# The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION — SANCTIFICATION — UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

**Vol. 43 July 2013 No. 7**

Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

*Psalm 122:1*

"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; I Cor. 3:11)
Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
God admits members (I 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)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. We are not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

CONTENTS

Sins Done Under the Cloak of Religion . . . . . 3
The Christian Warfare . . . . . 7
Especially for Young People . . . . . 14
Remember Whom You Are Called to Serve . . . . . 15
Unlimited Resources Through Christ . . . 19
Meeting Announcements . . . . . 25
Oregon Camp Meeting Announcement . . 26
Fall Camp Meeting Announcement . . . . . 27

Vol. 43 July 2013 No. 7

# Guest Editorial

*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

*1 Timothy 4:12*

**Setting a Good Example**

If there was ever a time when we needed to set the right example, it is today. This world is full of spiritual darkness. Satan is blinding the minds of men and women regarding godly principles. In too many cases people are confused and do not know right from wrong. Therefore, souls grope in a lost condition, not knowing or caring how to live. The glorious light of the Gospel is needed to shine across their pathways to show them the way out of sinful bondage. We live in the world, but we are not of it. Christ put each of us here to be lights and examples of the reality found in salvation. Honest hearts that see the light will come to Christ. In John 12:32 Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth [through our lives], will draw all men unto me."

It would be well for each one who professes Christianity to examine himself to see whether he is living a pleasing life before God. Professing to be a Christian is easy, but many people fail to actually live the way a Christian should live. Child of God, the Lord wants your light to shine. Why? So that others can see Him through the life that you live. You are to be a witness of God's goodness, His grace, and His power to those around you. Having Christ on the inside makes the difference. The things you do and the way you act can have a great effect on those around you. Man cannot see your heart, but he can see the deeds of your life. If your heart is truly right with God, His goodness will show forth on the outside.

You need to set the right example in your conversation. The words you speak ought to reflect godly character. A saint can get caught up in careless speech, failing to be on guard as he should. One can become involved in a conversation that is unbecoming to a Christian without realizing it. Words influence others; therefore, it is necessary for your speech to reflect a Christlike example. Slang words must be eliminated from your vocabulary, because such words are only substitutes for words that actually take God's name or Christ's name in vain. You must avoid words that imply vulgarity or filthiness of any sort. One who professes godliness must lay aside everything that is hurtful to the Lord.

You must set a righteous example in your conduct and in your actions; this is very important. Some worldly people would be eager to ridicule the Christian should he do something wrong. You must be careful of the places you go, and the things you do should be accomplished with Christ in mind. Again, carelessness can slip in and overtake you, setting the wrong example before those who are looking on. God does not want a child of God to live in a "straightjacket," so to speak, without the liberty and the freedom to enjoy life. On the other hand, He does not want you to live a loose, uncontrolled life that brings reproach and disgrace

[continued on page 6]

*Proverbs 6:12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.*

*13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;*

*14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.*

*15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.*

*16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:*

*17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,*

*18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,*

*19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.*

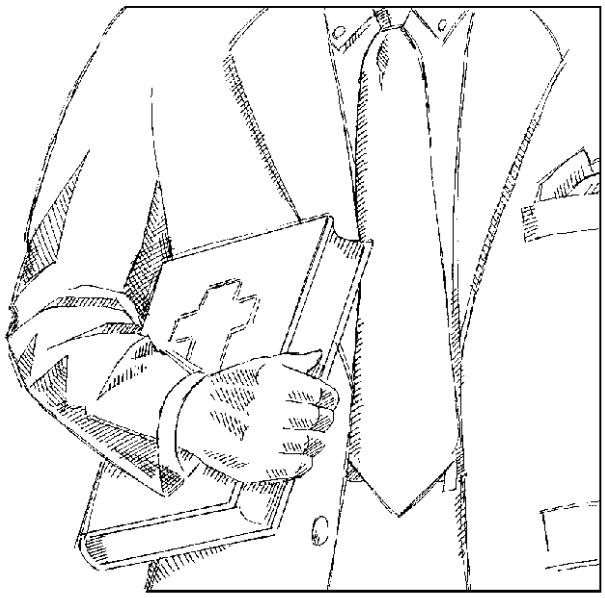
*20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:*

*21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.*

*22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.*

*23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.*

# Sins Done Under the Cloak of Religion



***Brother Roger L. Decker***

**Secret Sins**

I want you to consider a few of the sins listed in Proverbs, Chapter 6. As you look at these sins, you might wonder why the writer did not list some vile sins, such as adultery, lesbianism, homosexuality, thievery, and murder. I want you to notice that these sins were not mentioned. The reason is that in those sins, people do not get confused about whether or not the individuals who commit such sins are Christians. They have enough sense to realize that individuals engaged in those vile sins cannot be Christians.

The sins mentioned in our Scripture text are different because they are committed under the guise of religion. God hates all sin; all sin is a reproach to God. However, this chapter lists some sins that stand out to God. You will notice that these are not vile sins that you might read about in the newspaper. I repeat, these sins are done under the guise of religion. When sin is done under the cloak of religion, it stirs the anger of God.

With the sins mentioned in our Scripture text, the guilty persons are apt to sing in the church choir, preach, or hold positions in a congregation. This was the reason the anger of God was kindled against the religious hierarchy of Jesus' day in Matthew, Chapter 23. Jesus used the word "woe" eight times throughout that chapter. It is one of the strongest words that Jesus ever used to show dissatisfaction and disgust.

Matthew 23:1-2 reads: "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." What did Jesus mean when He said the scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat? Moses was a law giver. What were the scribes and the Pharisees doing? They taught the Law, but they did not practice it. They were hypocritical, and Jesus used the word *hypocrite* seven times in this chapter.

What were some of their actions? Verse 4 says, "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will

not move them with one of their fingers." They put the Law and traditions on others, but they themselves were exempt. Child of God, you have to be careful of putting judgment on somebody else when you yourself are guilty. This is what Jesus was crying out against. The scribes and the Pharisees sat in Moses' seat and held others to the Law, but they were hypocritical when it came to the keeping of the Law.

In our Scripture text, we read of some very severe sins. No, they are not the sins that you read about in the social world, and they were not sins that are visible all the time. You could classify some of them as "secret sins." Psalm 90:8 reads, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Now, we know that nothing is secret before the Lord. Every secret thing will come before God at the Judgment. The wise man penned these words in Ecclesiastes 12:14 when he said, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The sins mentioned in the Proverb letter have done more to wreck congregations than any other sin that I know of. These sins will tear congregations asunder, and yet they try to remain undercover at the same time. You need to consider them, even if you are not guilty. Let this message be a warning to keep these sins from becoming active in your Christian walk. These sins can touch most every area of a man's or a woman's life.

### The Sin of Pride

Let us start with the first sin the writer mentioned. First, he spoke of the sin of a proud look, or thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think. Proverbs 6:17 mentioned "A proud look." Where does a proud look come from? It comes from a proud heart. One who has a proud look thinks more of himself than he ought to think. Many a person has left a congregation thinking that the congregation could not make it without him. However, the church is not based on a few individuals; it is based on the foundation of Truth.

Romans 12:3 reads, "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." In another translation, the same verse reads, "For through the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment as God has allowed to each a measure of faith."

Proverbs 11:2 says, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom." If God has given you a gift or a talent, you should not let that gift or talent puff you up, because God has a way of bringing you down. If you have a good voice, you ought to give God the glory. If you can play an instrument, you should give God the glory. If you sing in a choir, you should give the glory to God. If you preach the Gospel, you ought to give God the glory; do not get puffed up. If you have a position in a congregation, you should labor in that position with all your heart, not desiring somebody else's position. You need to be faithful in that which God has called you to do. The lowly are humble.

Proverbs 13:10 states, "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." Pride leads to strife and contention. Proverbs 28:25 says, "He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat [or shall be made to prosper]." This sin is the sin of attitude, and it is shown by a proud look. A person can become so caught up in himself and feel that he knows so much that he will not take any advice from his godly pastor.

The proud are heading for destruction. Proverbs 15:25 says, "The LORD will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow." Proverbs 16:18-19 reads: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud." Three things are discussed in these two verses: one is pride, the second is humility, and the third one is disaster. Pride is a sin that leads to disaster. A proud look has its origin in a proud heart. You should avoid pride at all costs. If you feel yourself getting puffed up, you need to ask God to help you so that you do not become lifted up in yourself. You should not get drawn into any agreements with the proud; stay clear so that spirit does not affect you.

### The Sin of Lying

Next, the Proverb writer mentioned a lying tongue. This is a *very* deceptive sin. This is a sin that involves a person's speech. I want you to read how Webster's Dictionary defines the word *lie*. It means, "a false statement or a piece of information deliberately presented as being true; a falsehood meant to deceive or to give a wrong impression." Now, to speak something that is not true is not necessarily a lie. You could be given false information that you pass on in good faith, believing that it was true, and then later find that it was false information. That would not make you a liar. You did not pass on the information to deceive anybody or to misrepresent anything or to tell a falsehood. You related it as it was presented to you. Sometimes newspapers have had to write retractions because they printed information they thought was true but later found the information to be false.

Believing a person who is a liar can cost you your soul. When God shows you that something is true and you listen to someone who speaks against that truth, it can cost

you your soul. If God has shown you something that is true, then you should not listen to somebody who feels differently, because it can cost you. In 1 Kings, Chapter 13, you can read about a man of God out of Judah whom the Lord sent to Bethel to cry out against the altar when Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. This man of God lost his life and his soul because he believed a man who lied.

After God had used the man of God, King Jeroboam tried to persuade him to go home with him and refresh himself, and the king said he would give him a reward. First Kings 13:8-9 reads: "And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest."

This man of God had been given a divine revelation of the task that he was to do and of how to carry it out, so he did not return the way that he came to Bethel. The Bible lets us know that he received this instruction "by the word of the LORD." However, an old prophet in Bethel heard from his sons about the works that the man of God had done. After getting word from his sons regarding what direction the man of God went, he went after him and found him sitting under an oak tree. This was one time that resting cost him his soul.

The old prophet asked him to return home with him. Again, he revealed what the Word of the Lord had spoken to him, but this old prophet was determined. He replied in 1 Kings 13:18, "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

The old prophet's lie was effective. What happened? The man of God disobeyed the Word of the Lord and went back with him. After the man of God had eaten bread and had drunk water with the old prophet, the old prophet gave his donkey to the man of God. The man of God left and a lion met him along the way and killed him. The strange thing about it was that the lion never killed the beast, but he killed the man of God and stood by his carcase.

