

# Loaves & Fishes

Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2007

The Joy of the Lord Is  
My Strength • 6

Free on the Inside • 27

Martyr Algerius • 38

*The power of God alone can multiply  
these loaves and fishes in your hands  
to more than you can contain.*



## **The Warrior's Prayer**

*Ephesians 6:13–18*

Heavenly Father, your warrior prepares for battle. Today I claim victory over Satan by putting on the whole armor of God.

I put on the girdle of truth. May I stand firm in the truth of your word, so I will not be a victim of Satan's lies.

I put on the breastplate of righteousness. May it guard my heart from all evil, so I will remain pure and holy, protected under the blood of Jesus Christ.

I put on the shoes of peace. May I stand firm in the good news of the Gospel, so your peace will shine through me, and be a light to all I encounter.

I take the shield of faith. May I be ready for Satan's fiery darts of doubt, denial, and deceit, so I will not be vulnerable to spiritual defeat.

I put on the helmet of salvation. May I keep my mind focused on you so Satan will not have a stronghold on my thoughts.

I take the sword of the Spirit. May the two-edged sword of your word be ready in my hands, so I can expose the tempting words of Satan.

By faith your warrior has put on the whole armor of God! I am prepared to live this day in spiritual victory.

*In Jesus' holy name. Amen.*





# Loaves & Fishes

Volume 5 • Issue 1 • 2007

*Loaves & Fishes* is published by Lighthouse Publishing as the Lord provides. Our goal is to point those in prison to Jesus Christ and help them experience the life, hope, and freedom of a daily walk with Him.

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From someone who cares...

## Have You Met Our God?

Lavern Gingerich



**W**ooden carvings with scary faces. Gold sculptured into stone-cold humanlike figures. Trees, mountains, stars, and the sun. Money. Sensual pleasure. Drugs. A fast car. Loud music.

Many other things could add more to this list. I have mentioned only a few of the countless “gods” that exist in our world today. Some people’s god is a god of their own imagination. Some people choose a god they can touch and see. Some have decided to serve a god that gives them sensual pleasure.

The Bible teaches us that there is only one true God Who is alive and has power to save. *“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5).

In Exodus we read how the Almighty God miraculously brought His people, the children of Israel, out of slavery into a free land, the land of Canaan. On their trip, God did many supernatural things for them. When

they ran out of water, he made water come out of a rock. When they needed food, he sent more than enough quail and manna for each person to have plenty to eat. When the Egyptian army pursued Israel to capture and bring them back, God drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea. The God they served and worshipped is the only God Who is real and can do all things!

**Gold sculptured into  
stone-cold humanlike  
figures...**



Jesus said, *"With God all things are possible"* (Mark 10:27). He has all the power He needs to do anything He wants to do. We have limitations. The gold and wooden idols can do nothing. Nature is powerless in itself. Money cannot bring you the security you are grasping for. Sensual pleasure will not fill that void deep inside your heart. Drugs do not bring true fulfillment and rest to your soul. Everyone and everything has limitations, except God. The Almighty God Who created you is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think! That's our God!

Have you thought it would be easier to believe God if He did some obvious miracle for you? Let's take another lesson from Israel.

We have seen some glimpses into their journey from Egypt to Canaan. In spite of all the great things God did for them, they chose to turn away and make another god their own.

One day when Moses their leader was absent for an extended period of time, the people said to Aaron, Moses' brother, *"Make us gods, which shall go before us"* (Exodus 32:1). Aaron told them, "Break off the golden earrings that are on your wives and children and bring them to me." Aaron took these earrings and

**They traded a God  
of power for a  
bunch of reshaped  
earrings that had  
absolutely  
no life!**



made a golden calf to be their god. Imagine an earring god! They chose to replace the one true God with a god of their imagination! They traded a God of power and no limitation for a bunch of reshaped earrings that had absolutely no life and no power!

Who is your God? Are you serving the true God or a finite god of your own choosing? Do you love the Lord God with all your heart, or is your heart filled with the love of the world?

Have you met our God? If not, come by faith and trust Him today! He is waiting for you to come. Forsake all your other gods, the gods of your own imagination, the gods of your own making, and the gods of this world, and trust our true God to

deliver you and make your life beautiful. You can discover the wonderful plan He has for your life if you will come and surrender your all to Jesus Christ.

