

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker ..... Editor  
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

**THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:**

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21; Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

**SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS  
PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH**

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (John 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

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Website: [www.godsacres.org](http://www.godsacres.org)

Vol. 31 August 2001 No. 8

# 2001 Spring Camp Meeting Report

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 48:1, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness." Certainly these are apt words to describe our sentiments of the recent camp meeting held at God's Acres. The Lord is worthy of our praise for what was accomplished in this meeting. The camp meeting was very well attended with saints gathering from near and from far. Saints were gathered from several states as well as Canada. We also were privileged to have several in our midst from the various mission fields. Brother and Sister Joseph Mbui were here from Kenya, Africa, Brother and Sister Jesus Granil from the Philippines, and Sister Lucas from Hawaii.

The meeting began with a message from Pastor Roger Decker. Brother Decker assumed the burden of being the evening evangelist and preached some inspiring and enlightening messages such as, "The Little Book" and used the types of the Old Testament cities of refuge to preach on "Choosing Safety in Christ."

In the morning services Brother C. H. Dickerson from Medina, Ohio, and Brother Allen Polston of Mechanicsburg, Indiana, brought some rousing and challenging messages. For several afternoon services Brother Earl R. Borders taught some prophetic lessons and exposed the errors of false dispensationalism. On Saturday afternoon the children had the song service and the young people had the service. Brother Nick Conger spoke on the subject, "What Will It Take to Soften Your Heart?"

Saturday evening, in response to the saints prayers, the Spirit of God moved in the evening service in a glorious manner. Sister Velma Stevens of Zanesville, Ohio, felt impressed to sing "He Will Calm the Troubled Waters of Your Soul." As she sang, the Spirit of God moved on hearts and the altars were lined with souls seeking help from God. Many lost were saved, and several backsliders pressed their way back into the kingdom. It was indeed a glorious service that produced much joy in the camp. No wonder the Psalmist said, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised."

Sunday morning one dear brother who had been under the heavy hand of affliction for the entire meeting came into the service in answer to the fasting and prayers of the saints. Certainly it was a blessed meeting. The sweet spirit of unity and harmony was evident in every labor of love in the meeting. If you were unable to attend the meeting, we recommend that you obtain the tapes of the services.

We are already anxiously looking forward to the Fall Camp Meeting. We trust you will begin praying now for the meeting, and if possible, put it in your plans to be here at God's Acres for the meeting, when once again we can assemble "in the mountain of his holiness."

*2001 Camp Meeting Dates*  
*August 5-12*  
*December 26-30*

*John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*2 The same was in the beginning with God.*

*3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

*4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

*5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

*6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

*7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

*8 He was not that Light, but was*

*sent to bear witness of that Light.*

*9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

*10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

*11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

*12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

*13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*14 And the Word was made flesh,*

*and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

*15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.*

*16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

*17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

*18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

# The Two Covenants

Part 2 of 2



**Brother Roger L. Decker**

## Establishing a Foundation

We want to focus on verse 17 of our Scripture text: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Reviewing some thoughts to establish a foundation for this message is necessary. Inverse 17 we find that two mediators were mentioned. The word mediator simply means "a go-between, a reconciler." The Law was

given by Moses, but grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

Two names that stand out in the Old Testament are Moses and Abraham. Those names were brought up many times to challenge the authority of Jesus Christ. You will notice that when Matthew wrote the Gospel, which was written to the Jews, he began with the lineage of Christ, tying it back to Abraham. Had he been unable to tie Jesus Christ to

Abraham, his Gospel would have been to no avail.

Abraham stood out for the lineage, and Moses for the Law. Moses was gifted in many ways: he was an orator, a historian, a leader, a patriarch, and a prophet. He lived very close to God. When God called Moses to go to Egypt to speak to the pharaoh, he was eighty years old, and his brother Aaron was eighty-three. In many ways, Moses was a

type of Jesus Christ. Speaking of Jesus, Matthew 11:29 says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Moses also was a meek man. We read in Numbers 12:3, "(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)"

Moses was born into a very poor family, and so was Jesus. As soon as Moses was born, he was in danger of the wrath of pharaoh. Likewise, as soon as Jesus was born, He was under the wrath of King Herod. Both Moses and Jesus had miraculous deliverances. God appointed Moses to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt, which was a type of sin. God appointed Jesus to deliver all men from sin. Moses led Israel through the Red Sea, and Christ leads the new Israel through the sea of tribulation.

What really attached Moses to Christ? We find in Hebrews, Chapter 11, that Moses was a man of faith. Verses 23-27 tell us: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Again, verse 25 says, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The word *season* means "temporary." The word *pleasure*, as it is used here, means "sensual appetites, lust." It does not mean happiness, and that is because there is no happiness in sin. There might be pleasure, but that pleasure is only

temporary.

### The Law Without Christ

When the Law is mentioned, our minds go to Moses, because the Law was given by Moses; they are inseparable. As we look at the Law, or the Old Covenant, the Bible says it was added. Why add something that you cannot keep? It was added because of sin. Galatians 3:19 says, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." God revealed Himself and His holiness to His people through the Law. They could see what He liked and disliked. The Law was given to bring a consciousness of sin, to make people aware of their sins.

Often people sin freely until they come around where the Law is given. Today people still do not like the law, whether it is the law of God or the law of man. The flesh rebels against the Law. The Law brought sin to life, or made it active. It brought sin to the surface in that it showed man what was really on the inside.

In Romans, Chapter 7, the Apostle Paul laid out his experience before conversion. The first verse lets you know what he was writing about and to whom he was writing. He said, "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that knew the law,)." Though some religious organizations teach that Paul was speaking of his experience after conversion, because they want to make an excuse for sin, he was not speaking of his life after conversion. He was dealing with his life before Jesus Christ throughout the entirety of this chapter. Then, in Chapter 8, he was dealing with the New Covenant; he was getting into the law of Jesus Christ. One is a law of condemnation; the other is a law of life through Jesus Christ.

Verses 5-14 read: "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of

sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: [Notice that the Apostle Paul was very careful about what he wrote. He put himself in there. He in no way came against the Jewish nation, because he knew how highly the Jews esteemed the Law; therefore, he put himself in there as a testimony.] for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

"For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived [or became active], and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful [those things in the heart needed to come to the surface]. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin."

The Apostle Paul began by saying, "For when we were in the flesh . . ." This simply means that in the flesh, though we believed the Law, the motions of sin (or the passions and desires of sin) without the grace of God, excited our members. The motions of sin got excited when they were stirred by the Law of God. Those passions were aroused by the commandments. When a commandment or the Law tells the flesh not to do something, without the grace of God, the flesh is stirred

worse than if there were no Law. Why stir it up? To reveal your need of a Savior, a Deliverer.

### **The Purpose of the Law**

What is the object of the Law? It reveals your need of a Savior to deliver you from the body of the flesh. The fact is, you must have control of the members of the flesh. Without the Spirit of God, one is going to act as the flesh acts, and then when one comes under the law of God, it reveals that person's sinful condition and need. Only conviction through the drawing power of the Holy Spirit will bring an individual to a place of fully surrendering his members to Jesus Christ.

With salvation we do not need the Law. Why is that? The Law is not against righteousness but against sinners. First Timothy 1:9-10 reads: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." That is the purpose of the Law. You cannot be a child of God and be involved in any of those things. This is the reason a Christian is not under the Law but under grace, not grace to sin but grace not to sin. Romans 6:14-18 says: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being

then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

The Word of God is very plain concerning this topic. If someone tries to draw you back under the Law, they are trying to draw you back into sin, or into living after the flesh. As a Christian, you are on a much higher plane than those under the Mosaic Law. The Law was not made for a righteous man, but for the ungodly and the sinners, or for the unholy. It was given by Moses to make sin exceedingly sinful so man could see his need of a deliverer through Jesus Christ.

The Law is not against righteousness but against sin. That is the reason sinners do not want to hear the Word of God. In the services when a man of God begins to preach along a certain line, some people get fidgety. They get up, go out in the vestibule and stand around and talk or go outside. They do not want to hear the Law. They do not want to hear any rules or regulations. On the other hand, those who are righteous can raise their hands and say, "Amen, brother."

Romans 7:7 says, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The Law did not produce sin, but rather the Law made sin manifest.

I will use the illustration of light shining through a window. What does that light reveal? It shows little particles of dust. The light does not produce the dust; the dust is already there. The light just reveals it. That is what the Law did. It did not produce sin; it just showed sin and made it exceedingly sinful.

Paul said he had not known sin but by the Law. A heart that is dark and corrupt cannot discern the will of God. If God had not revealed himself by His Law, people could have put darkness for light and sin for acts of holiness. Jeremiah 17:9-10 reads: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked:

who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

### **When Sin Is Revealed**

When the heart is left to itself, it will become its own source of measure; but the Law is like a straight edge, and everything must line up with it. It makes sin appear exceedingly sinful. That is the reason we are not to measure ourselves by ourselves. The measuring rod is Jesus Christ. Romans 7:8 says, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead." He was saying that sin was revealed by the commandment. The Law did not bring forth sin; it just revealed what was there and excited that sin. Paul was saying, "It showed what was evil and forbade it, and that is when sin came to the surface. Sin rose in disobedience." The Gospel will reveal the true condition that one is in. What does the flesh do? It raises up and excites that sin, and it becomes exceedingly sinful. Paul was saying, "The Law showed me what was evil, and sin caused me to rebel and excited me to disobey."