The Bible says in 1 Kings 13:26, "And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him."

If you are found to be a liar when the Judgment comes, you will be cast into the lake of fire. A liar is not in the church, and he will not enter Heaven. In Revelation 21:8 John wrote, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars [those who tell little lies, big lies, or so-called white lies], shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." What is the second death? The second death is eternal separation from God.

You need to be careful of the sin of lying. Young person, you need to be honest with your parents. You should not say that you are doing one thing when you are doing something else. You should not say you are going one place when you are going somewhere else. You should not say that you were not keeping company with a certain individual when you were with that person. It is much easier to tell the truth the first time than to have to go back and repent and tell the truth. It is best to do what is right the first time. It is wrong to try to deceive your parents and lie to them. Doing so could cost you your soul, and it could possibly cost you your life.

Lying is hateful to God. Why is that? He is the God of Truth, and when God talks to you, He tells you the truth. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

**Flee Temptation**

Going back to our Scripture text, we find that the next sin the Proverb writer mentioned was "hands that shed innocent blood." Those who shed innocent blood will not be found guiltless. We read in Matthew 27:24, "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." It takes more than literal water to wash away guilt; it takes the blood of Jesus Christ.

The shedding of innocent blood cries out for vengeance. God, speaking to Cain, said in Genesis 4:10, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Some people are guilty of destroying other men's souls by living the life of neglect and indifference. If you are guilty of any of these sins, you need to get the victory, because you never know when God is going to call you home.

The Proverb writer went on to mention a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift to run to mischief, a false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord (or stirs up trouble) among brethren (or sisters). A person who sows discord sows discontentment. Remember, God hates these sins. You need to be wise and flee from the temptations of these sins. If the devil brings the thought to your mind to tell a falsehood, saying it would be easier to tell a falsehood than to tell the truth, you need to ask God to help you to tell the truth. God will love you for it. He appreciates people who avoid these sins. God loves the sinner, but He hates sin. If you should get caught up in any of these sins, you risk the loss of your soul. There is nothing worth losing your

soul for.

How can you stay away from these sins? Proverbs 6:20-23 says: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." You need to stay away from these sins, and the way to stay away from them is to obey God.

If you are not saved, would you like to be saved? Are you sick of sin, sick enough to quit? Are you tired of living a defeated life? God is giving you the opportunity to be free from all sin. Won't you heed His call before it is too late?

*(Compact Disc TR-981E)*

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*[Guest Editorial— continued from p. 2]*
to His name or cause. How you live, the way you talk, and the places you go make a difference. In Titus 3:8 we read of sound advice given to Titus that is good for us yet today. It states, "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

The child of God is also to set a good example in charity (or love). Genuine love is in great need today. You must love God, and also you are to love your brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus instructed in John 13:34-35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." You are to love those who are living in sin and know not God. You do not love the sin they commit, but you are to love the individuals. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus read, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

There will always be some people who do things that hurt you. Malicious remarks will be spoken about you that can mar your influence and your character. Possibly you could be mocked or disrespected. In a time such as this, you will need to lean heavily upon the grace of God and continue to show forth the right example. A Christian must be ready to love his enemies and to react as Jesus did when He was ridiculed, laughed at, and scorned. A Christian must always be ready to forgive that one even though the individual may never ask for his forgiveness. As Christ forgave you of your sins, likewise, you must be willing to forgive those who sin against you. In doing this as Jesus would have you to, you can and will keep your spirit right before God and man. You will set the example that He desires you to set.

The Lord desires each of us to be a vessel through whom He can work to help others. Dear one, you must strive to be the vessel of love and mercy that reaches out to fallen man. A Christlike example may be the only Gospel that some people will ever see or hear. It is not always what you say that influences those around you. More often it is the godly life and example that you set. An old adage states, "I'd rather see a sermon lived than to hear one." The example that you live as a Christian certainly has an influence on those with whom you come in contact every day.

One last thought that I want you to consider is, never allow discouragement to overtake you when those around you seem to be paying no attention. Many times a person will not let on that your life is having an effect on him. He may not seem to notice when you bow your head in prayer before you eat, but he is watching. Be encouraged and continue to be the Christian example that God wants you to be. He just might have you where you are to be an example, to show men and women how a Christian ought to live. Even though many people refuse to acknowledge God in this lifetime, someday they will wish they would have. When they stand before God at the Judgment, they might say they never knew what to do or how to live; but God will point them back to the example of godliness that you set before them. That will leave them without excuse.

Selected

A genuine Christian is the best evidence of the genuineness of Christianity.

*Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

*15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

*17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

*18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*

# The Christian Warfare

***Brother Walter Bergenthun***

**The Christian's Source of Strength**

The Apostle Paul spent about two years in Caesarea under house arrest. When he went to Rome, he was incarcerated. A Roman soldier was chained to him most of the time. They had to change the guards quite frequently because the Apostle Paul, who had a lot of power with God, convinced them to become Christians. As Paul looked at these Roman soldiers, he saw a lesson that Christians, even in our day, can think about. It portrays what we are up against in the world in which we live.

When you first got saved, you might have thought you would not have any more troubles. However, you actually lose one set of troubles and pick up another. Living in this world is a struggle whether you are saved or not. In this Christian warfare, once you are saved, you change armies. I used to be part of the devil's kingdom, or the kingdom of darkness, where the devil rules and reigns over the children of disobedience. I was one of his subjects, but when I got saved, I joined the army of the Lord. Christians are in a battle of Truth against error.

Paul admonished that you can only be victorious as long as you make the strength of God your strength. You are no match for the powers of Satan. You have the world, the devil, and the flesh to contend with. The devil has been around since the beginning of time, and he knows the ins and outs of this world. He knows your weaknesses, and he is very powerful. You are no match for him on your own. The secret is in getting the strength of God to help you. You need to tap into His power if you want to maintain your Christian walk. You need God's help.

The Christian life is not a flowery bed of ease; it is a struggle. Many people have started out for God, but somehow the devil tricked them. You are up against spiritual powers that are greater than you are. You need to understand that in order to have victory to the end, you must tap into the source of strength that God gives.

Prayer is one way to draw strength from the Lord. Psalm 27:8 reads, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek." You need to seek the Lord early. God is a

Spirit. It is important that you get alone with God and ask Him for help. I do not mind humbling myself every morning and saying: "Lord, I need You. I don't know what I'm going to face today." The strength of the Lord gives supernatural power beyond human strength. By yourself, you are powerless when it comes to this fight; therefore, you have to tap into God's strength to fight the good fight of faith. This Gospel is true, and you need to prove to the world that it is true. Prayer gives you the ability to do so.

You can only be victorious when you make the strength of God your strength. It is needful for a soldier to be well armed. If you want to be a soldier for the Lord, you have to be strong in the service that you are called to do. We each have a job to do. God does not have any drones, or people on spiritual welfare, so to speak. We each have something to do, and we are workers together with the Lord to build up the Kingdom of God, so we must have strength for service.

### The Armor of God

Sometimes you will have to suffer some things. We wish that no one had to suffer, but that is the lot of most Christians. If you study the Word of God, you will find that all great Christians had to go through tribulations and sufferings. Jesus is our prime example of suffering. Also, the Apostle Paul went through much suffering, but he found strength in the Lord. It is the strength and the grace of God that enables you to go through such things. The world looks on and wonders: "How are you able to do this? How can you live holy in this present, evil world?" Living a holy life shows the glory of God and shows what can be done when a person has the grace of God in his life.

You do not have sufficient strength on your own. Apart from Christ in your heart, there is no way to have victory. God gives you an armor, and He expects you to put it on and use it. However, He will not make you put it on; *you* must put it on. This armor has been tried and tested.

The military have equipment that they test to check how well it holds up. When I was in the military, we had to test our gas masks. That may not seem to be important to you, but when a person needs a gas mask, he wants to be sure that it will work. We had to check our equipment to make sure it was functioning properly. Our spiritual equipment has been tried and tested; it will work. It has worked down through the annals of time. The best test for anything is time. In the past, some cars that came on the market seemed to be great, but after a while, they fell apart. Time has a way of testing things. The armor that God gives you is tried and tested, but again, you have to put it on to be protected. Paul talked about taking the helmet of salvation, having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, having on the breastplate of righteousness, and taking the shield of faith. These are the things the Bible tells us that we need for our warfare.

The greatest danger you face is not realizing the danger. You may think: "What do I have to worry about? I have smooth sailing. I can sail right into Heaven. I don't have much of a struggle." However, the enemy is smart. He waits for the most opportune moment to move in on you when you least expect it and when your guard is down.

You need this armor. You must keep your experience up to date every day. You never know when the powers of Satan may be lurking around you. He knows your weaknesses, but God knows your weaknesses too. Satan works not only on your weaknesses, but also on your strong points. Sometimes you may not feel the need to pray. Often someone who is a good talker does not worry about situations because he can usually talk his way out of them. Also, the person who has a wealth of human wisdom may not feel the need to pray about things. Nevertheless, the devil is wiser than all of us put together. The Apostle Paul had to fight against the powers of Satan continually.

### Stand Firmly

You have to stand against the wiles of the devil. He has many tricks. You can look on people he has tricked and caused to stumble as examples. The closer you get to God, the more you stir the devil. Many people do not want to live that close because the more they get on fire for the Lord, the more opposition they get from the enemy. If you fire into his camp, he is going to fire into your camp. Great men of the past have suffered because the devil was out to get them.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Sometimes you may think this person or that person is working against you. You need to understand the power working behind that individual. The devil will work through individuals to try to discourage you. He is an expert at discouraging people. That is the reason you need the shield of faith. You have to learn to stand. You cannot call the pastor or your parents every time you have a problem. Senior citizens sometimes feel they are all alone, but God enables each of us to stand. There are times when you might have to ask for special prayer, but you can stand by the grace of God.

Consider the three Hebrew boys and Daniel who had to stand. They were hundreds of miles away from home. Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian king, had conquered Israel and had taken many of God's people captive. They did not have a synagogue to worship in. They did not have any encouragement from their parents, and they did not have any support from their people. They were isolated, yet they stood true to God even though they were in a hostile country. You have to learn how to stand.