He is real, and He knows exactly where you are and what you are thinking. He keeps track of the number of hairs on your head. He knows everything about you, and every part of your life is open before Him.

May God bless each of you. To those of you whose lives have been hopelessly wrecked by sin, I pray that God may open the eyes of your understanding and help you believe that this is for you! Jesus came for you. Now it's your turn to come.

*In Christ's love,  
Lavern*



*Lavern & Esther*  
Married September 16, 2006

*God makes everything  
beautiful in his time.*



## **Bible Reading**

**Luke 4:14-31**

<sup>14</sup>And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. <sup>15</sup>And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. <sup>16</sup>And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up:

and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. <sup>17</sup>And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to

preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,<sup>19</sup>To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.<sup>20</sup>And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.<sup>21</sup>And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.<sup>22</sup>And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?<sup>23</sup>And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.<sup>24</sup>And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.<sup>25</sup>But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;<sup>26</sup>But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.<sup>27</sup>And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, sav-

ing Naaman the Syrian.<sup>28</sup>And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,<sup>29</sup>And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

<sup>30</sup>But he passing through the midst of them went his way,<sup>31</sup>And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.<sup>32</sup>And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."



**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord....**

***This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.***



# The Spiritual War

*The Joy of the Lord  
Is Your Strength*

*Nehemiah 8:10*



**Nathan Stilley**

Volunteer Assistant Chaplain at Southeast,  
Tennessee Regional Correctional Facility

**H**ave you ever looked for power to overcome negative and destructive emotions? All of us have emotional hurdles to deal with at some point in our lives, but we can make it much easier for ourselves by dealing with the root causes of negative emotions. We also need to replace negative or destructive emotions with something better if we are to overcome them.

Replacing emotions requires us to carefully analyze our emotions. Are there situations or conditions, such as weather, that seem to initiate ugly emotions? We should also note which things stimulate positive emotions, recording personal actions that result in satisfaction, activities that lend themselves to proper emotional wellbeing, and thoughts that build lasting peace in your heart. Understanding our current emotional track

enables us to begin a conscious effort toward emotional peace.

Once the track is established, a plan must be laid out. The most effective plan is to focus only on the most destructive emotion in one's life. Effectively conquering this emotion gives courage to conquer the next. There may be some failure along the way, and it is wise to plan ahead of time how to relate properly to possible failure. With the plan in place, you can begin to gauge the progress that you are making toward your goal.

After laying a plan, it is effective to seek out a mentor. A mentor should be someone who has arrived at a satisfactory level of emotional maturity and who understands something of the struggle you are facing. He or she should be willing to push you toward your goal. Great mentors know that temporary



conflict is necessary for lasting change. You should value an honest mentor highly.

Emotions tend to exclude each other. Can you be angry and loving at the same time? Jealous and peaceful? Discouraged and joyful? Of course not; but you can be jealous, angry, and discouraged, or loving, peaceful, and joyful. This shows that emotional groups also tend to exclude each other. Positive emotions replace negative emotions, and negative emotions replace positive ones.

Taking charge of your emotional life has lasting impact. A positive emotional state increases productivity. It also allows stronger, more fulfilling friendships. Those who live positive, fulfilling lives surround themselves with others who are the same. Friends who are willing to come along on the

journey to emotional freedom should be welcomed into your life, but friends who reject the offer of freedom from damaging emotional influence must be replaced. Positive friendships are the keystone of emotional maturity.

Never underestimate the power of joy in a person's life. Joy is the experience of pleasure that is experienced or expected. But joy based on personal feelings is as temporary as the feeling of the moment. Likewise, joy based on personal expectations is fulfilled only when things turn out as expected. So what can joy be based on that does not change? *"The joy of the Lord is your strength"* (Nehemiah 8:10). Joy based on the unchanging Lord Jesus Christ can never truly be replaced with negative emotions.