Romans 7:9 says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." When knowledge came, sin became excited and caused the flesh to rebel even more. The flesh will rebel against the commandments of God. Why is that? There is no power in the flesh to live a holy, consistent life for the Lord. Rebellion against the known law of God opens your eyes to sin. You can really see what sin is all about when your passions get excited; then you can see how sin got you in such bondage. You would like to walk freely and do the things of God, but you cannot. Something became excited and drew you away from the things of God, and that was sin.

Rebellion against a known law of

God opens your eyes to sin. Almost everyone knows the story of Adam and Eve. The serpent, one of the most subtle of all creatures that God created, beguiled the woman. We read in Genesis 3:6-7: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

The Scripture says "the eyes of them both were opened." A law was given to Adam and Eve in the garden. It was not the law of the commandments; nevertheless, it was a law. The law was given by God for their dispensation of time. In the garden they had the best environment that anyone could have. So, you see, it is not the environment that keeps sin away. God told them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve never should have entered into conversation with the devil and partaken of the forbidden fruit. The Bible says her eyes were opened.

When sin is revealed, it becomes exceedingly sinful, and you know that you have disobeyed God. With it comes two things: first, you become ashamed of yourself; second, you fear that God is going to bring you into judgment. Verses 9-10 state: "And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? [God did not have to call Adam before. He could converse freely with him; but after Adam sinned, he was afraid. Sin brings fear and shame.] And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Genesis 2:25 tells us that "they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." However, after they disobeyed God, they were ashamed and afraid of God. Sin, when it becomes exceedingly sinful,

will open a person's eyes to fear and shame. When one has disobeyed God, He could bring that person into judgment at any time.

One fear that Adam and Eve had was that what God said was really true. In so many words, God said, "The day that you partake of this, you will surely die." Once they disobeyed God's command, that became a reality. They were willingly separated from God, and spiritual death became a reality. Friend, sin separates you from God. You can pray all you want and go through all kinds of ceremonial rituals when you are in sin, but God will not be impressed. What happened to Adam and Eve? Adam said, "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid [it never troubled him before], because I was naked; and I hid myself." He was naked before, but he did not hide himself. Also, he had no fear of God before, but disobedience brought fear and shame. It made sin exceedingly sinful.

### **Is Sin Warring in Your Members?**

Going back to Romans 7:15, we find that the Apostle Paul wrote, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." The Amplified Bible makes this verse a little clearer. It says, "For I do not understand my own actions—I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe [which my moral instinct condemns]."

Then, in verse 19 he wrote, "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." This verse from the Amplified Bible states, "For I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds that I do not desire to do are what I am [ever] doing." This is the testimony of an individual who has sin active in his life. Such a person does not have control over his members as he ought. Friend, you will never have control of your members until you are full of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit must

quicken those members; it is He who brings life. The Law was administration of death, but the Gospel brought life and immortality. You cannot have the life of God until you believe the Gospel, repent, and forsake your sins. The testimony that you just read is not the testimony of a child of God. Paul was teaching that without the Gospel you can try to make yourself good, but the end result will be nothing but failure. Again, he was speaking of those under the Law. Despite the good that they do, they find evil present with them. The evil they do not want to do, that is what they do. Evil is stronger than their desire to do that which is right. Evil is stronger than the mind, stronger than physical strength, stronger than good intentions, and stronger than desires.

What did Paul say was working in Romans, Chapter 7? Verse 17 tells us, "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." The Apostle Paul studied under Gamaliel, so he knew the Law. That is the reason he was so good in the discussions he had at Ephesus and other places where God used him in such mighty ways. He was a teacher of the Law, but without Jesus Christ he was void of victory in his soul. All that the Law did was stir him up. He had a desire to do good and not evil, but he found that he was one miserable failure. Though he was from the elite tribe of Benjamin, of the Jewish faith, and a Hebrew of the Hebrews, he still could not keep the Law of God.

Do you have a desire to do that which is right, but you find that you have no control in your life? You have to realize that something in you is stronger than the natural man, and that is sin. Perhaps you would to God there were some things you did not do. Well, you have to realize, as the Apostle Paul tells you, that it is not you that does it, but sin that dwells in you.

What happens to a man or a woman in that condition? The Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:23, 'But I

see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." He said in verse 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" In other words, he was saying, "How am I ever going to get deliverance? I am doing the best I can to keep the Law, but the Law stirs up my passions and desires." On the road to Damascus, Paul was still a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and he was set to wipe out every Christian, yet he thought he was doing God's will.

Paul said in verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Paul had a desire to do what was right, but he found that the flesh kept him captivated under the law of sin, and then he thanked God through Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:1-2 he wrote: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

I want you to notice one thing in closing. When we talk about the Spirit of God, we are talking about life. When we talk about the Law, we are talking about sin and death. Again, verse 2 reads, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Under the Law, Paul was under the law of sin and death, the Old Covenant. Without the Spirit of God active in your life, you are still under that law. Whenever the commandments or the Gospel goes forth, you will find that something gets stirred within you and keeps you from coming to Christ or receiving the Spirit of life. That is sin warring in your members, but Jesus Christ came to set you free from the law of sin and death.

*(Cassette C-4563A)*

# Youth Corner

## Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

There is a touching story told of the famous Dr. Samuel Johnson, who had an influence on many a boy who has heard it. Samuel's father, Michael Johnson, was a poor bookseller in Lichfield, England. On market days he used to carry a package of books to the village of Ottoxeter, and sell them from a stall in the marketplace. One day the bookseller was sick, and asked his son to go and sell the books in his place. Samuel, from a silly pride, refused to obey.

Fifty years afterward Johnson became the celebrated author, the compiler of the English Dictionary, and one of the most distinguished scholars in England; but he never forgot his act of unkindness to his poor, hard-toiling father. So when he visited Ottoxeter, he determined to show his sorrow and repentance. He went to the marketplace at the time of business, uncovered his head, and stood there for an hour in the pouring rain, on the very spot where the bookstall used to stand. "This," he says, "was an act of contrition for my disobedience to my kind father."

The spectacle of the great Dr. Johnson standing bareheaded in the storm to atone for the wrong done by him fifty years before, is a grand and touching one.

Many a man in after-life has felt something harder and heavier than a storm of rain beating upon his heart when he remembered his acts of unkindness to a good father or mother now in the grave.

The words "Honor thy father and thy mother," mean three things—always do what they bid you, always treat them lovingly, and take care of them when they are sick and have grown old. I never yet knew a boy who trampled on the wishes of his parents who turned out well. God never blesses a wilful boy.

When George Washington was sixteen years old, he determined to leave home and become a midshipman in the colonial navy. After he had sent off his trunk, he went to bid his mother goodbye. She wept so bitterly because he was going away that he said to his servant: "Bring back my trunk. I am not going to make my mother suffer so by leaving her."

He remained at home to please his mother. This decision led to his becoming a surveyor, and afterward a soldier. His whole glorious career in life turned on that simple act of trying to make his mother happy. And happy, too, will be the child who never has occasion to shed bitter tears for any act of unkindness to his parents. Let us not forget that God has said, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

*Theodore L. Cuyler*

*Matthew 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

*27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

*28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

*29 And yet I say unto you, That*

*even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

*30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

*31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

*32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

*33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

*34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*



# Are You Worthy of God's Love?

*Brother Samuel Oree, Jr.*

## **Having a Perfect Heart Toward God**

The key part of the Scripture text is found in verse 33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Notice that Jesus gave prerequisites. He said to seek first the Kingdom of God. In seeking the kingdom, do you make yourself worthy of what God has offered you? The Bible says the lilies of the field do not toil or spin, but they obey God and grow. However, you must do something. God sent His Son to save you; therefore, salvation is a free gift. However, you cannot be as the lilies of the field and not toil. You must pay a price, and that price is good, sound, Christian living.

Sometimes people seem to forget what good, sound, Christian living is. One may say, "Well, the Lord saved me many years ago, and I have been serving Him ever since." The question is, Have you taken care of everything you should have taken care of? You may say, "I have been saved for a long time. I know that I'm okay. I'm a good Christian." However, some things might have happened in your life. Perhaps you said something that you should not have said but never went back and asked forgiveness for it. That could be held against you at the Judgment. Maybe you told a little joke that you should not have told, and you have not asked God to forgive you. That could be held against you at the Judgment. You may say, "God understands that we are human and

that we will make mistakes. After all, no one is perfect." Well, if you are not perfect, you are not going to Heaven.

You may say, "God makes allowances for us, so why should we worry? If we do a little thing, that's okay." Let us see if God will accept a little imperfection in our lives. Some religions preach, "No one can live perfect." However, God instructs you to be worthy of the things that He has given to you, and He also said you must be perfect.

