14-17)], and the establishment of His throne in Heaven when He taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven" (Mat. 6:9).

2. Christ is in heaven reigning, where He shall remain until His second appearing (Heb. 9:28; 1 Cor. 15:20-28).
 - a. "...he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven" (Eph. 6:9); "...ye also have a Master in Heaven" (Col. 4:1), His having been "Received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).
 - b. He went "into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

IV. DEATH IS COMMON TO ALL MEN.

- A. We all sooner or later fall asleep (1 Cor. 15:6; cf. Num. 16:29).
 1. "...it is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27).
 2. For the Christian, "...to die is gain" (Phi. 1:21-23).
 3. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord" (Rev. 14:13).
- B. The resurrection at Christ's second appearing will take the sting out of death (1 Cor. 15:50-57).

V. CHRIST SHALL DESCEND FROM HEAVEN.

- A. "For the Lord himself shall descent from heaven" (1 The. 4:16); He will give the righteous special attention; He will not send others to receive the saints.
 1. Thus, we "wait for his Son from heaven" (1:10), at which time He will give rest to obedient believers and vengeance to the disobedient (2 The. 1:6-10).
 2. No one except the Godhead knows when He shall return (1 The. 5:1-2); the Son did not know when He was on earth (Mat. 24:35-51). He knows now, of course.
- B. We should be "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13).
 1. We should, like Paul, love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).
 2. We should anticipate that "abundant entrance" into glory (2 Pet. 1:11).

VI. WITH A SHOUT, THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED FROM THE TOMBS.

- A. There shall be one bodily resurrection, at the same time (John 5:28-29).
 1. Many are skeptical of the resurrection, but Paul correctly asked, "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8); cannot He who created all things raise our dead bodies, instantaneously [when the spirits are reunited with them in the graves] changing our vile, natural bodies into incorruptible, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:35-54)?

2. Death is thus going to be destroyed (15:26).
 3. To deny the resurrection or to say it has already happened [per Max Kingism - A.D. 70 heresy] is to err! (2 Tim. 2:17-18).
- B. Christ said, "...he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).
1. The bodily resurrection of Christ is proof of the general resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-19).
 2. Let us react as did Martha, "I know that he [Lazarus] shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day" (John 11:24)!

VII. AT CHRIST'S SECOND COMING, THE EARTH SHALL BE DESTROYED.

- A. Simultaneous with the resurrection, the heavens, the universe, will "pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10-13).
1. The heavens and the earth "shall perish; but thou continuest: And they all shall wax old as doth a garment" (Heb. 1:11).
 2. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more" (Rev. 21:1).
- B. As Christ's body was changed at the time of His ascension into heaven from its physical condition to a glorified, celestial condition, just so will our physical bodies have been changed in the grave in the blinking of an eye, fitted for our eternal existence (1 Cor. 15:40, 48, 49, 51-54; Heb. 11:16; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 John 3:2).

VIII. AFTER THE DEAD ARE RAISED, THEN WILL ALL BE JUDGED, RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED.

- A. After death shall be the judgment (Heb. 9:27).
1. All, righteous and wicked, will be present and will be judged "according to what [they] hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).
 2. Paul considered it to be very, very serious, a terrible thing for the wicked (5:11; cf. Heb. 10:31), for the Lord's justice will demand He take vengeance on the wicked (2 The. 1:8-10). [Notice that the punishment of the wicked will take place at the same time that Christ is glorified in His saints, not 1,000 years apart.]
- B. Christ has been appointed by God to be the judge, and He will judge righteously at that day (Acts 17:30-31).
1. Like God, He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35).
 2. Each person shall bow before Him and give account of himself (Rom. 14:10-12).

3. Both those living when Christ returns and those in the graves [who will then be raised] will stand before Christ in the judgment (2 Tim. 4:1); there is absolutely *no time* for a “millennial reign” of Christ!
4. That will be the “day [note the singular] when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16; cf. 2:5-6).
5. Each of us will be there, dear reader, when “the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God” (1 Cor. 4:5).