**"Joy based on the  
unchanging Lord Jesus  
Christ can never truly  
be replaced with  
negative emotions."**



**By allowing the  
work of joy to flow  
through us,  
we find strength to  
overcome all  
negative emotions.**

---

Of course, temporary emotional fixes are everywhere. Have you ever done something that was fun? What if you had to do that thing sixteen hours a day, for the rest of your life? Would it still be fun? Most things that bring temporary emotional “highs” also leave us with emotional “hangovers.” Drinking, drugs, promiscuous relationships, pornography, gambling, and money satisfy for the moment but result in pain and regret. Only joy which is

based on Jesus Christ and heaven can be enjoyed every waking hour for the rest of your life.

Make it a goal to put these positive emotions to work in your life. Remember, habits are hard to break. Opening up the true feelings of your heart to someone else makes one vulnerable. Becoming vulnerable is not easy even with someone you trust, but it is necessary. Simply saying, “I’m fine” does no good. *“Confess your faults one to another... that ye may be healed”* (James 5:16). It has been said that confession is good for the soul. Working with others, we can break the power of anger, bitterness, envy, jealousy, discouragement, and many other such passions. Only persistent care, working with the power of the Holy Spirit, will produce lasting results.

Replacing an old way with a new one does not leave room for the old. The joyful attitudes of thankfulness, patience, love, tenderness, kindness, mercy, and other such feelings will fill up our lives. *“In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”* (Psalm 16:11). Living this way is only possible when we are in the presence of Jesus Christ, the source of all joy. By allowing the work of joy to flow through us,

we find strength to overcome all negative emotions.

Strength to live the fulfilled joyful life is only found in the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ gave His own life to empower us to have joy. The strength of physical muscles has never helped to resolve emotional troubles. No machine can produce joy. The strength to live joyfully is accomplished by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill our life, and joy in the Lord is guarded by spiritual unity with God. Unity with God is accomplished only by holiness in life and behavior.

Yes, God requires obedience from those whom He empowers with joy. *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). The love for God described in the Bible is shown by obedience. Obedience results in God's favor toward us, and God's favor produces joy. This joy, based in an unchangeable God, never ends. We may choose, however, to

walk away from this joy. There are few things worse than to have the joy of the Lord, and then go back to living without it.

Joy equals strength. There is nothing stronger than a joyful life. When physical life is ready to end, joy in the Lord becomes even greater. Who can harm a person who has as much joy in dying as in living? Joy in the Lord makes life worth living in this world, but it is still more desirable to live in heaven. Joy in the Lord allows us to see that death is only a door into a better realm where we have never been, called heaven. It is the presence of God that makes heaven "heavenly," and in His presence there is joy forever. □

J esus first  
O thers in between  
Y ourself last

***"In thy presence is fulness of joy;  
at thy right hand there are  
pleasures for evermore."***

**Psalm 16:11**

# Pastor Chen

*The true story of a Chinese pastor who found fulness of joy in God's presence even in extremely uncomfortable circumstances. Today thousands of Christians still endure harsh persecution under the rule of Communist China.*

**P**astor Chen spent eighteen years in a prison work camp in China. Because he came from a background of moderate wealth and opportunity, the guards at the camp worked hard to break his spirit and indoctrinate him. He was so hungry at times that he was tempted to eat toothpaste. He was separated from his wife and his young church. While he was in prison, his wife died.

One of his greatest hardships was that he had no privacy to worship or pray or read or memorize the Scripture. He was under constant surveillance. Frequently he prayed that God would allow him a place of privacy so he could enjoy fellowship with God.

Soon the prison officials gave him a new assignment. In order to break his spirit and indoctrinate him, they gave him the

most difficult work assignment in the camp. They assigned him to the camp cesspool.

The sewer pit where he worked served 60,000 prisoners. His assignment was to scoop out

human waste to be used for fertilizer. No one else wanted the job because it was lonely and repulsive and they feared deadly diseases.

His heart was broken when he went to work on his new assignment. Day after day working in the foul pit, he

wondered if his prayers were heard. To withstand the hardship, he sang and prayed and quoted scripture aloud. One day it occurred to him that his assignment was a specific answer to prayer.