Second Chronicles 16:9 states, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth [why?], to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is [almost perfect? No.] perfect toward him." To be perfect toward Him means that you do not commit any

conscious or known sin. If you have lived perfect today, you have not committed any sin. If you did not commit a sin yesterday, you lived perfect yesterday. If you have not committed sin and you are serving God and doing His will, you are living perfect. Therefore, you need to quit telling people that you cannot live perfect because you have something to improve upon. We always have room to improve upon something. Being saved is a continuous process of improving. As Christians, we should show the world how a continuous process of improvement works by the way we live.

### **Living a Life of Perfection**

What are some things that can keep people from living perfect? We read in Colossians 3:12, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." Friend, the Word of God says if you do not love your brother, how can you love God whom you have not seen? Some say, "Well, I am still striving. Pray for me, because I have a hard time with that person." If you have that kind of attitude, God is having a hard time with you.

When God looked at Jesus, He said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He said that because the Son did what His Father asked Him to do. Parent, if your children do what you ask them to do, you are pleased, are you not? So it is with our Heavenly Father if we do as He says. You may say that you are a child of God, but if you hate your brother or your sister, if when he or she walks down one aisle, you go to the other aisle, God is displeased. Therefore, you are not worthy to receive His blessing. As a Christian, you should live so that God can say, "I am well pleased."

In the story of Job, when God called in the sons of men to present themselves to God, the devil came

among them also. God asked, "What are you doing here?" and he said, in essence, "I am walking to and fro, seeking whom I may devour." God asked, "Hast thou considered my servant Job?" Why did God ask that? He knew that Job would stand the test. Saint, as God looks upon your life, does He see that you can stand the test? Or when the devil comes against you, is he saying to God, "I told you that he or she could not make it"?

Saint of God, in living a life of perfection, you must have longsuffering and forbearance (grace to handle the pressures of life). Colossians 3:13 says, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Do you know what forbearing is? It means to put up with. If someone chews gum in your ear or sits behind you and taps constantly, you should not become so irritated that you turn around and say something sharply. If you feel that people are always talking about you, remember that they talked about Jesus. They nailed Him to the Cross. Has anyone nailed, you to a cross yet? You may say, "Well, that's different. I'm not Jesus." However, God's Word says if you are a son of God, you have to be like Jesus. God's eyes run to and fro, taking care of those whom He knows are perfect toward Him. If you are unable to forbear and forgive others, then you are not living a life of perfection.

### **The Need to Think Soberly**

God wants to be pleased with you. He does not want to be sorrowful. When the devil says, "I want to try your servant," God should be able to say, "Go ahead, because I know you cannot move him." The devil should not be able to tell Him, "I told you so." A problem that some people have is that they are not in a position where God can say to the devil, "Try that person."

You may ask, "What do you

mean try?" Through every little thing that someone does against you, the devil is trying you. You may say that you are saved, but do you commit willful sins? The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:1-4: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

The word *jesting* caught my attention in this Scripture. The word *jesting* means "making fun or creating a situation for someone to laugh." Solomon said in Proverbs 26:17-19: "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. As a mad man who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" We may not hurt someone intentionally, but let us be careful.

Notice that Paul mentioned *jesting* right along with fornication. *Jesting* is another form of foolish talking. *Jesting* can sometimes be a lie. God said that a liar shall not tarry in His sight. So, we see that *jesting* is not conducive to being able to say, "God, I am worthy of the blessings that You bestow upon me." It is not conducive to saying, "God, I have lived a perfect life today." To *jest* is to poke fun at someone. Are you guilty of that? You need to make sure that you understand clearly what it is to be worthy of God's grace and goodness. We read in James 2:22, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Friend, your decision not to go to church is not a work of faith. Your decision to skip the duty that you know you ought to do is not a work of faith. Your decision to ignore



what the pastor or a preacher tells you that you ought to do is not a work of faith. Some people say, "I hear what he is saying, but I don't agree with it." God gave your pastor the message to speak to you. He made him for your soul. He is to watch for your soul. So when he tells you something that God has revealed to him, you should pay very close attention to it. If you cast off his counsel, that is not a work of faith, because you do not have faith in the pastor or in the leadership that God has set before you. Also, when you do not have the work of faith, you lack perfection. You lack the ability to say to God, "I am worthy of the blessings that You are bestowing upon me." Additionally, you have given the devil the opportunity to say to God, "I told You so."

Child of God, you must be very careful when you disagree with things. If you disagree with something, you should never stand up in church and say, "Pastor, I disagree with you!" If you have a problem, when church is over, then you can take your Bible and go talk to the pastor. You may be surprised to learn that he was right after all. Sometimes people have the attitude, "I have been saved for a long time. I know the Scriptures, so what can you tell me?" That is not the right attitude. Paul said in Romans 12:3, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Why did Paul give this warning? Lest we fall. Many people say, "I have done everything I am supposed to do. I am doing well. I have been saved for many years, and I haven't sinned." God said not to think too highly of yourself, because you might be heading for a fall. When you think too highly of yourself, you are not living in the grace of God, in the bond of perfection that you should to receive the blessings that God is giving to the loyal Christian.

## True Christian Living

Christian living is a blessing, an honor, and a pleasure. It is something that you should want to do. If someone has to drag you to church, then you are not enjoying the pleasure of Christian living. Not everyone expresses joy in the same way, but in the heart and mind of the Christian is joy. God's church is in us. As people look upon you, they should see the Church of God. A Christian ought to look like a child of God; He looks like his Father. I look like my earthly father. I cannot say that I am not Samuel Oree, Sr.'s son, because I look so much like him. So it is in the spiritual. If you are a child of God, if you say, "I am saved and living a perfect Christian life, and I am worthy of God's blessings," then you ought to look as though you are. It is going to show in your face and in everything you do. If you are in a line at the supermarket and something goes wrong, people will see that you are a Christian, because you are going to deal with it in a pleasant manner, no matter what happens.

Today we have something called "road rage." Road rage often occurs when someone is cut off in front of another car. Well, no Christian should be guilty of road rage when someone cuts him or her off; that is not Christlike. God knows your heart. If you have vengeance in your heart and want to do something to get back at someone, that will keep you from enjoying perfection and being worthy of God's blessings.

I do not like long lines. If I go to the supermarket, somehow I often pick the line where someone has a problem with something. When that happens, I have to control myself. I say to myself, "Sam, you made the choice, so don't get angry." So I must smile and be pleasant. If I am pleasant in my soul, it is going to show on my face. Friend, your facial expressions often give away what is inside your heart. If you watch people's faces when they are under

duress or stress, you can almost tell what they are going through. Your facial expression is one way to show how strong you are in God. When pressure comes, your face shows it. If you have God in your life, it is going to show. Sometimes you may go to church and not feel well. You may look as if you do not feel well, but you should not look mean. There is a difference between looking mean and not feeling well. Such things can keep you from living a perfect life.

## The Law of Sowing and Reaping

Let me take it one step further. When my children were small, I bought them a bicycle from the store, but I could not put it together. Finally, I became so frustrated that I threw the bike in a corner. When my son saw me, he said, "Daddy, why did you do that?" I felt very small, because I was supposed to have been a Christian, but in a fit of rage I did something that I should not have done. I did not show myself as being what I should have been. Should you discover that you have done something like that, you need to repent. If you do not, those things will hinder you. Do you need to straighten up some things? Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It may come in a different form, but you are going to reap it. You may say, "God is a loving God, a God of all grace, a God of all glory. When He forgives, He wipes everything away." Well, we cannot do away with the part that says, "Whatever you sow, you are going to reap."

Let us look at the life of Paul. Before he was converted, he thought that he had a license to kill Christians; thus, he was a murderer, a mass murderer at that. You may say, "Well, surely when God forgave Paul, everything was okay, because God forgave Paul of his sins." Nevertheless, Paul had a price to pay. We can see that when we

read what God told Ananias to tell Paul in Acts, Chapter 9. (Keep in mind that Paul was a man whom we hold in high regard.) Verses 15-16 read: "But the Lord said unto him [to Ananias], Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Paul did not escape the reaping. If he did not escape it, what makes you think that you are going to escape it? You cannot escape it, because whatever you sow, you are going to reap.

There is one beautiful part about God's grace. Paul had a thorn in his side for quite a long time, but he conquered it and still paid his debt for the things he had done. How? God gave him grace to deal with it. No matter what you might have done while you were in sin, once God saves you and you are living in perfection to what you know, when the reaping comes, God will give you the grace to deal with it in a Christlike manner. Nevertheless, you still should be careful of what you sow, because you may find the price hard to pay. If you are not careful, the price you will have to pay may keep you out of Heaven. When the reaping time comes upon you, if you do not have the love of God in your heart as you should, you will not have the grace of God to deal with the problem.

One of the most difficult things to do is to return to Christ from a backslidden state. Do you know why? Because that person has been running from everything that reminds him of when he was a Christian. Often it takes something drastic to cause a person to come back to God. God may put that one on a sick bed to bring him back. He may allow that person to have a stroke or to break a leg. Others may end up in jail before they return to God.

Backslider, why do you remain in a backslidden state, waiting for a traumatic situation before you return to God? You need to give your

heart back to God while you are well or before you are incarcerated, while you can do something for Him, while you can spread His Word to others. Too many wait until they are down and out, unable to do anything else, and then they decide to get saved. I have a friend who smokes, drinks, and does whatever he wants to do. I said to him, "You really ought to think about giving your heart to God."