We have to deal with spiritual wickedness in high places. I have heard it said that some of the high places are in our own homes. The enemy would like to work in your home, and he would like to cause division in the church between brothers and sisters in Christ. He is always working. Even in your place of employment, the enemy may work to try to cause you to lose your job. Seducing spirits will tell you, concerning your salvation: "You need to give up. There is no sense in your fighting all of this." Some people have given up because of spiritual wickedness in high places. We have to watch constantly, because we are in a battle.

Verse 14 of our Scripture text says, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. . . ." The word *stand* is a military term that means to stand firmly under the attack of the enemy. We are under attack by the enemy. You do not have to fight the devil by yourself. You have to stand with the whole armor on. There is an allegory mentioned in the book entitled *Pilgrim's Progress* about how Pilgrim noticed that he had all the armor on, but there was nothing on his back to protect him. You would be very vulnerable if you were to turn away from the Lord. You would have no protection, so it would behoove you to make sure that you have on the whole armor of God.

**Beware of the Enemy's Surprise Attacks**

Christians are honest people. We do not lie on our income tax returns. The Christian does not buy a vehicle and say to the salesman, "Tell them I didn't pay as much for it, because I don't want to pay that much sales tax on it." There are many ways that one can be dishonest. Some people say that everyone lies, but that is not true. A Christian does not lie. He tells the truth. Ones who get saved and stay saved are honest. You have to be honest with yourself, with one another, and with the world. The world is looking on. Honesty is a good testimony. The devil is a liar and a murderer of souls.

When I got saved, I thought I would have no more troubles. I do have troubles, but I have Someone who will fight for me and go with me, Someone who is true to my soul. I can count on Him. He said He would never leave me nor forsake me. I can rest on the promises that He has given me. He never lies. A politician usually makes excuses concerning why he does not fulfill his campaign promises, but God is not like that. He tells the truth. You have to see Him through the eye of faith. He is true; we can trust Him. We are facing a very powerful enemy. We have to keep that in mind at all times and keep our minds focused on Christ.

The enemy has been around for a long time. He is an evil genius, and he knows just when to hit you. He may not hit you when you are feeling well or on top of the mountain, but he waits for his opportunities. Satan has a kingdom of darkness. In this warfare you must have faith in God, and you must fight the good fight of faith. You cannot see around the corner. Everything in this life that you accumulate is temporary. You are just traveling through. You cannot drive your stakes deep in this world because you never know when you will have to leave. This life is transitory. You may feel as though everything is working out well, but you have to be ready to fight.

The enemy does not strike when you are ready. Possibly you can remember World War II and a place called Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, a Sunday morning at 7:53 a.m., everything was peaceful and quiet. The United States Navy harbored 25 percent of its fleet in Pearl Harbor when the Japanese came in a surprise attack. This happened at a time when our military least expected it. The Japanese had sent out spies and checked the ships that were going in and out. They were looking for the best time to attack, and they decided that Sunday morning was the best time to hit.

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a complete surprise. The attacking planes first hit their targets at 7:53 a.m. The second hit came in at 8:55 a.m. By 9:55 a.m. the attack was over. Twenty-five percent of the Navy vessels were sunk in two hours because we were unprepared. We had lost much by the element of surprise. The Pacific fleet was left in chaos. Two thousand four hundred three Naval servicemen were dead, one hundred eighty-eight planes were destroyed, and we were left with a crippled Pacific fleet. This shows how you always need to be ready. You never know when the enemy is lurking around.

Another case we can remember in our generation happened September 11, 2001. It also was a complete surprise. You may remember where you were on that fateful morning when the Twin Towers were destroyed. We could hardly believe what we were hearing. It happened quickly, when we least expected it. The enemy moved in such a surprising way. The FBI and the CIA knew something was going on, but they could not quite figure out what the enemy had in mind. There is a spiritual lesson in this to learn, and that is, we need to be ready. We have a very subtle enemy, and we need to be ready to fight the good fight of faith and stand against Satan and strive against sin.

**Resisting Temptation**

You must also resist temptation. Jesus was tempted in all points. When He was in the wilderness and had gone through forty days and forty nights without food and water, the devil came and attacked Him. What did Jesus use against the enemy? He used the Word of God. He did not try to stand in His own strength. Today we stand on the Word of God; it has power.

With the Holy Spirit, you can do the supernatural and fight the

good fight of faith. You can stand with God's help. You need to pray for your brothers and sisters to stand as well. The Christian is not satisfied with defeat. He desires to be victorious. You can be a winner in this battle. You can be in this army, whether you are young or old, male or female, small or big. We all are in a battle.

The devil is working through unseen forces to try to make you back down to try to prove to the world that the Bible is not true. This is part of the Battle of Armageddon. You must prove by your life and your testimony that the Bible is true. The Bible contains God's thoughts and God's plan of salvation, and salvation will work if you meet the conditions. You must be born again, or born from above. There has to be a change in your life. God has to change you. True religion is getting tapped into God's strength and power. That is what enables the Christian to do what he does. He rises above the level of this world through the grace of God that He gives. The Christian cannot claim any credit for what God gives.

The Christian has to withstand temptation. If you cannot stand, you need to get hold of God. The reason that some people cannot stand in temptation is that they need to get saved. Temptation is not sin, but yielding to temptation brings sin. Therefore, you have to fight the good fight of faith and refuse to yield to temptation. A good soldier will not run from the fight.

There was a tribe in Israel called Ephraim. You can read about this tribe in Psalm 78:9, which says, "The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." They had everything going for them. They were fully armed, but they lacked courage. They did not have God's courage to stand and fight. The Christian has everything he needs to fight the good fight of faith, yet some people back away from the battle. You cannot defeat the enemy through compromise. God does not have compromisers or quitters in His army. You have to stand your ground and fight the good fight of faith. Compromise will never work.

### Be Careful of Entanglements

The Scripture says to "take the helmet of salvation." You have to put it on your head. As the battle rages in the mind, the helmet of salvation protects your mind. The enemy has talked people out of their salvation. Your mind is the gateway to your soul. The enemy cannot get to you except through the mind first. It is the same with God. He reasons with you and talks to you through your mind. You use your mind for many things. You may get up in the morning with thoughts of what your plans are for the day. You cannot do much of anything without your mind functioning. The enemy works to persuade people that this way is too hard. If your heart is not in it, it will be hard. The great thing about the Battle of Armageddon is that you have to use the Word of God as your weapon, and the more you get hooked into it, the stronger you become. You also need the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts that the enemy is throwing.

How can a person overcome? Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." People in the past have overcome, and you can too. You must give God the glory and the praise. In this battle, you have to be on guard and fight the good fight of faith.

Second Timothy 2:3-4 reads: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." We are in God's army as soldiers for Jesus Christ. Paul said not to get entangled with the affairs of this life. Many things entangle people. Some people get hooked on sports, and it seems that is all they think about. We live in a materialistic society, and many things can entangle you and keep you from fighting the good fight of faith.

If you were to join the United States Army, you would become a soldier, and you would no longer be your own. You would have to separate yourself from your past life, become dedicated to what the army is doing, and become a part of the national defense system. That is all they concentrate on. There are some lessons that you can learn from that. They specialize in one thing, and the Christian specializes in doing the will of God.

Many things can zap your strength and entangle you. Some people get really hooked or are overzealous about their hobbies. Others work two or three jobs. They are entangled because they have gone into deep debt, and now they have to work all the time. You need to be careful of things that cause entanglement.

The Christian must endure hardness as a good soldier. Of course, we all need money, but some people go to the extreme, and they never seem to have enough. One thing about riches is that a person always wants more. A deceitfulness can go with wealth. Some people love the entertainment world. They love pleasure. A person can go overboard with good things and not become tempered. A good soldier does not entangle himself with the affairs of this life.

### A Life of Discipline

To be effective and dedicated as a Christian, God wants the Christian to be narrow-minded. Have you ever been called narrow-minded? I have. The Christian walks in the narrow way. The Bible says it is a strait gate and a narrow way, and few there be that find it. If you walk in this narrow way, you will be considered peculiar.

Again, good soldiers endure hardness. The Christian lives a life

of discipline. The word *disciple* comes from the word *discipline*. You must discipline yourself. You cannot give in to every whim. You have to learn to exercise discipline. Sometimes you may not feel like reading the Bible, but you must discipline yourself. Jesus said to take up your cross and follow Him. There are certain things that you must do to maintain your salvation. Getting saved initially is important, but you need to stay saved. The Apostle Paul said to fight the good fight of faith.

Along with discipline comes self-denial, physically and mentally. You have to be careful of what you think upon. One old expression says, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you don't have to allow them to make a nest in it." The enemy works on your mind. He is the prince of the power of the air, and he wants access to your mind, so you have to be careful. He wants to inject something in there that you know you should not be thinking upon; that is the reason you need discipline.

A good soldier studies his enemy. Therefore, you should not be ignorant of Satan's devices. When a football team plays another team, the team sits down first and watches a video of the opposing team. They study that team to look for weaknesses. The enemy of souls does the same thing with each of us. Likewise, you should study the enemy's tactics. The enemy is clever, so as a Christian, you need to study about the wiles of the devil.

A good soldier must be stouthearted. He must be courageous to stand, and he must have good weapons. The Christian has the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. There is nothing like the Word of God, anointed and directed by the Holy Spirit. The Christian has good weapons, and you need to use them. Also, you must have the courage to stand. One is a coward on his own; therefore, he needs to seek the face of God for strength and courage to fight the good fight of faith.

Sometimes the world can be intimidating. People may make fun of you. You need courage to stand and to be a witness. Young person, someone may ask: "Why do you dress modestly? Does your mother make you dress that way?" Do you reply, "That's what they teach at church"? You need to have enough courage to say, "I believe the way I dress is right." You need to stand for what is right because people in the world are bold. You need boldness too. Some people would like to make you back down. That is part of the battle you face each day. You can be an overcomer through Jesus Christ our Lord. A good soldier is alert. You must be watchful and not careless. You cannot be careless because the enemy is not careless. The devil is always looking for an opening, a way that he can get in.

**Have You Enlisted in His Service?**

Do you know the story about Gideon and his army? He started with thirty-two thousand men, and the Lord told him that he had too many. The Lord said to tell those who were afraid to fight the battle to go home. He lost twenty-two thousand men because they were afraid. Then the Lord instructed him to do some more separating. He sent all the men down to the river and told them to get a drink. The men who were drinking water like a dog, lapping it up, were rejected. The men who cupped their hands to drink and looked around while they were drinking were watching for the enemy. He kept these men because they were paying attention. (We, too, have to pay attention, because the enemy is sly.) Gideon's army was reduced to three hundred men.