IX. WHEREAS THE WICKED SHALL BE CAST INTO HELL, THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE REWARDED IN HEAVEN.

- A. “...great is your reward in heaven” (Mat. 5:10-12).
 1. This principle of being rewarded is found in 1 Timothy 5:18, “The laborer is worthy of his hire” (cf. Mat. 20:1-16; 19:41; Rom. 6:23; Luke 6:23; Mat. 10:41-42; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:35; Mark 10:29-30; et al.).
 2. The two and five talent men were rewarded for their labors (Mat. 25:14-30); they shall go into eternal life whereas the wicked shall go into eternal punishment (25:46).
- B. Let us lay up treasure in heaven (Mat. 6:19-21).
 1. “Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not...” (Luke 12:33-34).
 2. Let us not be like the rich young ruler, who trusted in his riches and was thus lost (Mark 10:17-25) or the rich farmer, who was lost because he considered life to consist of “the abundance of the **things** which he possesseth”! (Luke 12:13-21).
 3. Heaven is a place where our precious things are laid [treasure from *thesaurus*, meaning “a place of safe keeping...a casket...a storehouse... treasure (in heaven or the heavens)” (Vine); “*the things laid up in a treasury; collected treasures: Mt. vi. 19-21...*” (Thayer)].

X. HEAVEN IS THE CHRISTIAN’S INHERITANCE.

- A. Paul speaks of the inheritance of those who are in the kingdom, in Christ (Eph. 1:14; 5:5).
 1. The inheritance, *kleronomia*, is “properly an inherited property, an inheritance” to be received by the faithful at Christ’s second coming (Vine); “what is given to one as a *possession*. ...*the eternal blessedness in the consummated kingdom of God which is to be*

expected after the visible return of Christ...destined for us, Eph. 1:14" (Thayer).

2. Paul urged, "...whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24).
3. Why do we Christians inherit? It is because we are "Abraham's seed, *heirs* according to promise" (Gal. 3:29); "The Spirit [the Holy Spirit through the Word, which we can read, understand, and obey] himself beareth witness *with* [not *to*] our spirit [we know when we have obeyed the Word], that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:16-17).
4. Faithfulness, however, must be maintained by God's children (Rom. 8:12-13), or they will be disinherited (1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Exo. 32:32-33).

B. What belongs to Christ will be inherited by us.

1. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23; cf. Heb. 9:15).
2. Through God's mercy, we have hope in Christ, "unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet.1:3-5), "receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1:9).

XI. HEAVEN IS A FAR BETTER COUNTRY THAN THIS.

A. Paul wanted to go ahead and be with the Lord, in Paradise and the bosom [comfort] of Abraham (Phi. 1:21-24); how much better his [and our] final reward must be "at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8)!

1. He wrote of those who died in faith, that "they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:13-16).
2. Paul was assured that "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his *heavenly* kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18), characterized as "life and immortality" (1:10). **What hope that is!**

B. In heaven, "so shall we ever be *with the Lord*" (1 The. 4:17) – **what great company and companionship!**

- C. In heaven, “there remaineth therefore a Sabbath *rest* for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9) – **what encouragement** to the devoted, laboring, often persecuted, suffering saint! (cf. 2 The. 1:6-7).
- D. In heaven, “...ye have for yourselves a *better* possession and an *abiding* one” (Heb. 10:34) – **what a contrast** to this land of disease, suffering, death, and separation (Rom. 8:18)!