Because he worked in such a foul hole, none of the guards would get anywhere near him. He worked completely alone. He







## **The presence of Jesus can turn a cesspool into a garden.**

could pray and sing and quote scripture as loud as he wanted to. He began to thank God and rejoice. There was no one there to hear him but his faithful God. His cesspool assignment lasted six years and miraculously he never contracted a disease from it.

When he was released, the church for which he had labored and prayed had exploded in growth and vitality. He traveled to poor villages where he saw the hand of God at work. He represented the cause of the suffering church in China around the world.

Speaking before a huge missionary conference years later he told the story of God's faithfulness to him in prison. With bright eyes he spoke of the fellowship that he enjoyed with the Lord in the prison cesspool. Standing before the huge crowd, the small Chinese pastor began to sing the song that he used to sing in the prison sewer.

*I come to the garden alone while  
the dew is still on the roses...*

*And He walks with me and he  
talks with me and He tells me I am  
His own and the joy we share as  
we tarry there none other has ever  
known.*

Pastor Chen had learned that the secret to rejoicing is not perfect circumstances but a consciousness of the presence of the Lord Jesus. *"In thy presence is fulness of joy"* (Psalm 16:11).

When you are discouraged by difficult circumstances, misunderstanding, pressures, responsibilities, or outright persecution, rejoice. The presence of Jesus can turn a cesspool into a garden.



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## The Parable of the Necklace

Once there was a king who presented his daughter, the princess, with a beautiful diamond necklace. Then the necklace got stolen, so the king put a \$5,000 reward on it and asked all the people in his kingdom to search for it.

One day a clerk was walking home along a river next to an industrial area. The river was completely polluted, filthy and smelly. As he was walking, the clerk noticed a shimmering in the river, and upon closer observation, he saw the diamond necklace!

He reached his hand into the filthy, dirty river and grabbed at the necklace, but somehow missed it. When he pulled his hand out and looked again, the necklace was still there. He tried again; this time he walked into the river and put his whole

arm in to catch the necklace. But strangely, he still missed the necklace! He came out and started walking away, feeling sad. But then a feeling of determination came over him as he glanced into the water and saw the diamond necklace one more time. He would get it, no matter what!

He decided to plunge into the polluted river, as disgusting as it



***We must look up to God, the source of true joy, and stop chasing after the happiness of the material world.***

was. Though he knew his whole body would become filthy, he plunged in, searched everywhere

for the necklace, and yet failed. This time he was really bewildered and came out feeling depressed that he could not get the necklace that would get him \$5,000.

Just then a saint, who was walking by, saw him and asked him what was wrong. The clerk didn't want to share the secret with the saint, thinking the saint might take the necklace for himself, so he refused to say anything about it. But the saint could see this man was troubled and he compassionately asked the clerk to describe the problem and promised he would not tell anyone about it.


The clerk mustered up enough courage to put some faith in the saint. He told the story about the necklace and how he had been trying to catch it, but kept failing. The saint then told him that he should try looking upward, toward the branches of the tree, instead of in the filthy river. The clerk looked up and was amazed to see the necklace dangling on the branch of an overhead branch. He had spent all this time trying to capture a mere reflection of the real necklace.



---

*Happiness in material things is like the filthy, polluted river because it is a mere reflection of true spiritual happiness and fulfillment. No matter how hard we try, we cannot find the happiness we are looking for in the things of this earth. Instead we must look up to God, the source of true joy, and stop chasing after the happiness of the material world. Spiritual joy is the only thing that can satisfy us completely. May the Lord help us to look up to Him!*





# Understanding the Bible

Tommy Clayton

Drawing © by Ralph Hofknecht 2002

*This section of Loaves and Fishes is designed to teach solid fundamental Bible truths that all believers need to know and understand.*

*God has given us the wonderful gift of His Word. Much blood has been shed over this precious Book that we have so freely available in our country today. The Bible is our guide to know God, to believe on Jesus, and to live the victorious Christian life. We should value it more than our daily food.*

## **Faith**

**H**ave you ever tried to clean up your life, only to find that old habits, addictions, friends, and environments just keep pulling you back down into a life of sin? Do you know God is not pleased with your life, yet find yourself falling deeper into evil each time you try to improve? If this sounds

like your experience, we have had much in common. I too know what it is to feel as if change is hopeless. I have heard people claim that “you are who you are and that will never change, so just accept it,” but friends, I can assure you that is a lie. Like you, I have been to prison. Like you, I have been bound by drugs and alcohol. I’ve had my friends forsake me and my family disown me. Have you been so low you had no money for food, no car, and nowhere to sleep at night? So have I. Have you ever had a nice car, money to burn, and your own nice place? So have I.