He said, "When I know I can't do anything else, then I'll call on God to save me. That is how He saved my mother."

I told him, "You may not get the chance. A truck could hit you or you could go to sleep at the wheel and go into eternity instantly."

Too many people think they have a charmed lease on life. They feel, "That would never happen to me. Those things only happen to the other guy." There are graves in the cemetery of those whose lives were very short and others whose lives were long. Babies die, older people die, and all ages between.

### **The Danger of the Little Foxes**

No matter how young you are, you cannot afford not to lead a perfect life. You cannot afford to let the devil say to God, "See, I told You so." It hurts God when the devil comes to try the Christian and he fails the test. Christian friend, no doubt you would not commit fornication or steal; however, the danger to the Christian is the little foxes. Friend, if you tell little off-color jokes or little "white lies," those things will keep you out of Heaven. The Word of God says that broad is the way that leads to destruction. Nevertheless, narrow is the path that leads to eternal life, and only a few are going to make it. Now, of all people who say they are Christians, when Christ comes the second time, only a few are going to make it. How can you guarantee that you are going to be one of the few? By good, solid, consistent Christian living.

Child of God, you need to live so that when the devil goes to God and says, "I want to try this brother (or sister)," God can say, "Go ahead," and in the end, the devil will have to hang his head and say, "You were right." Will God be able to say about you, "I was right" or will the devil say, "I told You so"?

Another thing that will keep you out of Heaven is, if you have a problem with someone and you start talking to people about it. If you have a problem with someone, first you should look at yourself. Next, you need to leave it in God's hands. Too many take things upon themselves and say, "Well, I am going to help this brother." I have learned that if I am having a problem with someone, before I try to deal with that problem, I should first look at myself and say, "Maybe I caused the problem." I have had to do that. Now, that is hard, because no one likes to say, "I have a problem." That is just part of human nature.

You do not want to say, "I have a problem," especially when someone has really hurt you. You may say, "She has the problem, not me." Well, is there something that you did to provoke that person? You need to stop and examine yourself. You might find that you did something to provoke that person's actions. I am not saying that what the other person did was right. Perhaps it was not right at all, but you may be part of the problem.

When people get up in the morning, few people get up and go out without looking in a mirror. One way to check your Christianity is to look in the mirror of God's Word. You need to ask yourself, "Have I done anything that I need to go back and apologize for? Have I done something that prevents me from being in the Kingdom of God?" Sometimes when you ask yourself these questions, you may find that you have to go back and make corrections. That is difficult for the flesh to do, but the grace of God can enable you to do that. It is only by God's grace that we are saved, and

it is only by God's grace that we have life.

### **Becoming Heavy Laden With Cares**

Another thing that can keep one out of God's kingdom is going to pieces when something catastrophic happens. The Bible says to rejoice in tribulation. How can you rejoice in tribulation when your house has just burned down and you have lost a loved one? The Word of God says to rejoice in tribulation, yet how can the Christian do that? Let us say that you have two grandchildren, and one was burned and the other was not. You should rejoice that one was saved. I used to wonder, "How can I be joyful when something bad has happened to me?" Do you know why I can be joyful? Because it could have been worse. There is joy in the fact that it could have been worse. You can say, "I thank God that it was not any worse than it was."

My former pastor told a story once of a lady who was sitting beside a window peeling potatoes and crying, "Lord, this is all I have to eat." The potato peels were falling out the window onto the ground. She heard a noise and looked down. There was a lady picking up the potato peels and saying, "Thank You, Jesus! Praise the Lord for these potato peels." Now, one lady was crying because all she had to eat was potatoes. However, another lady was giving thanks to God for the potato peels.

Too often people let calamity and the cares of the world block the things that they should do to maintain perfection with God. They let things cloud their minds. That is because they have not learned how to say, "I am going to put it in God's hands and let Him work it out." When you do that, you are as free as if someone has lifted a big load off you. If I see my brother struggling with a package and I come along and say, "Let me help you," he would be glad. He would say,

"Well, thank you!" God is the same way. If you have a heavy load on you, you ought to give it to God. God's Word says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Sadly, too often people do not give God a chance to do it, because they want to try to struggle with it. Some individuals say, "Well, I can make it. I know I can do it."

Sometimes you just have to say, "Lord, help me with this burden." When you give the burden to God, you should not take it back. Oftentimes when people give the burden to God, they think He does not work fast enough, so they take it back and struggle with it some more. Then they give it to God again, and then they take it back. That is no good. Once you have given it to God, you should leave it there. A song says, "Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there." Then you can say, "Lord, I have done all that You asked me to do." When you struggle with things and just keep going on in yourself, the thing that is burdening you is keeping your mind off God. Also, it is leaving room for the devil to step in. Some become so burdened with what they are trying to deal with that they forget God. They forget to pray and read the Bible, and they begin to miss church. Therefore, they need to give it up and give it to God and let Him work with it.

### **Can You Stand the Test?**

Some people would like to give it to God, but they do not have the faith. We can read the story about what Abraham did by faith. By faith the children of Israel went through. The lack of faith can bring condemnation. Lacking faith means that one cannot trust God. Often people trust in their fellowman. However, our fellowman can let us down. God will never let you down! If you have lived as you should, God will not let you down. Again, 2 Chronicles 16:9 says, "For the eyes

of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Friend, if you are perfect in your heart toward God, He is going to care for you. There is nothing that He will not do for you. Now, He will not always give you what you want, but He will take care of your needs. Jesus told the people of His day to quit worrying so much. He told them to look at the lilies of the field and the birds. Look at all these things and see how God takes care of them. Child of God, if you are perfect in your heart toward God, then He will take care of you. You may say, "Well, I know that, but trusting Him is so difficult for me." The reason it is hard is that there is not enough of God down in your heart. The Spirit of God must dwell in you. If He is in you, then you have the love of God in your heart. There is no place for any doubt; there is no room for anything but what God wants you to do, and that is to serve Him and give Him your undivided attention. God does not want half your attention, but He wants your total, undivided attention.

I used to teach high school drafting classes. When I taught the classes, I wanted the undivided attention of the students. If I did not have their attention, they were going to miss something, and then they would be asking me, "What did you say?" Friend, what if God is trying to tell you something, but your mind is on something else? Then you will say, "God, what did You say? I wasn't paying attention." He might be trying to tell you, "Get ready to die." That is what He told Hezekiah. Suppose Hezekiah had not been paying attention when God told him that? Then Hezekiah would not have turned his face to the Lord and pleaded with God to spare his life. Because Hezekiah heard God and pleaded for his life, God added fifteen years to his life.

In closing, are you living where God can say to the devil, "Try him, and you will find that he will stand the test"? When there is a problem in your life or a burden on your heart, you need to give it all to God. He will lighten; that load and You will feel happy; then you can sing and shout and enjoy the blessings that God gives to you. If a catastrophe should happen to you, do not think the worst of it. You need to thank God and realize that it could have been worse. Do you want to be a perfect Christian? If there is a problem, look at yourself and say, "Lord, am I the problem?" Then give it to God and let Him handle it. He is much better at taking care of it. The most complex things of man appear simple to God. Many prayers are not answered because some are not doing what they ought to do.

James 5:16 tells us, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." If you are not righteous, do not think that your prayers are going to be answered, because they are not. If you have anything in your life that prevents you from being perfect, you are a sinner. Friend, you are either a saint or a sinner. No man can serve two masters, and there is no gray area. There is a definite line of demarcation. Either you are saved or you are unsaved. Either you are living a perfect life for God or you are not. If you are not living perfect, then you are not a Christian, but you are a sinner. If the message has found you lacking, I trust that you will ask God to help you.

(Cassette C-4025A)

It is better to look ahead  
and prepare than to  
look back and regret.

WHAT WE WEAVE IN  
THIS WORLD WE SHALL  
WEAR IN ETERNITY.



LABOR DAY  
*Fellowship  
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Monday-Friday 7:00 p.m.  
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Pastor C. H. Dickerson  
(330) 725-6853 or (330) 725-5993

*Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith*

*ye are called,*

*2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

*3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

# Christian Unity



*Brother C. H. Dickerson*

## **Lift Up the Standard**

The world today is looking for something that they do not have. People of the world are dissatisfied. Many have turned to drugs and alcohol because they are in a miserable state. The answer is for the saints of God to make the way of salvation look attractive to them. There is only one answer to the world's problems, and that is Christ. However, the world is not going to see Christ as they should until they see the people of God come together in unity.

To get the world to believe, Jesus let us know that unity is the most important factor. Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 was, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be

one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Living so that we can be together, agree together, and walk together as God's people is important. We will walk together if we keep God's eternal Truth. Then we will see lost souls find what they so desperately need.

Unity is one of the most powerful things there is; without it there is no power. This is the reason the enemy is working so hard to destroy unity. God knows that the lack of unity will make His people powerless. Because of this powerless, religious generation, we are seeing people who submit to anything and lower the standard, and we are seeing loose, moral living. Never has there been a time when people have lived such a low stan-

dard. Many have let down on the dress standard. Too many people have lowered their standard of ethics (the way they work and the way they do things). Why? Simply because without unity, the power to live right is diminished. Church, we need to get down to business with God and fight the battle. Unity ought to be in the congregations so that we can lift up the standard.