Had the Navy been paying attention at Pearl Harbor, the attack would not have been as disastrous as it was, but they were not paying attention. They say that the men who left the ship to attend church that Sunday morning were protected. However, the men who did not go to church and stayed on board the ships were in perilous conditions.

All of God's soldiers are good soldiers. We have enlisted in His army. We are not draftees. At one time, there was a draft program in the United States. Men were forced to join the military service whether they wanted to or not. There was a difference between those who enlisted and those who were drafted. The men who enlisted joined voluntarily; they were not forced to join. Likewise, none of us is being forced to be a Christian. You do not have to live this life if you do not want to.

In the *Evening Light Songs* there is a song entitled "I've Enlisted in the Service." It reads:

*I am fighting in the army of the Lord,*
*And though dangers thickly round my pathway lie,*
*I shall never faint or fear, for my Jesus is so near,*
*I've enlisted in the service till I die.*

*Often do I meet with Satan by the way,*
*And his fiery darts so thickly round me fly;*
*When the shield of faith he sees, then he always quickly flees,*
*I've enlisted in the service till I die.*

*Now the world has ceased to be a friend to me,*
*And the ones I most have loved now pass me by;*
*But to him I'll faithful be who has shed His blood for me,*
*I've enlisted in the service till I die.*

*I shall never tire or give the battle o'er,*
*For the crowning day is coming by and by;*
*Then through all eternity I shall shout the victory,*
*I've enlisted in the service till I die.*

*I will press the battle on till the victory is won,*
*And I reach my crown and mansion by and by;*
*By the grace of God, I know, I shall conquer every foe;*
*I've enlisted in the service till I die.*

This song is a testimony for every Christian who is in His service. There is no retirement in His army. I retired from where I was once employed, but in the army of the Lord there is no retirement. We are in His service until the day we die.

Draftees, or those who were forced to join the military, always seemed to have an attitude problem. "Do I have to do this?" they grumbled and complained. Every young male had to sign up for the draft, and during times of national emergencies, when the military needed more men, they took those who were not particularly willing to go. God does not make us serve Him. We voluntarily join God's army.

Child of God, you are a part of His program; you are not a robot. You have your own free will, and you have a right of choice. You can do what you want to do in that you can either be a Christian or go the other way.

**Joining the Winning Side**

Moses made the declaration, "Who is on the Lord's side?" I love to be on the Lord's side; it is the winning side. You can read the Book of Revelation and see that the church is on the winning side, but we are in a battle.

A good soldier completes his mission. There is no compromise in this battle that we are in. There are no negotiated peace settlements. After World War II, there was an unconditional surrender by the enemy. After that, the Korean war and the Vietnam war ended with conditional peace treaties. There were not unconditional surrenders. We cannot compromise with the enemy. The enemy will try to get the Church of God to compromise and give in on certain points, but there is no victory in that. We are what we are because we do not compromise. The enemy is forever trying to break us down in one way or another, but we will not compromise Truth, and we will not compromise our integrity.

A good soldier never deserts his post. He is faithful; he is not a deserter. Some people claim to be neither Christians nor sinners. They feel they are somewhere in between. Some people say, "I'm not a sinner, but I'm not a Christian either." They are either one or the other; there is no in between. We live in a very religious society, and it is very difficult to find an old-fashioned sinner. However, honest hearts are out there who really desire to get saved and stay saved. The first step is, a person must be sick of sin. Many people are not fully persuaded because they are not sick of sin. The enemy presents things to them that turn their minds away from Christ.

A good soldier never surrenders. He stays at his post of duty. He does not give in or give up. A man named Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of England during World War II. It was a very dark time in England. After the war ended, he was invited to give a speech, and being a good orator, the people were expecting him to come up with an eloquent speech, but all he said was, "Never, never, never, never give up!" Although that was all he said, it was profound.

The enemy and the forces of evil will try to get you to give up in one way or another. He wants you to quit. If you do, you are telling the world that this way is too hard and that it is not a life that you want to live. The enemy will work on your mind. This way is not too hard if the grace of God is working in you.

**God's Promises to the Overcomer**

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? There is a prize for the victor. You can inherit God's promises if you overcome. We sing the song entitled "Be an Overcomer." One who is victorious has a prize waiting in the end. The Book of Revelation talks a lot about being overcomers. Revelation 2:7 says if you overcome, you will eat of the tree of life. In other words, you will have eternal life with Christ Jesus.

Revelation 2:11 says the overcomer will not be hurt by the second death. Did you know there are two deaths? You will die physically, but there is spiritual death that you do not want to enter into. Overcomers will not have to suffer the second death. Another Scripture talks about eating of the hidden manna. Psalm 23:5 says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." In other words, he was saying: "While I was going through a hard time, God was giving me manna from Heaven. I was able to feast the things of God." He sets a table for us every day. The Christian has power over the nations as well.

In Revelation 2:28 He said He would also give you the Morning Star. The Morning Star is Jesus Christ in your heart. As Jesus Died on the Cross, He gave His soul to God, and He gave His mother to John. He gave everything away as He was dying on the Cross. He gave His life for us. He gives us peace, not as the world gives. He gives us peace when we go through tribulations or trials. It is a part of our strength.

You can read about Job and all that he suffered in the Book of Job. He fought the good fight of faith in spite of all the things he went through. He said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). Job also said he looked to the right and to the left and could not find God, but God knew where he was. God knows where we are, and He goes with us in the trials. You may think you are alone, but as long as you have God in your heart, He will help you through the difficult times.

In Revelation 3:12 we read that He will make you a pillar in the temple. Pillars are those who support the church. In Revelation 3:21 Jesus said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." God gave us many promises. He cannot lie, so you can trust in His promises. All these wonderful blessings are for those who overcome.

There are times in the Christian

life when you may wonder how you will make it. This is when the enemy would like to move in, but you can be victorious in Christ Jesus. You do not have to give up the battle. You do not have to be ashamed.

When I was living in sin, I was ashamed of many things. Since living this Christian life, I do not have to hang my head down or go around singing the blues because I have a new song. God gives us a new name, and He said we could be overcomers. I used to be a sinner, but now I am saint. Christians no longer have to bow down or cater to what sin brings. It is a wonderful life! It is the best life to live now, and it will be the best life to come.

If you want to be a Christian, you can be. Maybe you need courage and strength. Maybe you feel as though your armor is becoming tarnished and you are getting weak. Perhaps you have not put on the whole armor as you should. God wants you to put on the armor and use it to fight the good fight of faith. The Apostle Paul said he fought a good fight and kept the faith. We have a course to run. It would be nice if all our troubles ended when we go saved, but that is not the end of them. We have a different set of problems, but we have Someone to help us. God is a present help in the time of trouble. We do not have to give up or give in.

*(Compact Disc TR-935E)*

In spite of what some people say and think about the church, no other institution has lasted so long.

No other organization has had a greater impact for good.

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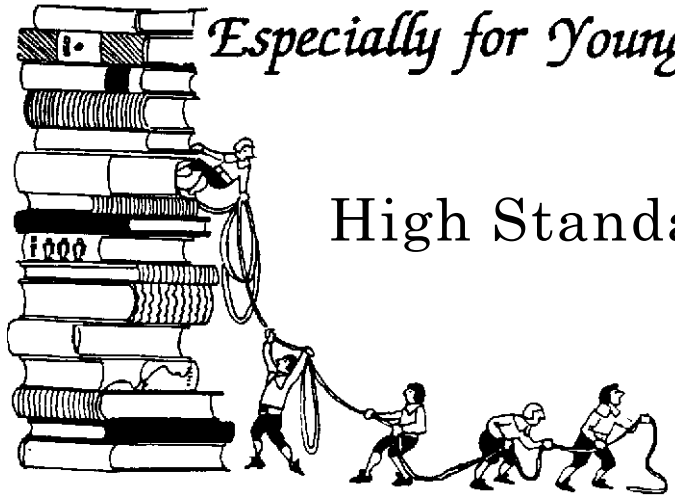
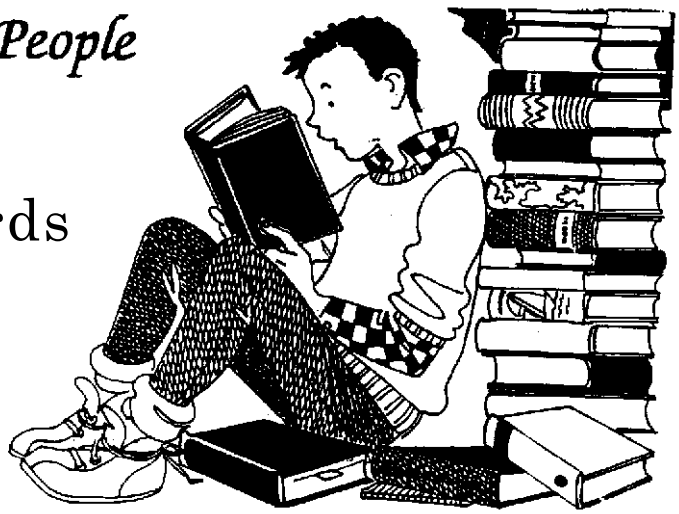
# High Standards





The Church of God has standards. We have standards of dress and standards of performance. Whenever standards are mentioned, many people have a negative response in their minds. The standards of the Church of God are positive, and I try to impress upon the minds of the young people that the standards of the church are not negative; they are for their good.

I was brought up in the Church of God as a young child, and I appreciate the Bible standards. I do not look back and say, "They were too strict." My wife was brought up in the Church of God under strict supervision, and as she looks back, she appreciates it.

The child of God is to have high standards in all areas of his or her living. What is a standard? Webster's Dictionary tells us that the word *standard* means, "Anything taken as a basis of comparison, a rule, or a model."

It is not up to you, me, or anybody else to decide the standards of the Church of God. The standards of the church are very explicitly stated in the Word of God, and it is up to each of us to obey them. You might as well tear out the teachings of the new birth, the Lord's supper, and any other doctrine as to ignore those portions that teach the standards of holy living. No one has a right to take anything out of the Word of God. God intended everything in His Word to be there for our good.