I want you to know without doubt that I can relate to where you are, who you are, and where you’ve come from. I also want you to be certain that everything Jesus Christ has done for me, He will do for you. That’s why this article is for you; I can say with all confidence that no matter who you are, Jesus loves you. He is able



and willing to change your life, and you can't excuse yourself by thinking His offer is not for you. There is hope for you!

It has been almost ten years since I was released from the Texas State Penitentiary, TDCJ for those of you who know it, and I am a different person today from who I was ten years ago. When I tell my story I feel like an observer narrating someone else's life. That's how different my life is now. Sound strange? This proves the power of God and demonstrates the life-changing work of Jesus Christ in my life and in the life of every believer, by faith.

In this article I want to talk about faith. In today's society, faith is a well-known word, but it is a terribly neglected ingredient in the lives of those

who really want to change. For example, many people try to clean up their life before they get right with God (sound familiar?). Because they try to improve without true faith, using their own strength, they often fail and become discouraged with religion. What a pity that so many people have hardened their hearts, thinking they can never change or measure up to God's standards, all because they never exercised the true faith in Jesus that would have empowered them to overcome their old ways. Such a person is exactly where the devil wants him.

The Bible tells us that without faith, pleasing God is impossible. *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder*



**No matter  
who you are,  
Jesus  
loves you.**

of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Since Christian denominations and church groups teach so many different things, it is wise to search the Bible itself for truth, and that is what I want us to do here as we examine the subject of faith.

What is faith? *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"* (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith and hope will always go together; the objects of our hope are also the objects of our faith. Faith is a firm persuasion and expectation that God will do everything He has promised to us in Christ. Faith demonstrates to the eye of the mind the reality of things that cannot be seen by the eye of the body.

Faith is the thread that connects all the parts of Christianity together, and it must be exercised in every part of the Christian's life. From the moment of the new birth to the last dying breath, faith is present in the life of a believer.

Although Christians hold many views as to how someone comes to Jesus Christ for salvation, the Bible teaches that God shows Himself through creation and makes Christ known through the Gospel, but that all mankind must choose

to embrace or reject Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Some believe that God calls a person and gives him faith so that he will trust in Christ as Lord and Savior, and that there are people who are not called who have no opportunity to believe. However, the Bible clearly teaches that God calls everyone, so that salvation in Jesus Christ is open to anyone who chooses to believe and by faith surrender his all to Jesus.

Faith is so vital that no matter how many prayers you have repeated or how many times you have been baptized, you cannot be saved without faith. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We are brought into the family of God by faith. *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:26). You can change your clothes, cut your hair, put away pornography, and start attending church services somewhere; but none of these deeds will save you. These good works are important to God, but you will not be justified before God simply by doing good works. You must come to God totally

**Without real  
faith it is  
impossible to  
please God.**



on the merits of His righteousness, not your own. *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

In salvation and in the life of a Christian there is God's part (which He will always do) and there is our part, which we must do in faith. Jesus said, *"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved"* (Matthew 10:22). Each day we must choose to be faithful and endure to the end. *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only"* (James 2:24). Revelation 20:13 also warns us that in the end we will be judged by our works.

A true living faith will change your life. If you say you have faith, but it is producing no good works, it is not real faith at all. *"Even so faith,*

*if it hath not works, is dead, being alone"* (James 2:17). Genuine faith always produces good fruit in the life of the believer.

When we look outside and see the wonders of creation—the trees, the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars—we believe by faith in the Creator of it all. *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"* (Hebrews 11:3).

In time of temptation and in the midst of trials, faith is a shield to protect you from the attacks of the devil. *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked"* (Ephesians 6:16).

Remember that without real faith it is impossible to please God. But if you realize that you never had true faith, don't de-

spair; there's hope. You must ask the question, "How do I get real faith?" The answer is simple: *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17).