XII. WHO WILL RECEIVE THE ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO HEAVEN?

- A. Paul speaks of his “fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life” (Phi. 4:3).
 - 1. Those whose names are not in the book of life will be lost eternally (Rev. 20:15).
 - 2. Only those who walk by the New Testament pattern will be saved (Phi. 3:13-16).
 - 3. Christ is the Savior of only those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9; John 12:48; Luke 6:46).
- B. One must be born again, led by the gospel through **faith** to die to the love and practice of sin in **repentance** (Rom. 6:1-2), to **confess Christ** as the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and to be **immersed in water** for the remission of past sins (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38; John 3:3, 5; et al.).
 - 1. He must “continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard...” (Col. 1:21-23).
 - 2. Let the alien sinner respond to the gospel call today: “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Knowing the Christian’s hope, how should we then live?
 - A. Always have the assurance we are created in God’s image.
 - B. Learn what brings true joy – the simple attitudes and actions of obedient faith, love of God, and love of others.
 - C. Possess the knowledge, assurance, and trust in Christ that the faithful will be saved in the judgment.
- 2. **Only God and Christ our Savior** can bring true hope; **only Christianity** offers this most basic, vitally important need of mankind!

THE CHRISTIAN'S STUDY HABITS

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Ardent and active Christianity cannot be separated from a diligent study and meditation of God's Word.
2. Yet, in our day far too many members of the church are very complacent with superficial knowledge of God's word.
3. Biblical ignorance leads to all kinds of trouble for the lukewarm.
4. Back in the 1950's, late and lamented Gus Nichols held a great gospel meeting in Nashville, TN.
 - A. In that meeting he said that Biblical ignorance is the damning sin of our time.
 - B. Brother Nichols knew, and knew well, that so many other sins spring from this taproot.
 - C. As bad as Biblical illiteracy was during the 1950's, it is far worse in 2010.
 - D. One man thanked God for his ignorance and prayed that God would make him even more ignorant or, as he expressed it "ignoranter" -- The Lord has His work cut out for him in dealing with such people.

DISCUSSION:

I. THERE IS A SURE BLIGHT OF BIBLICAL IGNORANCE IN OUR WORLD.

- A. It was a glaring sin in Isaiah's era (Isaiah 5:13) and beckoned on coming captivity. Isaiah was a prophet for Judah, or the Southern Kingdom.
- B. Biblical ignorance characterized Hosea's age in Israel or the Northern Kingdom (Hosea 4:6).
 1. As a result there was "no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4:1).
 2. But, a strong word of contrast, there was swearing, lying, killing, stealing, an abundance of adultery and mass murder cursing Hosea's peers.
 3. Hosea could be describing our own generations with total accuracy.
- C. Herod the Great was dismally ignorant of Old Testament teaching
 1. He did not know where the Christ child was to be born.
 2. Had he known Old Testament Scripture, he would have realized that Christ would not be a political threat to his continuing dynasty.
- D. The Sadducees were ignorant of the Scripture and God's power (Matthew 27:22).
- E. Ignorance cost infidel Israel dearly during the time of Jerusalem's destruction at the hands of mighty Rome under Titus because they

knew not the time of visitation (Luke 19:44). They perished in mass form while NO Christian perished in this first century holocaust.

- F. Ignorance was costly to Corinthian people who denied their own resurrection out there in the future and, by implication, Christ's own resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:34).

II. THERE ARE MANY GOOD AND GREAT PASSAGES ABOUT BIBLICAL LITERACY.

- A. The opening verses in Psalm 1 surely present a strong case for regular Biblical meditation (Psalm 1:1-3).
- B. The writer of Psalm 119, in all probability David, surely favored a regular meditation on God's word (vs. 9-11, 72, 97, 105)
- C. The beautiful Berean people were diligent in their daily perusal of God's Word. (Acts 17:11)
1. Luke connected nobility with them.
 2. They wanted to make doubly sure that what they were hearing from Paul and Silas corresponded perfectly with what the Scriptures taught. It did!
- D. Hearing only (or reading only) will not get the job done (James 1:22-25).
- E. Paul strongly encouraged Timothy to be a proficient student of God's Word (1 Tim. 4:13-15; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- F. There is a great blessing in reading and hearing read God's Word (Revelation 1:3).
1. The book of Revelation should never be an ignored or rejected book.
 2. It overflows with gems of goodness and pearls of piety.