Isaiah 62:1 reads, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace [Zion is the church], and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." The light that shines out in all directions from your life should be a beacon to the world.

Young people should have standards for dating. When you are dating, you should not sit out in the car until the wee hours of the morning. You ought to stay around the saints of God. You should go to all the services of the congregation and take an active part.

My wife and I courted for a number of years, and most of the places we went were to revival meetings, camp meetings, and special services. We really enjoyed working together in God's service. That gave us a great deal of contentment and happiness, and it still does. If you will reverence God and follow Him, He will choose your companion for you, and He never makes a mistake.

Young people sometimes have problems with their minds. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:13-14: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance." Sin begins in the mind. Young person, you will have less trouble in your mind if you are careful about all the other standards. I repeat, the standards are meant for your good. They are meant to bless you and to preserve you in holiness and righteousness.

Standards of dress and conduct are explicit in the Word of God. In Ephesians 6:1-3 Paul wrote: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

God wants you to be holy in every avenue of your life. You may ask, "While conforming to the standards, will I lose my individuality?" No, of all institutions, the Church of God is the highest institution on earth, and it allows you to maintain your individuality. You are allowed to be an individual in the Church of God, but there are standards that God has designed to protect you. They are for your good.

As a young person, you ought to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty and be faithful in His service. Second Timothy 2:1-2 states: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Do you want to be used of God? You must be faithful in divine principles. God will commit His work to those who are faithful.

Brother David Stegmeier

*Luke 17:7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?*

*8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?*

*9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.*

*10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

# Remember Whom You Are Called to Serve

***Brother Richard Talbot***

**Servants of Christ**

Paul wrote in Colossians 3:23-24: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily [do it with all your heart, with enthusiasm and with a spirit of anxiousness and desire], as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." Whatever you do, you should put your heart into it. On the job where you earn your living, you ought to do it with all your heart as service to God, not to man, because out in the work world, you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are saved, you are there as God's representative for Christ, whether you are on the job or in school. Wherever you are as a child of God, you are there to serve, to carry a message as God's ambassador.

In our busy lives, let us not forget that we are saved from the bondage of sin to become servants of Christ. Servants do the work of serving others. A person employed to work for another should be involved in the affairs of others to the extent of being a help, a strength, and an encouragement. You should give a smile or a word of cheer when needed. You should not go out into the world and yet remain in your own little cocoon, so to speak. You need to realize that God has you in that position so that you can be a servant for Him by serving those with whom you are in contact all day long. As a Christian, you have a duty to be a servant.

A major part of your life as a saved individual is the duty of your service to others. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19, "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." The Apostle Paul made himself a servant to all.

Your saved life is to be lived in service without expectation of thanks. You should do what you do out of a heart filled with gratitude for what God has done for you and give yourself to the task of being a living witness for Jesus Christ. Everywhere you go, whatever you get involved in, you need to remember that you are saved and that you have an obligation and a duty to your Savior to serve others and to carry the Gospel message to

a lost and dying world without expectation of thanks.

You should learn to think about yourself as an unprofitable servant. A young man in the ministry had not been preaching too long and went to a congregation to preach. He was very excited and talking about being called there to preach. When it came time for him to preach, he strutted up onto the platform and made a big show of himself. When he preached his message, it did not go over too well; so when he finished preaching, he felt beat down and crushed as he walked off the platform with his head down. The old pastor got him off to the side and said to him, "Son, if you would have gone up on the platform the way you came down, you could have come down the way you went up." Sometimes you may think too much of yourself. You cannot be too small for God to use you, but you can get too big for God to use you.

**Love and Forgiveness**

Why does the Scripture say, "We are unprofitable servants"? Man is not capable of bringing profit to God. Nothing you can do can bring profit to God. Happy is the man who judges himself an unprofitable servant, but miserable is the fellow whom God pronounces unprofitable. You need to keep yourself in a place where God can use you. You may not be able to give much to God, but as you serve the Lord, the blessings are going to come back in full measure into your heart and soul. As you give yourself to God by serving others, God will begin to pour blessings, benefits, privileges, and honor into your soul that you do not deserve. He will give you a full measure of His presence.

Let us go back to the first part of Luke, Chapter 17, and learn why Jesus used this example and taught this lesson. Verses 1-6 read: "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; [You should go to him privately and explain the situation to him. Let him know how he has trespassed against you. Do not live with things in the dark, but get things cleared up and out of the way. Do not try to act as though nothing has happened. The only way you can get by this is if you take it to the Lord and leave it there. It is always best to do that. If you can, let God take care of it, but if it is troubling you, causing you to lose confidence in that individual and you cannot deal with it yourself, you should pay that person a visit and talk to him.] and if he repent [if he sees what he has done and asks you to forgive him, you have restored something that the devil was trying to tear apart], forgive him.

"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; [Should you give him a good lecture and try to straighten him out by letting him know that enough is enough? Remember, Jesus said to take heed to yourself. You are not in any position to straighten him out. You had better be careful. You need to take heed to yourself so that if this should ever occur, you can have a heart full of the love of God to extend forgiveness as many times and as often as it should be needed.] thou shalt forgive him.

"And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. [We need strength because these things do not come easily. Offences are not easy to deal with, especially when they have gotten under your skin and dug deep. Sometimes it is hard to extend forgiveness. That is the reason Jesus said to take heed to yourself, because you are in no position to straighten out anyone else. You must forgive, not give someone a lecture. I am not saying that you cannot give someone a little instruction along the way, but you ought to do it with a heart of love and forgiveness. You should not do it with the attitude, 'I am going to straighten you out.' The way you approach a person matters. You can drive a person away from you and make a bad situation worse. God is trying to teach you how to be strong in the Lord. Sometimes being strong in the Lord means being hard on your flesh.] And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

**Giving Without Expectation**

Luke 17:7 starts with the story of a servant out in a field. What is the connection? What was Jesus trying to teach? Suppose your faith has been tested and you have proved true. You have avoided being an offender. When you were offended, you forgave the offence by the grace of God. Because you accomplished such a great feat, you were successful in a tremendous warfare in your soul. No doubt, your heart and mind struggled with it, but you brought it under control and, by God's grace, you were able to forgive that person of all the terrible things that he did to you. In such an instance, do not think that you deserve thanks for that, because you have only done your duty as a Christian. Do not think that God owes you special recognition. You have only done the right thing.

The story has been told of a missionary and his wife who came back from the foreign fields after years of service. When they returned, they were old and crippled in body, unable to do their duties on the mission field any longer. As they sailed into New York Harbor, some dignitaries aboard the ship were sailing home also. As they got into the harbor close to the pier where the ship was going to dock, they looked over the side of the railing

and saw that a red carpet had been rolled out, a band had gathered to play, and lots of people were gathered. There were officials of the town and the government to welcome the dignitaries. The band began to play and the dignitaries marched off the ship to a grand welcome.

The wife of the missionary looked at her husband and said: "Dear, they don't even know that we are aboard, yet we have given our lives for the Lord, serving God all these years. I doubt that anybody is here to welcome us."

He looked at her and said, "Honey (and I can just picture him patting her on the shoulder), just remember, we are not home yet."

Child of God, when you get home, there is going to be a grand welcoming. Something is going to be waiting for you when you get home! Remember, you are not home yet. Do not expect praise or gratitude. If it comes, that is well and good, but do not expect it, do not live for it, and do not desire it. Let God be glorified and praised.

You should not get puffed up as though the Lord is under any obligation to you. You should never let the devil make you feel that you are somebody important. God can get along without you if He has to. He can find somebody else, but you would lose the blessing and part of your eternal reward. You ought to give without expectation.

### Care and Consideration for Others

With the saving of our souls, we automatically feel the compulsion to serve the Lord. I do not know of anybody who was ever truly saved that did not immediately enter into servitude for the Lord; that is part of salvation. When Christ comes into your heart, He compels you to think about others. If you are not thinking of others, you have something lacking in your Christian experience. We should observe and pay attention to the needs of others. We need to pay attention to others to see who might need encouragement or who needs someone to express concern. Sometimes people can get lost in a crowd and nobody really understands why that person is not responding to things as he or she should. We need to shake hands with others every service and make an effort to get across the aisle and greet others. We need to consider one another.

Paul wrote in Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." As saints, let us take care to keep one another encouraged and to serve one another. Paul said we are no longer foreigners or strangers, but fellow citizens, knit together into a habitation of God through His Spirit.

A pastor becomes a servant to his flock. Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-27: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Matthew 23:7-11 says: "And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant."

In John, Chapter 10, Jesus referred to a pastor as a shepherd of the flock. A shepherd is one who serves the sheep, cares for them, and watches over them. In the midnight hour he is there caring and ready for service. A pastor has his own family's burdens in addition to all the congregation's burdens. He is there to serve the congregation, and he is on call whenever anyone needs him.

A college professor gave his class a spontaneous quiz one day that was going to count toward their grade. There were five questions on the quiz, and each question was worth twenty points. They were difficult questions, and the professor thought most of the class would probably miss two or three. The last question he asked was, "What is the name of the cleaning lady who cleans our school?" One of the students in that college class looked up at him startled and said, "You can't be serious!" The class was stunned and shocked. He made them all make that a part of their next assignment. They were to introduce themselves to the cleaning lady, find out what her name was, and thank her for keeping the hallways and the classrooms clean. He told them, "For the three or four years that you have attended this school, you have walked by her and never even had enough courtesy to stop and speak to her. She is a person who needs your consideration." Soon they found out her name, and the students began to talk to her. She became encouraged and lifted in her spirit, and she did a better job than ever before. Everything went smoother because others cared to be an encouragement.

Maybe someone has been in the hospital for several days and nobody even visited that person except the pastor or his helper. What about you? We are the family of God. We owe it to one another to be concerned, considerate, and thoughtful. God wants us to realize that we are called to serve. Somewhere along the road, everyone needs a word of cheer and a word of encouragement.

How many men get up from the dinner table, wipe off their mouth, lay the napkin on the table, and say: "Well, I'm out of here"? They never go over to their companion and say, "Honey, that was a wonderful meal. Thank you. I appreciate it." If they were to say that, they might get something better the next time. Being thankful, appreciative, and thoughtful begins at home. You

should not have the attitude, "She does not deserve thanks; that is her duty." That is a terrible attitude.

**The Measure of Our Love**

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In order to be a good and faithful servant, you must never allow duty to be neglected or oppressive, and you should never serve another through a feeling of obligation.