Hearing the preaching and teaching of God's Word and reading the Bible for yourself will stir faith in your heart. That you hold this magazine in your hands and have read this article is proof that God's love is shining on you, and that you desire to know Him and experience His life-changing power in you.

Friends, it's time to count the cost and make Jesus your everything. It's time to consider this world's offers as worthless as garbage, believe in Jesus as your Savior, and make Him Lord of your life. It is time to forget about being accepted by your peers and to quit worrying about what they think. It's time to care only about what God thinks, and whether He will accept or reject you on judgment day. Throw off your lust and covetousness, and put on holiness, righteousness, and a pure conscience before God and man.

Today is the day of salvation; tomorrow may never

come. Now is the time to quit playing Christian, and to really become a Christian by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Remember the words of the Savior: *"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"* (Luke 11:9).

*"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God"* (Mark 11:22).

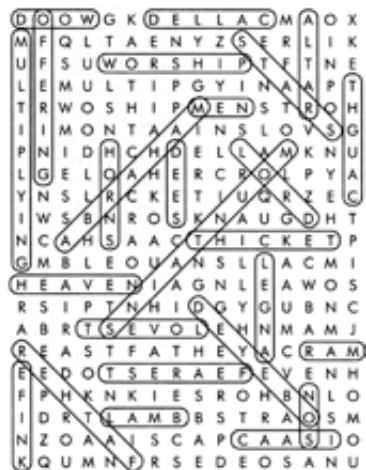


### Puzzle Answers for Last Issue

*"Discover the Names" on page 36:*

Adam, Noah, Lot, Elijah, Joseph, Samuel, David, Abel, Moses.

*Abraham and Isaac Word Search Puzzle on page 39:*





— Test Your Love —

## How much do you love Jesus?

Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

**Do you live your life in such a way that you are wholeheartedly trying to obey whatever Jesus taught?**

Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (John 14:23).

**Do you keep (obey) His words in the Bible?**

Jesus said, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

**Is God’s love conditional according to the above verse?**

“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” (2 Timothy 4:8).

**Do you live your life in such a way that shows you are waiting for Jesus to come back at any moment, like a bride waits for her bridegroom the day of a wedding?**

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” (James 2:5).

**Does this verse teach that only those that love God are going to heaven?**

*Even though you can’t see Jesus, cry out to Him and ask Him to have mercy on your soul. Confess all your sins to Him and ask Jesus to forgive you and change you, then trust in Him to do it! Tell Him that you will follow and obey Him the rest of your life by faith.*



# *The Pursuit of Godly Seed*

**Denny Kenaston**

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Denny and Jackie Kenaston were saved in 1972 out of the “hippie culture.” The Lord Jesus delivered them from drugs, drinking, and many other things that go along with that lifestyle. They have raised their eight children in the rural setting of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania for the last 24 years. In this setting, they find many opportunities to extend their home school far beyond the classroom.

They were first called to this location to help start Charity Christian Fellowship where Brother Denny serves as an elder. He also travels extensively in a church planting and preaching ministry. God has placed an anointing upon him to call the church back to a burden for the family, and through this, many families have fallen on their faces in repentance and received a new vision for a godly home. Our prayer is that your heart and home will be challenged and changed by this section taken from his book *The Pursuit of Godly Seed*.



*I never cease to be in awe  
as I gaze into the face of an  
innocent child. When God  
gives them to us, they come  
as a blank sheet of paper –  
clean, pure, and waiting to  
be inscribed upon. They trust  
us, open themselves up to us,  
and receive whatever we give  
them, whether it be good or  
bad. Lord, teach us how to  
guide and train them!*

# Bring the Fathers Home

That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth;  
that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after  
the similitude of a palace. Psalm 144:12

Our beloved father David was a prophet, one who moved in the prophetic realm by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As prophets often do, he saw deeply into things and bore many burdens that did not even occur to others. In Psalm 144 we find an expression of one of those deep burdens that God had pressed upon his heart. We find in this psalm some insights into the needs of the American family, as well as the rest of the fast-developing world.