III. WE ARE SUPPLIED WITH MAJOR MOTIVATIONS FOR STUDYING GOD'S WORD.

- A. It is food for the soul (Matthew 4:4; 5:6).
- B. It is powerful (Romans 1:16-27; Hebrews 4:12; James 1: 18, 21).
- C. It is profitable (2 Timothy 3: 16-17).
- D. It is Heaven's map to the eternal home of the soul (1 Timothy 4:16).
- E. A noted student of the Bible once said in tribute to the Bible, "Every hour I read you, a vice is killed or a virtue enters to fight that vice."
- F. It will make of us better men, women, boys, girls, nations, communities, citizens, workplaces, schools, congregations, neighbors, etc.
- G. By it we are going to be judged in that day of final reckoning (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12-15).
- H. It will keep us from being members of the club of Biblical illiterates.
1. This is a sure realm we should avoid at all costs.
 2. People in this club are NOT on their way to Heaven for the sweet by and by.
- I. Truth should be the pearl of great price to all of us.

1. It is found in the Bible.
 2. It is not found in human wisdom.
- J. There is supremacy of pleasure, or at least should be, in meditating daily on truth and the fabulous riches with which it blesses our lives.
- K. In Bible meditation we can walk with the great and good worthies of the past--patriarchs, prophets, John the Baptist, the Christ, the apostles and other New Testament saints.
- L. Diligence in Bible study offers convincing proof that we love Father, Son, the Holy Spirit and Their immortal words of truth.
- M. This is a sure way of imitating Jesus, who knew the Scriptures in a masterful sort of way.

IV. HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL AND TIME-TESTED PLANS OF BIBLE STUDY.

- A. Here is a way of reading the Bible through in one year's time:
1. Three chapters a day and five on Sunday will put one from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21.
 2. This plan keeps one more deeply involved in Bible study:
- B. Here is a second plan for a more comprehensive study:
1. Three chapters daily in the Old Testament and three chapters in the New Testament will put one through the Old Testament in one year and four times through the New Testament.
 2. This plan keeps one more deeply into the New Testament than plan one does.
- C. Here is a third plan that calls for much more study in the New Testament on a daily basis:
1. Three chapters in the Old Testament will put one through the Old Testament in one year's time.
 2. Nine chapters daily in the New Testament will put one through the New Testament once a month, and twelve times in a year's time.
 3. This third one has been my choice for nearly sixty years. It has been one of the richest types of Biblical study I have ever done; I recommend it without reservation.
- D. Here are plans for Biblical memorization of Sacred Scripture:
1. For more than forty years I have chosen the first twenty-two days in each February and memorized again Psalm 119.
 - a. There are twenty-two sections composing Psalm 119 with eight verses in each section.
 - b. Eight verses per day will put one through the 176 verses of this precious chapter in these twenty-two days.
 - c. Incidentally, this is the longest chapter in the Bible and is a chapter about the Bible.

2. Ten verses a day in the New Testament will put one through it in less than three years.
3. Biblical memorization is one of the finest ways of engaging in serious Bible Study.
4. This is a sure way of hiding God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11).

V. REWARDS OF DAILY MEDITATION OF THE BIBLE.

- A. This is a way of walking with God as Enoch, Noah, and Micah's generation did (Genesis 5:21-24; 6:9; Micah 6:8).
- B. It enables us to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).
- C. It will enable us to be victorious over temptations that confront us on a daily basis (Matthew 4; Luke 4; 1 Corinthians 10:13).
- D. It will enable us to be proficient in refuting errors that challenge us by an ever increasing number of Biblical enemies.
- E. It will keep us on the pathway of present piety and traveling faithfully toward Heavenly glory eternally.

CONCLUSION:

1. It will please the Godhead to see us in the serious study and ardent application of Their Word to our lives.
2. It will help us morally and spiritually.
3. It will set a worthy example for those who might be imitating us.