Servitude will only be recognized by God when it comes through the motivation of a pure and loving heart. Paul made this clear in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries [of God], and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." In other words, Paul was saying, "Without charity I have lost it all, and there is no value to it."

In our Scripture text we were given the example of a servant who labored all day in the fields and fed and cared for the animals. If the servant was not tending the animals, he was probably repairing the equipment or working in the fields. He labored at something from sun up to sun down. No doubt, he dragged into the house each evening exhausted and tired. Did the master say: "Thank you for laboring as you did. I appreciate it"? No, in essence, he said to that servant, "You get cleaned up and get in a position to serve me. I want you to bring my food and drink, and after you have done that, I want you to take care of all my other needs."

What did Jesus say in verse 8 of our Scripture text? "And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shall eat and drink?" Jesus, in so many words, talking to His disciples, asked, "Does he thank that servant because he did those things that were commanded of him? I trow not." This phrase was used as an expression with emphasis. In other words, Jesus was saying, "Absolutely not! He is a slave. He is only doing his duty." Jesus was bringing this to His disciples' attention.

Now I want to go back to the first part of Luke, Chapter 17. When you have come through offenses and duties of forgiveness and you have been struggling in matters of faith and strength in your heart, battling things in your soul, and have been successful, you should not expect personal edification. You have only done what is expected of you. It might have been a big mountain for you to have climbed, but it was only what you were expected to do.

A little saying states, "A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." This is how God wants His people to work together. Some people light sticks of dynamite instead of candles. Let us light candles. Let us light up other people's lives. Let us encourage and strengthen one another. Christ has no hands, but our hands are to do His work. He has no feet, but our feet must lead men in His way. He has no tongue, but our tongues are to tell men of how He died. He has no help, but our help brings others to His side. You should do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, and all the times you can, to all the people you can, for as long as you can. You should be a servant.

Remember, Jesus made it plain that to serve Him, you must serve one another. There is no way that you can really serve God without serving humanity. The measure of your love is in how you care for others. You should serve others without needing to be thanked. Even if nobody ever realizes what you are doing, you are to do it wholeheartedly to the Lord. You should not try to please men or try to gain recognition, but you are to try to please the Lord.

I want you to read a poem entitled "Anyway." It reads:

*People are often unreasonable,*
*illogical, and self-centered;*
*Forgive them anyway.*

*If you are kind, people may accuse you*
*of selfish, ulterior motives;*
*Be kind anyway.*

*If you are successful, you will win*
*some false friends and some true*
*enemies;*
*Succeed anyway.*

*If you are honest and frank, people*
*may cheat you;*
*Be honest and frank anyway.*

*What you spend years building,*
*someone could destroy overnight;*
*Build anyway.*

*If you find serenity and happiness,*
*they may be jealous;*
*Be happy anyway.*

*The good you do today, people will*
*often forget tomorrow;*
*Do good anyway.*

*Give the world the best you have, and*
*it may never be enough;*
*Give the world the best you've got*
*anyway.*

*You see, in the final analysis, it is*
*between you and your God.*
*It was never between you and them*
*anyway.*

Friend, you need to be true to God, your calling, and your salvation. You are called to be a servant. Do not forget whom you are called to serve.

***(Compact Disc TR-959E)***

*Romans 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

*32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

*33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

*34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

*35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

*36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

*37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

*38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

*39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

# Unlimited Resources Through Christ

***Brother Leamon Whitehead***

**Being More Than a Conqueror**

Paul, in strong language, let us know that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. He was saying that nothing that could ever separate men and women from Christ and cause them to lose out with God, or to be unsuccessful in their Christian experience. At the same time, we know that despite all these things, Paul said, some people along the way allow these things to take hold of their lives, and they fall and lose out with God.

Paul let us know there is no need to allow anyone to separate you from God and the experience that you have with Christ. You have to do much to maintain your Christian experience. You must get close to God and work at it.

I want to deal with some things that you might wonder about. Perhaps you think that God is better to someone else than He is to you, but the Scripture says He is no respecter of persons. God has the same experience for every one of us.

Someone may say: "I don't quite understand how the three Hebrew boys could go through the fiery furnace. How could they stand all of that? God brought them through, but in my struggles I just can't make it. It seems that God was better to

them than He is to me. It looks like He gave them more grace than He gives to me. To me, it seems that He shows partiality." My friend, God is not that way. He will take you through. If you will hold on to God, He will be the same to you today as He was to the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace and to Daniel in the lions' den.

The Apostle Paul asked the question in Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He went on to say in verse 37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Some people struggle in their Christian experience. It seems that every step they walk with God is uphill, and they can barely make it. They do not quite understand when they look over and see others happy in their Christian experience, the devil works on them and tries to tell them that God is better to others than He is to them.

You may say, "If I could live the way Brother So-and-So lives, I'd live for God" or "If I could be as happy as they are, I'd like to live for God." Friend, you can have the same kind of experience with God. You can live victoriously every day. He has only one kind of experience, and that is full and free salvation. He will be there to meet your need, whatever it might be.

The Apostle Paul was persuaded that nothing could stop him along the way. God dealt with him on the road to Damascus, and Paul paid the price. Paul found the treasure that he had been looking for. He paid the utmost price for it, and he went all the way with the Lord. Suffering did not stop him, and being nearly beaten to death did not stop him. The devil was unable to stop him. May God help us.

God does not want you to struggle all the time in your Christian experience. He does not want you to fight a spiritual war on the home front all the time. He wants you to get victory over that. You need to conquer that territory, and then you can go on and win souls for God. The devil wants to keep you fighting a war on the home front continually in your own life, trying to conquer this and battling that. God has victory for you.

### God's Grace Is Sufficient

What I want to do, by the help of God, is to help you to understand and to get hold of the power of God and to experience great victory in Christ Jesus the Lord. You do not have to be on the verge of backsliding all the time. You do not need to backslide. That is the result of carelessness, wandering too far from God, and not being what He wants you to be. If you do not pay the full price, the enemy will come in. Little by little, he will get you to back away from the things of God, and you will lose your experience with God.

You do not have to sin. Nowhere does the Word of God say that you can have the victory for only three weeks of the month, but one week of the month you are going to commit sin and be defeated. John said in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." John said that you should not sin; but if you do sin, God has made provision for you so that you can get back to Him. However, you do not have to sin. Since you do not have to sin, you surely do not have to backslide. God has a life of victory for every precious soul who will put on Jesus Christ.

You may say: "You don't know my struggles. You don't know what I go through." I know that we all are different, and each of us has different battles. I cannot compensate for that, but I can tell you of One who will. Jesus Christ said His grace is sufficient.

Never were the three Hebrew boys in such a tough spot as they were in the fiery furnace that day. They had never needed God in the way that they needed Him on that day; but when they needed Him, He was there. When Daniel was down in the lions' den, he had never faced anything like that, but the Lord closed the mouths of the lions. When the king came the next morning and called Daniel's name, Daniel let the king know that everything was all right. Daniel found peace down in the lions' den. No doubt, he slept all night like a baby. Why? Because his trust was in God.

Maybe last night you lay on your soft, comfortable mattress, but you tossed and turned, unable to sleep. Perhaps you are professing to live for God, but things are pressing in on you, and you do not really have peace. You may be one who has an up-and-down experience, but you can get a victorious experience today and live for God successfully. Glory be to God! You can have grace in your life to take care of your need, and then you can reach out to others. This way of living is not a fairy tale; it is real.

The truth of the matter is, many people live in such a state that the enemy is able to press them down all the time, but that is not the will of God. The will of God for your life is for you to have victory. God wants you to be able to sing a song of victory in the face of every foe.

In Christ are all the spiritual resources that you and I need for successful Christian living. It is a trick of the enemy to draw you away from Christ and away from a life of victory. Some saints can really enjoy a high time in the Lord, and others seem to struggle. That is not God; that is the devil. He has only one experience for every child of God, and if you will draw upon that, you can have grace for every need.

### The Vast Resources of Christ

Job, in all his suffering, never cursed God or charged Him foolishly. There were lots of things about Job's sickness that he did not understand, just as you and I sometimes do not understand. In essence,

Job said: "Lord, I've looked for You, but I cannot find You. I don't know where You are, but You know where I am." Job waited upon God. Today sometimes a person suffers a little pain, and he is ready to find fault with God. Job lost about everything he had in this world, even his children, but not once did he charge God foolishly. He stayed on top of things even when his body was covered with boils. Although he did not understand, he knew there was a God in Heaven, and he knew that he was serving that God. Job knew that God was not far from him. These resources are in Christ.

Paul said in Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They are hid in Christ. The word *hid* lets us know that these treasures are not laying on the surface. What did Jesus say? In Matthew 7:7 He said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He did not say it *might* be; he said it *shall* be.

Colossians 2:2-3 reads: "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

I am going to mention some natural things to help you to understand something about the messages of this great Kingdom of God. In the Old Testament, God told Israel that He was going to give them all that vast land of Canaan, and He told them where the borders would be. Later He let them know that they could only occupy the land whereon their feet had trod. That is very important to us. When you become a Christian, a door of utterance is open to you and you can access all the vastness of the Kingdom of God and the treasures hid in Christ; but they do not come automatically.

Perhaps you have heard talk of lazy Christians. Some people are too lazy to read the Bible and pray. A lazy Christian is not going to receive much. A Christian has to put forth effort to stay saved. In fact, a person cannot remain a lazy Christian long because laziness will take him down the road to backsliding. Those who get more out of serving God are those who put more effort into it. You cannot give your strength, your effort, and your talent to the world and expect to go to the house of God and get blessed.

If you will put God first in your life, meditate upon the good things of God, think upon Him, read the Word of God, and pray often, you can soar like an eagle over many things that drag people down. You can have a burning, up-to-date experience that will take you over the rough places of life and cause you to run for God.

Isaiah said so beautifully in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." When he said "they that wait upon the LORD," he was not talking about getting in the bed and sleeping to wait on Him; but those who wait upon Him will renew their strength, mount up with wings as eagles, and run and not be weary.

**Digging Deeper**

The world needs to see people who are on fire for God and who have victory over death in their lives. Glory be to God! The world does not need to see people who are up and down in their Christian experiences, but rather the world needs to see people who have victory in Jesus. The devil is real, and his tricks and devices are real. He is not just something in your mind or make believe. You can have constant victory through Christ if you will just draw on the resources in Christ.