Allow me to guide your thoughts a bit as we read a portion of this psalm. The context of this psalm is war. David is speaking about the Lord's blessings in the midst of war. Amid his reflections and praise, a prayer arises in his heart. This prayer, coming from the deep longings of his heart, is for the end of wars, a peaceful society, and the fruit that comes from that peace. Let's read the psalm with these longings in mind.

*"7Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;*

*<sup>8</sup>Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*

*<sup>9</sup>I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.*

*<sup>10</sup>It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*

*<sup>11</sup>Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:*

*<sup>12</sup>That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:*

*<sup>13</sup>That our garners may be full, affording all manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:*



**Our sons will be  
nurtured into  
mature men.**

**Our daughters  
will be polished  
and molded into  
lovely ladies.**

*<sup>14</sup>That our oxen may be strong  
to labour; that there be no breaking  
in, nor going out; that there be no  
complaining in our streets.*

*<sup>15</sup>Happy is that people, that is  
in such a case: yea, happy is that  
people, whose God is the LORD."*

*Psalm 144:7-15*

### **A Prayer of David**

In the first part of this psalm, David is reflecting, praising, and praying about the subject of war. He prays for God's help, and that God will deliver him from his enemies. We see here a righteous king's burden to be free from the influence of ungodly nations. In the last part of the psalm (vv. 11-15), his focus turns away from war, and onto what life is like in Israel when there is no war. In verse 11, we find the prayer that I mentioned earlier for the second time in this

chapter. It is a prayer for Israel to be free from war. He says again: "*Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.*"

Now, we know that David was a man of war. In all the days of David, there was war in Israel. This means that the men of Israel had to rise up many times and go forth to battle. When Israel went to war, they could be gone from home for six months at a time. They lived out in the fields. They traveled long distances, and they were away from their families, their cities, their farms, and whatever their work was. They left all of that when they went forth to battle.

Now that we know a little of the cost involved when Israel went to war, we can see why

David's longing prayer was for a peaceful society. David is crying for deliverance from war, to "bring the men home." Why? Well, there are seven things in this psalm that David is crying for, and all of them happen when the men come home. These seven aspects of a peaceful society are all prefaced by the word "that." David's prayer was simply, "Lord deliver us from war and bring the men home so that:

- Our sons will be nurtured into mature men.
- Our daughters will be polished and molded into lovely ladies.
- Our fields will produce abundantly by the work of our hands.
- Our sheep will have shepherds and bring forth ten thousands more.
- Our oxen can increase strength and labor more because of our care.
- Our land can have all the blessings of peace upon it.
- Our people will be full of courage, and all murmuring will be gone."

When there was wartime in Israel, the men left their homes, their children, and their wives. They left their farms, their busi-

nesses, and their cities, and they went out to war. What happened to the wives, the children, the farms, the cattle, and all those things while the men were out to war? Well, what happens to our families, when the men are gone too much? We all know the answer to this question. We know the answer by personal experience. When the family is neglected, things do not go so well. We kind of put them on the back burner, and they suffer from the men's absence. Here in America, we do this one day at a time. Often, we say, "I will do better for the family tomorrow."

But that tomorrow never comes. There is always another voice calling us to something else.

Can you grasp the depth of wisdom and vision that David had in this inspired prayer for Israel? Here was godly David with a vision of what God had put in his heart through constant meditation in the Word. He knew what Israel was supposed to be. He knew what the children were supposed to be like. He knew what kind of a blessing God wanted to put on the nation of Israel if they followed the precepts I have already described. But, here was Israel going out to battle again.



David knew what would happen to the children while the fathers were away. We also know what happens to our children when we are away too much. David knew that it takes more than men going to war to make Israel a strong nation. There were foundations of righteousness that needed to be laid in the next generation, or the nation would not be what Jehovah intended it to be. With all this knowledge, David cried, "O Lord, rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children." He prayed "Lord, deliver Israel from war," so that the men of God, the men of war, could go back home and guide their families and take care of their farms.