In the Word of God we read, "Go through the gate, lift up the standard." It does not say some standard, but the standard. What standard? The standard that God gave to govern the church. When we lift up that standard and people of God have true unity, the Church of God will go forth conquering. Regarding the horses shown in the Revelation, the first horse was a white horse

and the One who rode it had a bow in His hand. In other words, He had God's standard, and as a result people were saved by the hundreds and by the thousands. God has not changed His mind today. If we, as God's people, will get back to the same place, we will see more people praising God, we will see the standard lifted up, and the people of God will look and act as they should. False religion and the world are getting worse and worse. It is up to God's people to change this.

The great need of the day and the key for God to do a work is Christian unity. However, a spirit is working that causes people to be self-centered. When this spirit is working, people do not care who they hurt or how many people lose their souls, as long as they can have their own way. This is the picture that we are seeing today.

Paul addressed the Ephesian letter to the saints of God. There was trouble back then or Paul would not have written that letter as he did. He was endeavoring to bring them back into unity so they could have greater power with God. That is what the message is all about yet today. God wants His people to have power so that souls can be saved and healed and so that God can move in a special way. Thank God, He is doing that in the true Church of God, and I appreciate it.

My friend, if you will keep holding on, God will bless more, and then more souls will be saved and more bodies will be healed. More people will be delivered from habits of life, drugs, and every wicked place. However, it all depends upon the people of God getting together and turning away from what we think and doing what God says. As God's people, we need to act as God wants us to act. When God says to move, we need to move. When God does not put His approval on something, we need to sit down and wait for Him; then greater things will be accomplished. Today many people feel that the only ones who are right

with God are those who see things exactly as they see them. In other words, people feel that only when others fit into their mold are they right. In too many cases, trying the spirits has become a thing of the past, yet the Bible says that we should try the spirits, to see what the Spirit says and to see how the Spirit works.

### **The Unity of the Godhead**

In Ephesians 1:1 we read, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." As you consider this verse, look at what the unity of the Godhead is and how it works. Just as the Godhead has unity, God's people should likewise have unity. The Godhead is a trinity, or a three-fold Being, yet They are one. The Trinity of the Godhead (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) had one thing in mind, and that was to produce a people who were above this world, who had power with God, who could get down on their knees and ring the prayer bells of Heaven, who could make contact with God and move Him on His throne.

God still has a people today, though they are few, who can move Him on His throne. I am glad that God still heals bodies, saves souls, and works out problems. He still delivers people from the bondage of sin and sets them free. We need to thank God for these things! He has never lost His power. People do not have to go to a rehabilitation center to be delivered from drugs and alcohol. All they have to do is get down on their knees and give their lives to God. He can change their lives completely and make them new creatures.

The Godhead had one thing in mind, and that was the salvation of mankind. John 3:16 tells us, "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." God was so concerned about us that, before the very foundation of the world, He made a way that whosoever believes (or whosoever will adhere to, stay fast, be strict in, trust in, and rely upon Him) should not perish. What is the condition? One must adhere to what God said. You cannot deviate from what He said and take man's word.

Church, we have a Head far greater than any man's head. If you will get down to business and seek God's face, He will give you the direction you need. You might have been taught certain Scriptures throughout your life, but when you truly get hold of God, you will find out what the true meaning is. You may find out that you have been wrong and that you need to back up. You might have to change your thinking and even your preaching, if you are a preacher. You will see greater results when you measure up to the Truth of God's Word. God said if you will adhere to His Word, rely on it, and trust in it, you will not perish. However, if you do not, you are going to perish.

You may say, "I am sincere." How sincere you are does not mean anything. Baal worshipers were sincere, but that was not good enough. You must be sincere in the Truth and stand for it; then God will save your soul, and you will not perish.

### **"The Washing of Water by the Word"**

The second person of the Godhead is Christ, and His mission was to help. We read in Ephesians 5:24-26: "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." In verse 26 we can see that God wants to sanctify and cleanse His church by the washing of the water by the Word. Friend, this is the rea-

son you need to go to the house of God, and when you get to the house of God, you need to lay aside every care and allow God to wash you by His Word. If, under every Gospel message preached by a man anointed by the Holy Spirit, you will lay aside the cares of life, all your thoughts, and get centered on the things of God, you will become more spiritual. One reason that people run around and say, "The pastor is not feeding me," is that they do not have their minds on the service. Some run down the preacher and then say, "He's not feeding my soul anymore." The reason is that they do not have their hearts into it. Their minds are on other things. God wants you to lay aside other thoughts so that you can hear what the preacher says. Once you get the message on the inside and adhere to it, it will help you.

One of the most sickening things is when most of the people in a congregation are completely satisfied and say, "Our pastor is doing a good job!" but then some disgruntles sit around and pout and say, "We are not getting our souls fed." The reason they are not getting their souls fed is either because they have closed their ears to the Truth or they have walked back of light for so long that they no longer hear from God. It is one or the other, because God is still feeding the saints of God. People getting fed is what keeps the church moving forward.

I do not feel sorry for people who say, "You are not feeding my soul." Whenever someone says that to me, I have one message for them: "If you are dissatisfied, leave." You may say, "That is bold." Well, when people become dissatisfied, they are disgruntled, and they will sow discord among the saints of God. The best thing for them to do is to stay away. I would rather have fifty good people who love God and love the Truth than to have five hundred people who are always fussing, finding fault with the preacher, and causing a reproach against the Word of God. I have no patience for

that.

Again, there is a need to go to the house of God and set aside every care and every thought so that you can be washed by God's Word. In other words, after you are out in this old, sinful world all week long, you need to be bathed by God's eternal Word. From the physical standpoint, you can take a shower and feel refreshed, but after you work and get dust on you and perspire, you will need to shower again. You take a shower because you need to keep your body clean. So it is in the spiritual. When you are out in the world all week long and hear cursing and see evil things going on, you need to get to the house of God. When the message goes forth, you need to say, "Preach it, brother, because I need it! I need cleaned up. I need a spiritual bath to get the smell of the world off me."

You should not sit back and criticize a man of God because he is preaching the Truth, friend. If you find fault with the preacher, that shows how ignorant you are. If you are going to grow spiritually, God wants you to admit that you need cleansed. When the washing process goes on, too many look across the aisle and say, "Boy, that really hit So-and-So." They fail to realize that it hit them too. When you acknowledge your need, there is help for you. David said, "I have sinned," the prodigal son said, "I have sinned," and one thief on the cross said, "We deserve what we are getting." He acknowledged his transgressions and received forgiveness. However, the one who blames others is never forgiven.

An example of blaming others rather than acknowledging one's own transgressions is when King Saul disobeyed Samuel's orders. He blamed the people. Did he receive forgiveness? No. From that time on, he was in trouble with God. If you are going to receive any help, you must acknowledge your need. This is the reason many people cannot get settled and grounded. Friend, if you will truly see yourself, quit the

foolishness of saying "I made a mistake"; and confess that you have sinned, God will be faithful to forgive you and cleanse you from every sin.

We read in Ephesians 5:2, "And walk in, love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." In other words, you are to show the world that you have been set apart for God. Galatians 1:4 states, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Titus 2:14 tells us, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Christ had one thing in mind, and that was to save people from their sins.

### **Attributes of Unity**

The Holy Ghost is the third part of the Godhead, and the Scripture says that He came as a guide; He came to reprove, comfort, and set up His kingdom within us so that He could guide our lives. Concerning our salvation, God put something into it, Christ put something into it, and the Holy Spirit put something into it. Now God is telling you to put something into it. Why? So that more souls can be saved. People are not going to get saved unless the saints put something into it. It is more than going to the house of God to sell something or to visit with friends. We go to the house of God to do a work so that we can see people helped.

There are several attributes of unity. The Holy Spirit is a comforter, and when you have the Comforter, you do not have to cry on someone else's shoulder. Too often people do not receive help because instead of going to God, they try to find someone who will sympathize with them. God does not feel sorry for you, but He will do business with you when you meet His condi-

tions. When you need help, only One can truly help you, and that is God. People may feel sorry for you, but all that does is build up the devil. When you get in trouble, you need to get down on your knees, seek God's face, and tell God about your trouble. Do not try to say that it is someone else's fault, but tell God, "It is my fault," and then God will help you. He will not help you unless you acknowledge your need.

There are characteristics of unity. You see, you can cry out against short hair on women, against dressing immodestly, against television, and against worldliness; but if you do not have the spirit of unity in your heart, it will be to no avail. Certainly, we need to cry out against these things, but we also need the spirit of unity in our hearts so that when we cry out against these things, it is going to cause people to change.

God is real, and He is still able to get hold of souls and talk to hearts. When the Truth is preached, God will show people what they ought to wear and what they should not wear. God will still do that if men will dare to stand and preach His eternal Truth. If you are a preacher and you do not preach God's eternal Truth, you should sit down, because you are damning your soul. God has called men of God for one reason, and that is to preach the Word. Although it is not going to please everyone, we still need to preach the Word. The Word is all that will save you.