Someone wrote a song one time that said, "I found a gold mine when I found the Lord." Well, all those nuggets of gold are not laying on the surface. They are not just rolling down the mountain so that you can easily catch them as they roll by. You must dig into that mountain to find gold. The deeper you dig, the more nuggets of gold you will find. Too many people want to sit down at the foot of the mountain with a wheelbarrow and wait for gold to work out of the mountain, but it does not work that way.

I want to say again, those who get more out of the service of God are those who put more effort into it. It is just that way. You cannot have your mind focused on everything else (the cares of life, the things of this world, and everyday living) except God and expect the blessings of God to start flowing. It does not work that way.

Again, Isaiah said those who wait upon the Lord will run and not be weary, and they will walk and not faint. My friend, you do not have to be inconsistent in your living for God, but you can have victory. I am not saying that you will not have burdens. I am not telling you that troubles will not come your way, but you can ride on top of the storm. You can still have victory in your life. You can praise Him right in the midst of all the trouble and all the pain that comes your way. Right in the midst of Job's sickness, he still found time to praise God and to give glory to God. Job did not charge God foolishly. God may be waiting to see what you are going to do. My friend, the darkest hour is just before dawn. Many times people have failed to get the help they needed simply because they quit digging too soon. They did not dig down deep enough and really hit the rock.

I want to tell you a little story. A man said he had to drill a well. He prayed about where to drill it, and he said one night in a dream, the Lord showed him just where to put it. He got up the next morning, went out and moved a chain-linked fence, and drove a stake in the ground where he felt that God had shown him to put the well. Next, he called

the well driller and told him, "I've got the place where I want the well staked out, and I don't want it put anywhere else."

The man had to leave to go on a job, and he was gone for a while. When he came back, the well driller had already drilled down, and he began to talk to the man about the water. He said, "Well, you've got a well, but it only pumps about seven or eight gallons a minute." The man's countenance dropped, but he began to think about it, and the well driller was still trying to talk to him about the well.

The man was not satisfied, and the well driller was about ready to pull his rig out and leave. He said, "I saw a lot more water than that in my dream. Let's just drill down about ten feet more and see what we get." The well driller drilled down only four or five feet and the water gushed up out of the well. The man said he got about eighty-five gallons a minute.

Maybe you have quit digging too early in your Christian experience and you need to dig deeper. My friend, you do not know how close you may be to a gusher, but perhaps you quit praying too quickly. You might have gotten up from prayer too soon. If you had dug a little deeper, you might have hit an overflowing well, and you could have gotten up and run for God.

**Hidden Treasures**

You do not have to be hindered in the things of God. It is sad to see an individual in a wheelchair or walking with canes or crutches, hardly able to get around. My heart goes out to such individuals. Friend, it does not need to be that way in the spiritual realm. You do not need to be hindered in any way in your service for God. You can run for God, and you can be victorious in your living. You cannot be spiritual in the things of God if you give God very little time. Some people struggle to be faithful in the worship services. They always have other things to do. Grandma wants them to come over to her house or someone is sick so they say they need to spend some time with that person. You cannot win any battles if you have a struggle every time church service time comes.

The devil is real. I want to point out to you that some problems are a result of your own doing, your own way of thinking, and your own lifestyle. These things can bring many issues upon you that do not need to occur if you would put your trust in the Lord.

We have vast earthly resources in this world, but in Christ in the spiritual realm, we have whatever resources we need to be successful in our Christian living. Here is the secret: you must learn how to explore, discover, and develop those resources before you can benefit from them in your life. Remember, Paul said in Colossians 2:3 that all the treasures are hid in Christ. If I were to go outside and hide something from you, you could not just walk out and pick it up. You would have to search for it.

Let me illustrate the thought of hidden treasures this way. Suppose you own a piece of land, and on the surface the land is poor and unproductive for farming. Since the land is unsuitable for farming, you struggle to make ends meet financially and become so discouraged with it that you finally decide to sell it. Because of the discouragement, you practically give it away and lose money on it.

The new owner begins to explore the land for natural resources down below the surface. He drills and finds oil down there, and then that little place that you struggled on becomes a treasure. God did not put it there after you sold it. It was there all the time, but you just scratched around on the surface with the plow, only getting down a little way. That is the way many people are in their Christian experiences. They just scratch around on the surface. They might make a trip over into Canaan from time to time; but when they see a giant or two, they run back across the river. You will see giants and "ites" over there, but it is a land flowing with milk and honey. Certainly, there are battles to fight, but the victory is sweet to those who will fight the battles.

In the story about the land, the new landowner dug down and found unlimited resources that made him rich in the natural sense. That is what it does for the person who keeps on digging in the spiritual sense. It makes him rich in faith, rich in good works, and rich in the things of God. He can excel and have victory every day. Instead of asking God for a rake, you should ask Him for a pick and shovel. You need to do a little digging in this mountain so that you can find the nuggets of gold and get the needs met for your soul.

It does not take something big to knock you out of the Christian race. If something small is left unattended, that can do it. For example, let us take the thought of discouragement. If left unattended and you do not get help or if you do not dig down and find the vast resources in Christ, in time that discouragement can work on you and cause you to lose out with God. It does not take a great thing to cause this to happen. You can have victory over everything in your life.

Someone may say, "The people down at the shop curse and carry on, and it tears me all to pieces." God can give you victory whether they quit cursing or not. You can have full victory in your life over them. The devil wants to take the little circumstances of life and cause you to say, "If this was different, I believe I could have victory." You can have victory even if those circumstances are never different as long as you do not allow such things in your life.

**Victory Through Trials**

Someone used a wonderful illustration one time. He said: "May-

be some people wonder how a little boat can float in a vast body of water. I can tell you how. The boat is in the water, but the water is not in the boat." If someone were to turn it around and get the water in the boat, the boat would go down. That is the way it is with each of us. As long as we keep certain things out of our lives, we can have victory with God. We can sail on the top without any danger.

Too often some people come to the conclusion that they have explored it all. Sometimes when the preacher announces his Scripture text, some people close their ears and think: "I've heard that a dozen times. I don't need that any more." The truth of the matter is, you can read this book over and over and find something clearer every time you read it. You can sit and hear it preached, and it becomes clearer every time. Every time I hear the message on the church, it becomes clearer and more glorious.

Some people are too quick to take the attitude, "I've already heard that." Let me illustrate it this way. Suppose you were to walk on the seashore and look out at the ocean for the first time. Perhaps you take a quick look and turn away and say, "I've seen it." Well, that would be an understatement. You would have barely caught a glimpse of the surface of it. In some places the ocean is many miles deep. There are mountains and vast resources down in the ocean. You may look at the mere surface of it and say, "I've seen it," but you have seen hardly any of it. If God should let you live to be one hundred years of age and you serve Him all the days of your life, and if you should leave this world praising God for the things that He has shown you up to your dying day, you will have seen only the surface of His treasures.

People need something today that will pull them closer to God, cause them to be curious about the things of God, and cause them to desire to learn more about Him. Some people go to church only twice a year. They say that is about all they can stand. How can they comprehend the things of God without salvation? Paul said in Ephesians 3:18-19: "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

I am sure that the power company has enough power to run anything that you might want to use. Jesus is the way, and He has all power. He wants to unleash His power in your life, if you will let Him so that you can be victorious over every circumstance of life.

You may think: "Some people never seem to have a burden, a problem, or a discouragement. Every time you see them, they are smiling and their countenance is aglow." The devil will try to tell you: "God stays right with them, pats them on the back, and gives them anything they want. That is the reason they can smile all the time." Friend, it is not the load that gets you down, but it is the way you carry it.

God has victory for you in the circumstances that you go through. You are going to go through trials and hard places, but He wants to take you through those hard places with victory. The devil is trying to throw you a curve. God does not show partiality, but the devil will point out things here and there to try to make you think that He does. God has enough grace to take you through any circumstance of life. You do not have to say, "Well, if he had my troubles, he wouldn't smile like that." It is not that the other person does not have any problems that he can wear a smile, but he has victory over those things.

If you are not careful, the bulk of your prayers will be spent asking God to take away your burdens. What you need to ask Him for is the grace to bare your burdens, and then you will have overflowing blessings. You see, we want to get out from under the load, because we do not want to suffer and carry burdens. We do not want rain; we just want sunshine. We want the flowers to bloom twelve months of the year. No doubt, you have heard the old saying, "April showers bring May flowers." Without the April showers there will not be many May flowers. Without some storms in our lives we would not be fit for anything. They are what molds us, fashions us, and causes us to get settled, like a tree planted by a river of water. We must stand for God when the storms come, every time. We do not need to worry that the wind may blow this way and that way. When the storms are over, we will be standing for God.

### "My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness"

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:37, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Maybe you are trying to serve God in your own strength. What did James say in James 1:5? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James said if you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. He did not mean that you do not need to read and study the Bible. You must do more than tell God that you want wisdom and then think He will drop wisdom on you. That was not what He meant. James was just letting people know where wisdom comes from. You could wear the pages out in your Bible and never receive understanding. It has to come from God.

You want God to give you grace for today and tomorrow. His grace is sufficient. Whatever you might have to face, when the time comes, He will supply the grace in your life. He will take you through. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." God has power and strength for each of us,

and He cannot fail. Glory be to God! What He said, He will do. He will take us through with victory.

You may look at Paul's life and say, "God must have been better to him than He is to me. It looks as though Paul never had problems or struggles." Have you ever been in jail? Have you ever had stripes laid on your back? Have you ever been put in stocks, bleeding? No, and I have not either, but it happened to Paul and Silas. They knew that Jesus had the power and the victory over every circumstance. In Acts, Chapter 16, you can read that Paul and Silas were beaten. Along about midnight, they prayed and sang praises to God; they got happy in their souls. Suddenly there was an earthquake, and God shook the prison. He shook their bands loose and shook the prison doors open.

Paul did not tell Silas: "Now, I want to tell you what we are going to do. In the morning we are going to lodge a formal complaint about this. We are Romans, and yet they beat us. Just wait until the office opens in the morning." No, they talked to God, and His office is always open. They began to pray to God, and He shook that place. God got everybody's attention.

The Apostle Paul was not moaning, groaning, and complaining. He did not say, "I didn't know it was going to be this hard or I never would have started this journey. Everywhere I go, people want to beat me and kick me around. Nobody wants the Truth." No, he did not do that. When a mob took Paul out of the city one day and stoned him and left him for dead, he laid there for a while. Even the disciples thought he was gone, but after a while, he got back up, went back into the city, and started telling about the good things of God again.