Jesus called those who do not have the spirit of unity in their hearts "white washed sepulchers." He said in Matthew 23:28, "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Too often we judge people by what we see, but in Jeremiah 17:10 God said, "I the LORD search the heart [He gets right down in the very recesses of the heart and searches it out], I try the reins [in other words, God tries the spirit that things are done in], even to give every man according to

his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

### **Characteristics of Goats**

The reason many people are in the condition they are today is that they do not truly want to serve God. The Book of Romans tells of people who did not want to retain God in their knowledge and did not want to glorify God. Jeremiah 17:10 states, ". . . to give every man according to his ways." Do you know why people today are in such a terrible spiritual condition? That is what they want. God has always given people what they want even if it was against His will. When the children of Israel wanted a king, God spoke to Samuel and said to give them a king.

Protestantism did not want Holy Ghost leadership. We read in Revelation 11:9-10 that the two witnesses (the Word and the Spirit) tormented them. What happened? They went into spiritual darkness. Are they yet in darkness today? If you take the Word and the Spirit into one of those places, if they let you preach, they will never let you preach again. Why? Because they do not want Truth. Once I was invited to another church to preach on the Revelation. I went and preached only two nights. By then the preacher was in a hurry to get it over with because he did not want to hear anymore. However, five people followed us out to the Church of God, and they are still walking in Truth yet today. When Babylon calls in a man who will preach the Truth, the saints will get out of that place.

The primary characteristic of a goat is butting. When I was growing up, we had an old billy goat at our place. He would not butt you when you were looking at him. My oldest brother was always getting into some kind of mischief, and when someone came to the house, he would get them to turn their backs on that old goat, and then he would get it to butt them. Now, I do

not like to have to watch people. I like to trust people. I like for them to work for the Truth. If they will work with the Truth, they will work with me as a pastor. I love the Truth, and I am Church of God through and through! Anything that is run by man is Babylon. (It does not matter what name they have posted over the door.)

God still runs His church, He is still on the throne, and He still puts out and enforces the orders. I am against anything that man is the head of. Anything that God, through the Holy Spirit, is not leading, I am against. God will give people what they want. Many people today are on the road to hell because they have become blinded and do not realize it, but that is the way they want to travel. They want to travel on the broad road. God has given us a dress standard, which is modest; yet people want to wear immodest apparel, such as shorts, capris, short skirts, low-necked dresses, and so on. Others want their children to be popular and to have prestige, so Wednesday nights, at prayer meeting time, they let their children practice in the band. Then, on Sunday night they let their children miss church if there is a ball game. Why is that? Because they want their children to be popular. Friend, when you get in that condition, you are guiding your children down the wrong road. The Bible says to train up a child in the way he should go. One should start training a child when it is a babe in arms and right on up through to when that child becomes an adult and gets married; then you are not responsible for him or her any longer. Unless they ask for advice, it is time to back off after they get married.

### **Showing Forth the Spirit of Unity**

The attributes of unity are humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance (which means the practice of self-control), patience, and tolerance. Today some who claim to



be God's people do not want to tolerate anything. If someone does not do things as they think that person ought to, they do not want to tolerate it in any way, shape, or form. People will do things a little differently. Now, I am not talking about sinning. If you have been walking with God for many years, you cannot expect a new convert to be measured up to everything that God has shown you when it took you fifteen years to get to where you are spiritually.

Church, you need to tolerate a few things and not sit around and say, "Well, the pastor is allowing some things in the congregation." If you do that, you are showing people that you do not have the spirit of unity or long-suffering. You need to be long-suffering with people. If they start to show a bad spirit, then that is the time to set them down. However, as long as they are walking with God, you need to encourage them. You should not discourage them, knock them out of the race, or allow someone who is sitting on the sideline to fill your ear with accusations against them. I learned a long time ago while listening to ball games on the radio that team members defend one another. Why? Because they are part of a team. It is the fans sitting on the sidelines who say, "That crazy fool! Had he caught the ball, we would have won that game" or "Had he hit a home run, we would have won that game!"

Who finds fault with the saints? Those who sit on the sidelines, not those who are working. Do you know who finds fault with the pastor? Again, those who sit on the sidelines. They never do anything except sit back and pout. However, the saints lift up the pastor's hands and pray for him. They will say, "Go on, brother; we are backing you and holding you up." They sometimes send cards, little gifts, or speak words to encourage him.

## What Is Unity?

There is a commandment for unity and a need to see people saved and to stay saved. If people are not careful, they will sit around in their own little groups, two or three here, a half dozen there, one little family here, and another family over there. When the service is over, they only visit with their friends and miss the strangers in the back who are waiting for someone to speak to them and welcome them back. If they are not welcomed, they walk out and say, "Those people were not very friendly."

Church, we need to do away with cliques. We need to look around and see if there is a visitor among us. If there is, when that last amen has been spoken, we need to find that individual and let them know that we are glad to have them. We need to make them feel welcome and invite them back. Sometimes the pastor cannot get away in time to greet new people, and by the time he finally gets loose, they might have already left and formed an opinion. When people do not feel welcome, it is doubtful that they will ever return.

As I have already said, the unity of the Godhead is to win souls for God. What is our unity today? It is to make people feel welcome when they come in the services and sit under the Gospel. You should not say, "You ought to do this and that." They may not understand what you are talking about. Because you told them to, they may measure up, but it would not always be in their hearts. However, if God shows them something, they will take it off and do away with it. You ought to let God do the work. Let us have unity and let God do a work. When people interfere, that does nothing but drive people away.

A young man came to me a few years ago who had been out in deep sin. He did not know anything about the things of God, and he inquired about different things. I instructed him just to walk in the

light. God wants us to walk in the light. If you have the right spirit, when a man of God preaches the Word of God, the Spirit of God will show you what he is talking about. Unity is not trying to get every one to fit into your mold or having everyone think as you think they should; but it is living peaceably with all men and women without sacrificing the Truth. You should not sacrifice the Truth for anything or anyone. Truth is too precious to sacrifice any part of it. In Samuel's day Truth was precious, and the Word of God is still precious in the day and age in which we live. Friend, you cannot get fed the Word of God in every place that calls itself the church. The places where you can hear Truth are getting fewer and fewer. Church of God, we need to stand against anything or anyone who tries to cause discord.

When I was fighting in World War II, one night we were called to get rid of a group of German sharpshooters. My outfit was told, "Get rid of them. Don't capture them; kill them." What was the purpose of our mission? They commanded us to do away with the opposition so the army could move on. Likewise, in the spiritual, God has called patrols to uphold the Truth, to get rid of the enemies so the Truth can go on. Church, when we get in unity, we will see a work done. We will see more children, companions, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors saved. However, we are never going to see them won until they can see that God's people are not divided.

One sickening thing today is when people go to the house of God, see something that they do not put their approval on, and then get on the telephone to call someone who is unsaved and run down the church. A saint of God would not do a thing like that! If saints of God do not understand something, they will ponder it in their hearts. They will go home, pray about it, and keep their mouths shut. They will not tell an unsaved person about it.

## Examine Yourself

To live peaceably with all men is to do as the Hebrew writer admonished: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). If you do not live holy, you are not going to see the Lord and you are not going to show the Lord to anyone else. This has a twofold meaning: not only should you live holy to see the Lord for yourself, but also to show the Lord to others. Why? Because God is holy. You cannot find God in a worldly atmosphere. Child of God, you have to lift Him up by living holy, by showing people something higher than this old world, by showing them something greater. God expects us to live holy lives so the world can see that there is something to living for God.

Paul wrote, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). Second Corinthians 13:1 says, "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Verse 5 instructs, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Verses 8-9 tell us: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong; and this also we wish, even your perfection."

Then, Paul said in verse 11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Ecclesiastes 10:4 says, "If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences." Rulers will try to rise against you and get you to go with the crowd in your decisions. However, if you do go that way, you will wish that you had not done so. Going with the crowd may relieve the flesh. How many times have you heard people say, "I told

them off, and I feel better now. I feel relieved"? It will take the pressure off when you are with the majority, but it is about like giving a pacifier to a hungry baby. It will only calm him for a little while. Now, a pacifier will never give a baby one ounce of nutrition; it just pacifies him. However, if you give a baby the real stuff, he will be satisfied.

You need to have a clean heart before God. When the pressure is on, you need to get down on your knees and say, "God, I want You to lead me." Saint, when God puts it in your heart what you should do, but you do what the crowd tells you to do, it may make you feel better, but it will prove to be a catastrophe for you. God's people cannot go with the crowd. I decided a long time ago to go God's way. I have never changed it, and with God's help, I never will. If God gives me breath to preach another ten years, I will continue to preach Truth. I am going to stand on what God has shown me.

James 3:13-14 states: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation [or conduct] his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth." If you are bitter against someone or if you envy what someone else can do and, as a result, you have strife in your heart, do not glory in it, because that wisdom is not from above; it is earthly and devilish.

Verses 15-17 state: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish [it is carnal]. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable [it will bring you to peace], gentle, and easy to be entreated, [When you get wisdom from above, the pastor will not have any trouble from you. When he says, 'This is what the Word of God says,' you will walk in it. The saints are easily entreated. However, when you say, 'I have to go home and think about

this,' you should check to see where your wisdom is from. The saint who has wisdom from above is easily entreated and easily corrected.] full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

## Humbleness of Mind

In this Christian walk you must take off some things and put on some things. In Colossians 3:8-9 we read: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, [malice is active ill will; it is having a get-even attitude.] blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." After all these things are put off, then the new man is put on. Verses 10-15 tell us: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him [not after some man's image, but after God's image] that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, [Why did he say humbleness of mind? Because everything that gets in the heart comes through the mind first. If you do not have a humble mind, you will not have a humble heart. If you have in your mind to do something wrong, it will get in your heart and you will do it. People are doing wrong today because they have let some things get in their minds and these things have worked into their hearts. We must have humbleness in our minds so that we are not proud. Are you humble before God and living as God wants you to live?] meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel [or a complaint] against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in

your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

We read in 1 Peter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." He said to be of one mind, and that is to win souls, to turn people from darkness to light. He said to have love one for another. How much love should you have for others? As much love as you have for yourself. You would not hurt yourself intentionally. If you have love for the brethren, you will not hurt them intentionally, not if you have what God wants you to have. My friend, you need to have the same love for your brother as you have for yourself. People do not hit themselves with a hammer to see if it hurts or deliberately walk in front of a car because they would like to experi-

ence a broken leg. Likewise, I have never seen a true saint of God who wants to hurt someone else. The saints have compassion and love for one another. Peter said to "be pitiful"; and the Greek says to "be tenderhearted." You need to have a heart that is tender, a heart that can be touched. If you see someone do something wrong, do not cast them off, but work with them and try to help them. That person has a soul, and a soul is worth more than this entire world. Saint, I pray that God will help us all to be in unity so that we can work with one another. When we work together, others will see something that they want. They will see the great Church of God in action. Friend, if you have gotten away from unity, if you are not working with the saints of God as you ought to, if you are not backing your pastor as you ought to, or if

you are not letting bygones be bygones and working for one common cause, it is disobedience, and God said it needs to be confessed. Do not override it, but confess it. Your attitude should be, "I want to win souls. I want to lay up treasures in Heaven." People work to lay up something in literal banks so they can have something to draw on later. Well, everything we do, every prayer we send up for a soul, every word of encouragement, every time we lift up one another, we are laying up treasures in Heaven.

The Hebrew writer said to exhort and encourage one another daily. It will draw interest in the bank of Heaven. I pray that God will help us.

*(Cassette C-3918M)*

**"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."**

**Proverbs 29:1**

# Radio Log



LOCATION	STATION	DAY	TIME
Newark, Ohio	WCLT-AM 1430	Sunday	7:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m.
Anderson, Indiana	WQME-FM 98.7	Sunday	8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m.
Gaffney, South Carolina	WAGI-FM 105.3	Monday	8:30 p.m.-10:00 p.m.

*Tune in to the radio station nearest you to hear an inspiring message from the Word of God. If you enjoy the broadcast, let us hear from you!*

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:


4 (For the weapons of our warfare

are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself

against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

# CAPTIVATE YOUR THOUGHTS



*Brother Jeremy Hupp*

## **The Battle in the Mind**

As Christians, if we bring every thought that enters our minds into captivity, we will be victorious and see great things accomplished for God. Also, we will see greater healings and greater works, and the Kingdom of God expanded. The devil will come along and say, "This is impossible; the Lord can't do it." On the contrary, the Lord can do it. Instead of thinking on bad things, you need to bring every thought into captivity.

The devil works on us in many different ways and attacks us continually. He tries to get us to fall into temptation; but there is only one way the devil can get to us, and that is through our minds. He

cannot put a cigarette in your mouth, make you drink alcohol, make you commit adultery or fornication, or make you look at pornography. He would like to, but he cannot. All he can do is tempt you to do those things. If you will bring every thought into captivity and into the obedience of Christ, you can live on the high plane that Jesus Christ intends for you to live. He came and spilled His blood so that you can walk on a higher plane, free from sin. He came to give you power to live above sin. Matthew 26:41 says, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." When you become a Christian, your spirit wants to live right, but the

flesh is weak and wants to go astray. It wants to do its own thing. Therefore, you must bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The battle is in the mind.

The flesh is weak and wants its own way, but you must resist the flesh and walk in the Spirit. The only way the devil can get to you is through your mind. When you get in hard trials, the devil will bombard you from all sides. That is how he works. The devil knows when you are in a battle and being tried, when you are being persecuted, and when you are discouraged and weak in the flesh. That is when he wants to come in and stomp you out of the battle. He can tell when you are getting weak,

and he pours it on from all sides; but you must bring every thought into captivity.

When the devil says, "No one cares about you and all the horrible things that you are going through, you need to rebuke him. You need to say, "I rebuke you, devil. I know that Jesus cares about me, and I am going to bring that evil thought into captivity."

If you are not careful, evil thoughts will get into your heart. You have to be very careful when certain thoughts come in and captivate them. You need to determine what is really going on and ask the question, "Is that thought of God?" If it is not, then you need to get it out of your mind.

### **Think on Good Things**

Sometimes the devil will say, "What you are going through is not fair. You have been treated so bad." You need to rebuke the devil. Some saints have gone through very difficult trials. Some older brethren have been through extremely trying situations. So you are not the only one who has been tried, afflicted, or persecuted.

One of the devil's favorite tactics is to say, "Just give up. It's not worth it. You are going through too many trials." Next, he will get you to look at other people's problems and faults, and say, "No one around here is right. You may as well forget it too." You have to captivate those thoughts and bring them into the obedience of Christ. The devil works in many different ways to attack you, but it all happens through the mind. If you can control what you meditate on, you will be victorious.

Often when people have hard trials, they seem to forget the promises in the Word of God. Do not forget that 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the

temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." When you are in a difficult trial or temptation, the devil never brings that to your mind, does he? He brings thoughts such as, "Why don't you just give up. What's the use? What you are going through is not fair." Christian friend, you need to captivate your thoughts. When you get really pressed down, if you are not careful, you will not even think of the Scriptures that tell you that God is not going to tempt you above what you can bear. If God is allowing it, then it is for good.

I went through an affliction on my body that was a difficult trial, but it was for my good. God was trying me. God allowed Job to be tried. My trial was small compared with what Job went through, but it was for the same purpose. It was to see how I would come out on the latter end, to see if I would still praise the Lord, preach the Gospel, teach Sunday school, and live for the Lord every day of my life. That is the reason the Lord allows trials to come into our lives.

You should not meditate on negative thoughts, but think on the good things. One song says, "I'm gonna think on the good things." Sometimes I think about how the Lord lifted me up out of sin or about when He healed me. A spiritual healing took place when the old black heart that I used to have became white as snow. When you start thinking on good things, soon all the negative thoughts that the devil is trying to put on you will be gone: When you think on good things, the temptation will end and the devil will flee.

Too many people give up on God. Why? Because they do not bring every thought into captivity. You need to keep your mind focused on the things of God. Philippians 4:8 reads, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

When you start to become pressed down and the devil works on you, you need to read Philippians 4:8.

### **Focus Your Eyes on the Goal**

The Church of God is made up of good, honest, true Christians. There are no hypocrites in God's church. I am not saying there has never been any in the congregation, but I thank the Lord for the true church. Sometimes I say, "I thank the Lord that my heart is pure"; and discouragement starts to flee.

If you keep your thoughts focused on good things, you will be less likely to be tripped up by the enemy. When people get into hard battles, they tend to focus on the obstacles instead of the objective. Friend, if you do that, you will lose sight of the goal. I was talking to someone once who said, "The walls are so high, and I can't see around them."

I said, "Walls are for climbing. You need to get your eyes off the walls and get your chin up above it so you can see what is beyond it." You must keep your eyes on the goal and off the obstacles. When you do that, you will be victorious. Too many people look at the obstacles and quit praying. Next, they lay aside the Bible and quit attending Sunday school. Then they quit attending the Wednesday night prayer services. Before you know it, you do not see them in church at all. That is what the devil wants. His main objective is to get you to quit going to church. If you fail to read your Bible one day, the devil will say, "Oh, that's no big deal. It won't hurt you to skip it today." Well, no one ever backslides overnight. It starts with a little laying aside, and then when tomorrow comes, you do not think anything about it. The next thing you know, it is Wednesday and you have not read

the Bible since Sunday. Finally, the day will come when you may find yourself saying, "I haven't been to church in months."

Some dear people used to be faithful to the house of God, but they got themselves in spiritual trouble. They allowed little things to creep in here and there, and they let little things slip away. Now they are a million miles away from God; that is sad. Christian friend, if you will bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, the Holy Spirit will remind you to pray, to read the Word of God, and to attend Sunday school and prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. Also, you will be less likely to lose out with God. Often the number one problem that people have is failing to read the Bible and pray.

When people start slipping spiritually, it is mainly due to their not reading the Bible and praying. Why is that? The thought enters their minds, "You have not read your Bible today"; yet they do not stop and take the time to do it. You need to take the reading of God's Word and praying seriously. The Word of God is a great gift that He has given us. It is a shame that people spend so little time in reading it. God is a wonderful God. I am excited about the Word of God. When I open the Word of God and start reading, it thrills my soul. Friend, you need to open your mind and heart to the Truth. God is no respecter of persons. He wants us all to have a knowledge of His Word.