Do you know why Paul had such a beautiful ending? He had a beautiful beginning. God is so good! You may say, "I wish I could die with the victory that Paul had." If you get that kind of experience and live the experience that Paul did, when it comes your time to die, you can just go to sleep in Jesus. You must have the victory in your soul. Praise God!

**Keep Climbing Higher for God**

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Paul ran the race that was set before him. He did what God told him to do. He went on to say in verse 8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." That crown is also for you and me today. You can get on "Strait Street" and walk straight. Let the trials come your way. God will turn them into blessings.

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 8:36, "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." In other words, we are ready to be offered at any time. Paul talked about the many things that would befall him, and he said in 2 Corinthians 4:9, "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." We are not forsaken or left alone. God has not left us; He is still with us. Through every test and trial, He will make a way for our escape. He will turn it into victory for us.

The devil will throw things in your way for stumbling stones, but God will make steppingstones out of them. You can keep climbing higher and higher for God. The battles are going to come. In every battle you will have either victory or defeat. You cannot have both. The Lord is going to give you victory in every battle if you will only claim it. You do not have to be afraid of the battles. James 1:2 reads, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

The devil will try to work discouragement on you, but James said to count it all joy when you fall into temptations. He was letting you know that just on the other side of that is real victory and real glory that you can walk in. Friend, you can wear a smile. God can make you happy. You can go to bed with victory, get up with victory, and live with victory in your soul; but you need to work at it. You need to dig deeper. You need to go on down underneath the surface.

When you get saved, you get in Christ, but you have to learn how to discover those resources in Christ so that you can make your life rich in experiences with God and have a rich life of victory. Precious friend, you do not need to go on struggling. You can have real victory if you will do what God says to do. If you will cut yourself loose from everything that has been holding you back, burn the bridges behind you, and say: "From this day forth, I'm going to live for God and be what He would have me to be, regardless of what others do. I do not aim to let others steal my joy or steal my victory." Right in the midst of all your troubles, God can give you victory!

*(Cassette C-2062E)*

When you get to the end of your rope,
be thankful—God is there!

## ETERNITY

It's a mighty l-o-n-g time . . .

We cannot comprehend the immensity of eternity; it is too much for our little minds.

Long ago a giant, four-engine airliner crashed in the early morning in the hills just outside Oakland, California. On investigation of the horrible wreckage, newspaper reporters and photographers found a copy of a current best seller. It was the book, "From Here to Eternity." Evidently a passenger had been reading the book in flight, and there it was, still in its entirety, telling most graphically, the fact that all passengers aboard had suddenly been ushered from here to eternity.

Eternity is ahead for all of us, and no one will escape it. A million years from now, you and I will be somewhere—let's face it. Yea, a billion years from this moment, you and I will be very much conscious—the quality of self-consciousness will, no doubt, be much keener then than now. A trillion years from now, we will be just as real as we are this moment, and eternity will have just begun. It's a long time; there's no end to it.

My friend, you and I will spend this eternity somewhere; remember this, won't you? We will not die as animals, ceasing to be the moment breath leaves us. No, a thousand times no—our lives go on—in the next world, and that world with its life shall never end. We cannot escape spending eternity somewhere.

God has given us the ability to know in advance where we will spend eternity. He has assured the child of God of an eternity of bliss. Our Lord said to His disciples, "That where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Ah, the Christian will spend that long eternity with his Lord in that glorious state above. The unbeliever, on the other hand, will "go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). You see, eternity will be spent in one of two places. Some folk think they are too good for hell, but not quite good enough for Heaven. They feel there must be some in between place for them in the next world, but this is not so. We are either saved or lost; we are Christians or we are not. We will spend eternity in one of two places. Where we spend eternity is settled here in this present life, of course, before death. Now is the time for you to think of this and settle the matter. Circumstances may be such tomorrow that you cannot settle it. Where you spend eternity is determined by what you do with Jesus Christ. Remember, "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:23). Will you trust Jesus Christ as your personal Savior today, even now?

Eternity—it's a long time. The flowers fade, the heart withers, man grows old and dies, the world lies down in the sepulchre of the ages, but time writes no wrinkles on the brow of e ternity. Prepare for it now by taking Christ as your Savior.

Nothing you can do will take you out of eternity. Time is but the essence of eternity. The day you drew your first breath, you started on your march toward eternity. Eternity is limitless; it reaches before the beginnings and continues beyond the end. Eternity belongs to God. "In him was life" (John 1:4). Before the worlds were framed, he lived. The spark of life was with Him. Flesh and bones belong to time; the spirit belongs to the infinite. Life is that tangible something that cannot be defined: here today, gone tomorrow, fleeting yet continuing. Life is a part of eternity, possessed by a body, yet elusive as the evening breeze. What a solemn warning to the unsaved! What a glorious thought for the Christian!

Out of the vast eternity behind us, God created our world, and time began for this earth and its people. Generation has succeeded generation, and time has shaken her hoary locks, waiting for the word from the great Creator for her dissolution. Time is but a hyphen in the brief interval between two vast eternities. Scientists go back millions of years in their calculation but they cannot calculate eternity in terms of figures.

The thought of life as but a hyphen arrested a young woman in her life of vanity. "In Wasserburg, a small peninsula on Lake Constance, there stands a small church close to the shore. Around the church there is a cemetery. One of the congregational members was showing me this wonderful place, when suddenly she stopped and pointed down into the water before us. 'Here,' she said, 'my life was decided.' I looked down into the waves. Old gravestones were lying there on the bottom. When the water is clear, you can still read the inscriptions.

"The woman continued, 'When I was a young girl, I was standing here once, looking down as we are now. My eyes fell upon one particular stone whose name was no longer readable. But I could still make out the dates, 1789-1821. There it struck me that the hyphen between those two numbers was a whole human life. A mere hyphen, that's all your life amounts to. It suddenly came to me what a responsibility we have to make something worthwhile out of this miserable little hyphen. That moment I made my decision to place my life in the service of Christ.

"We sat for some time there on the shore, and it struck me to see how great a miracle it is when God takes this little hyphen of life and makes it into something for the praise of his glory!"

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whosoever confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12).

Selected

# Old-Fashioned Camp Meeting

## Canby, Oregon

## July 8-14

First Service Monday at 7:00 p.m.

Two Services Daily
10:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

**We Welcome Everyone**

*We extend a cordial invitation for you to come and worship the Lord with us!*

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***(Please make reservations in advance, if possible)***

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to attend the

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***The first service begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday.***

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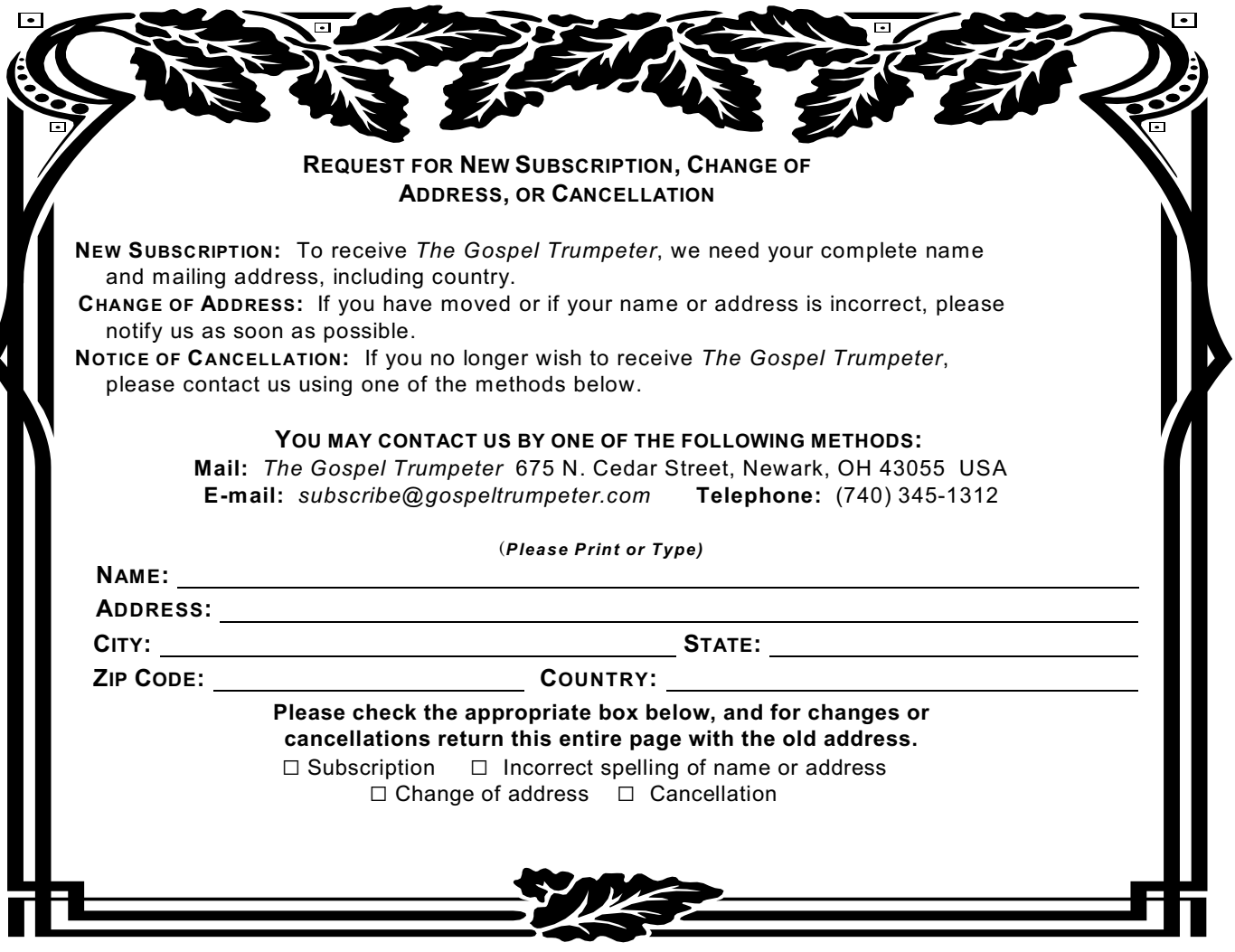

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