### **Steps That Lead to Sin**

Again, you must bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The key word is "every." You may ask, "How can I bring every thought into captivity?" If the Word of God commands it, it is possible. God has never commanded one thing that He did not give power to do. You must control every thought that enters your mind.

Thomas Hobbs was quoted as saying, "The secret thoughts of a man run over all things: holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave, light, without shame or blame." Many thoughts come into our minds every day, but what we do with those thoughts determines whether we enter into sin. Just because a thought comes into your mind does not mean that you have committed sin. Again, what you do with that thought once it enters your mind determines whether you enter into sin.

My mind goes to the story of Achan. Joshua 7:19-21 reads: "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me. And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

In verse 21 Achan said, "I saw." And then he said, "I coveted, and took them." Last, he hid them. These are the basic steps to sin. He said, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight . . . ." There was no sin in that at all. He saw it and was tempted. Next, no doubt the thought came to his mind, "Look at that nice stuff!" It was at this point that Achan decided what he was going to do.

The thought came into his mind, "Take it." No doubt, another thought came in, "You know better than to do that. You will get in trouble." He failed to captivate the thought that came in, and he took the next step from seeing it to coveting it. Then he took it and hid

it. Achan had to decide in his mind what to do, and instead of bringing those thoughts into captivity, he took the next step into sin.

As it is with sin, one step leads to another and another, until spiritual death comes. What was Achan's punishment? Death. What is the punishment to each one who steps over into sin? Spiritual death is the punishment that he or she will receive. Therefore, we must bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

### **Your Secret Thought Life**

Each of us leads a secret thought life invisible to others and known only to ourselves and God. Are you living a thought life different from the "you" known by others? Are you thinking on thoughts or meditating on things that you should not be meditating upon? God knows.

We had a lesson in Sunday school called, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." That Scripture is found in Matthew 12:34. Young people take too much freedom in their speech. It is almost shocking how liberal the talk and the thinking is in our world today. When I was a child, I remember the first time I ever heard a cuss word in a song. I was shocked. I read in a newspaper or a magazine the lyrics of a song sung by a rap group. A few years ago they would have never thought of publishing something like that. It is a shame. Many young people's thoughts are on sex. They talk too freely about it. It troubles me when I see young people making that the focal point of their conversations. Young person, if a thought comes to your mind about sex, there is no sin in that, but there is if you dwell on it and take that thought into your heart. Matthew 12:35 says, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." You are building up a treasury in your heart. That treasury starts

building, and all the lustful thoughts that are going through your mind all the time will suddenly slip out of the mouth, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Young person, you ought to guard your talk. If you find yourself wanting to talk about things you should not talk about, you need to examine your heart. If you always think about things reserved for married couples, that is not of God. You need to get your heart purified. The Church of God has a higher standard than the world does. The world accepts lustful talk nowadays, but saints of God do not. Young person, if you think about sex all the time, you need to pray and captivate your thoughts; you are not married. If you are not careful, you will ruin the preciousness of those things reserved for married couples. There is nothing more precious than being married and having a companion, someone who is yours to love and share your feelings and emotions with. Many young people today are defiling themselves with their thoughts and actions.

The world has such a strong pull along corrupt lines. If you do not captivate and control your thoughts, you will find yourself lost in a devil's hell forever. You are going to find yourself as Achan was. Temptations are going to come, and you are going to covet something. If you do, that is sin. May God help you to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Would you be embarrassed if your friends and associates knew the thoughts that you dwell upon? Would you be embarrassed if the Lord were to reveal what you continually think on? If so, then obviously you are not captivating your thoughts to the obedience of Christ. Wife, if your thoughts were audible, would your husband be upset? Husband, if your thoughts were audible, would your wife be upset? You may fool people with

your outward appearance, but the things upon which you meditate make up the real you, the one that God sees and knows. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ is very important.

### **Guard Your Thoughts**

Why does the devil work so hard on your mind? It is the most effective avenue he has. He knows that the only way he can get to you is through your mind, so he bombards you continually. If he can occupy your mind, he knows it will crowd out God. He is not going to share our mind with the devil; He wants it all.

You can read in Genesis, Chapter 3, about how Satan led the first man and woman into sin. When he came to Eve in the garden, in essence, he said, "Why don't you partake of that fruit? It's good for food. You will be as a god if you do." What happened? She was tempted. There was no sin in her looking at that fruit; that was a temptation. However, she failed to captivate her thought, and then she overstepped. Many thoughts will enter your mind during the day: some holy, some profane, some clean, and perhaps some obscene. It is up to you to sort out those thoughts and cast aside those that would lead you into sin. You have to captivate every thought. If you do not, one evil thought can go from the mind to the heart and cause you to eventually end up in a devil's hell forever.

The tempter would like nothing more than to discourage you from continuing in the faith. Many people let the devil beat them down and discourage them because they have reoccurring thoughts of temptation. I looked at things when I was out in sin that I wish I had never seen, and the devil likes to bring those images to my mind. You may have reoccurring thoughts or temptations, but that is not sin. If you choose to think on wrong thoughts and accept them into your

heart, then you have sinned. Do not let the devil beat you down. You need to captivate your thoughts. Remember, the thoughts are not sin, but what you do with those thoughts determines whether you enter into sin.

When a normal observation becomes an abnormal preoccupation, then you have crossed the line into sin. If you see a pretty woman walking down the street who has a split in her skirt, there is no sin in seeing her leg. On the other hand, if you drive around the block to look again, then you are preoccupying yourself with her, and you have crossed over into sin. The devil may say, "You ought to go around the block and take another look. Maybe that was not really what you thought it was." He will try to trick you. Therefore, you need to captivate that thought and bring it into captivity. You should say, "I am just going to go on my way." Then you can sing a song and think about some Scriptures. Turn your mind toward the things of God.

It is amazing how fast your mind can get away from God when something like that happens. Have you ever thought, "How did my mind get on that?" If you are not careful, you will let a normal observation become an abnormal preoccupation, and you will cross over into sin. You may drive around the block thinking about what you saw. Even if you do not see her again, if you have lusted after her in your heart, you have sinned. You need to be careful about what you let your mind think on. If you take the trip around the block, you will do as Achan did and cross over from seeing to coveting or lusting. The devil may even give you an opportunity to have whatever you see. What a shameful thing that would be! What would the end result be? You would end up just as Achan did. The sad thing is, many people are in that condition. They have things hidden and they are just as dead as Achan is in their souls.

## Being Obedient to Christ

This world is so corrupt. It is so full of lust and sin that we cannot help but be tempted. However, we must recognize the temptation for what it is and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Unclean thoughts must be expelled from our minds as soon as we recognize them for what they are. Sometimes a thought may come in that you should not think about. It may wander around your mind for a few minutes before you realize that you should not be thinking on it. The very moment you realize that, you ought to cast it out. If you dwell upon that thought, you will be crossing over into sin.

What are some things that you can do to get rid of evil thoughts? If you have a temptation, you can start singing a song, and soon the thought will be gone; that works really well. Something else that you can do is quote Scripture. You ought to remember 2 Corinthians 10:5, which says, ". . . bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." When you quote Scripture at the devil, he will flee.

One of the best ways to get rid of temptation is to pray. You may be at a place where you cannot get on your knees, but you can still pray. Sometimes you will have to really get earnest in prayer. If you give up the battle and allow that thought to stay, you are going to find yourself in sin. Then you will be sorry that

you let your thoughts go that way. You need to be honest with yourself and with God. If you are meditating on ungodly things, you need to look to God for help. Do not be a hypocrite. God knows your heart. You may fool people, but you cannot fool God. Why are unclean thoughts so dangerous? Though they are unseen by others, they can lead to hypocrisy. You can have unclean thoughts going through your mind and no one can see them. You may think upon lustful things and go on with a form of religion. Some people dwell on unclean thoughts and go on as if nothing is wrong. Friend, that is hypocrisy.

Matthew 23:27-28 says: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

What is a "whited sepulchre"? It is a white, marble tomb. They had beautiful, marble tombs in those times that they spent much money on. They were beautiful on the outside, but on the inside they were full of rotting, decaying, dead men's bones. That is what is in a tomb. That is a true picture of a religious hypocrite. He is one who appears to be a saint of God on the outside, but on the inside is the stench of sin. Won't you be honest with yourself? What are you meditating on? If it is

unholy, or ungodly, bring it into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Psalm 139:23-24 says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Consider our text of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. If the Lord is telling you, "You have been thinking on impure thoughts, you need to get straightened out," You need to captivate those thoughts and do what God is telling you to do. The devil may be telling you, "You are all right. Don't worry about that." You need to captivate your thoughts. If they are from the devil, cast them out. If they are from the Lord, then do what He tells you to do. If impure, unholy, ungodly, and unclean thoughts have entered your heart, you need to get help. People are not going to judge you. God is the One who is going to judge you. You need to get past people and get what God has for you. If you have a need in your heart, you need to talk to the Lord. You need to bring your thoughts into captivity and be obedient to Christ. He is the only hope you have.

*(Cassette C-4569A)*

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe."

Proverbs 29:25



# Spring 2001 Camp Meeting



## Tape List



TAPE NO.	DATE	MESSAGE TITLE	MINISTER	COST
C-4658M	6-17-01	A Christian Father	Bro. Roger L. Decker	2.50
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