### **How the Prayer Was Answered**

Now the Lord did not answer David's prayer in his own lifetime, but the Lord did answer his prayer. His son Solomon had very little war during his reign. Consider the difference twenty or thirty years with no war would make. Twenty or thirty years with fathers home every day guiding the children and teaching them. Twenty or thirty years with men watching over the sheep and the farms, and in the streets taking care of

things. All the leaders of all the homes in the nation of Israel are home! What happened to Israel in Solomon's day? Israel became the most powerful nation on the face of the earth during Solomon's reign.

Did you ever consider the how's and why's of Israel's testimony? It wasn't because Israel was a mighty nation of war, not in Solomon's reign! In David's reign, the enemies and the nations that lived near Israel trembled in fear. Yes, they did! Israel was a mighty force of war and power. David ruled many nations with a rod of iron.

But we come to Solomon's reign of rest from war. It was during this period that many of the nations revered Israel. She became a testimony to all the nations far and wide around her. Israel stood out as a nation that was very different from all the other nations. Many of the nations looked on at Israel and said, "*Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people*" (Deuteronomy 4:6b). Israel was healthy, wealthy, and wise, more than all the nations round about them. Many of the nations of the world looked on Israel and said, "There's something special about that nation!"

One of the major reasons for their world-renowned testimony

is that during Solomon's reign, the men of war came home! The godly fathers came home! Those men of God who stood out on the battlefield and fought the enemy in the power of the Holy Spirit came home. All the spiritual energy that they were directing toward the battle came home and was directed toward their families!

Israel became a mighty nation by the teaching and the preaching of the fathers in every one of

the homes, and that is the only way any nation will become a mighty nation! When the fathers of the nation turn their hearts toward home, then that nation will begin to change. When they rise up with a burden and a vision of what God can do through them in their own homes, then the tide will begin to turn. Oh, listen! God could shake this country for Himself through godly families.

There is a lot of talk about revival these days, and I praise

## THE WORTH OF A SOUL



EDWARD PARSON

How inestimable does the worth  
of the human soul appear.  
How clearly is it seen to exceed  
that of the whole world.  
When we view it as endowed  
with the capacity  
Of being made equal to the angels.

How momentous an event occurs  
when such a soul is born.  
When an immortal being commences  
a flight through endless duration.  
A flight which will raise  
him high to an equality with angels,  
Or plunge him low among  
malignant fiends!

Think of this, ye parents!  
Ye to whom is committed  
The care of giving to this flight  
its earliest direction.  
On whom largely depends, under God,  
What its termination shall be.

God for revival! I believe in revival, that is, an outpouring of God's Spirit. I pray, for and long for revival. I hear of many praying, "God, save our nation through revival," but if all we see when we think about revival is preaching and souls coming down the aisle, we see only half of the picture. The other half of revival is a nation of godly fathers and mothers training their children. One of the clear biblical fruits of revival is a family that loves God with all their heart. Revival is more than a puff of emotions. If it is genuine, it will affect our closest relationships, which is the family, for years to come. If our revival doesn't touch our homes, there is something wrong with it.

So, how does this psalm apply to us? We live in America, and we are not being distracted from our duties by a war. Consider what is taking our fathers away from their homes. We live in an unusual society. We are a nation of men that "will be rich" (1 Timothy 6:9). We live in a nation where it is easy to make money. This is encouraging more and more men to "become successful," and the wives and the children are the ones who are paying for the success. The price being paid is very evident when you look at our overflowing

prisons, and at the rising rate of divorce in our land, even among Christians. Let's face it men, prosperity is destroying our precious families one day at a time. Yet, everyone is talking about revival. Then why is this mighty move of the Spirit not turning the hearts of the fathers to their children? I know these are strong words, but the present distress is urgent. My heart unites with the prayer of David. Lord, bring the fathers home, that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth, that our daughters may be as cornerstones, polished after the similitude of a palace. □

## *Prayer ~*

*O Lord God, our Father, open our prosperous eyes to the reality of the true condition of our families. Bring the fathers home before it is too late, even if it means that we lose everything and find ourselves in poverty, even if we have to draw together just to survive. Plant us fathers back into the center of our homes, like the patriarchs of old. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen.*



## **Free on the Inside!**

***A place where prisoners can proclaim Jesus,  
the Deliverer Who sets the captives free.***

## **Thank You for Being a Friend**

Stephen Hunter,  
ASPC-Eyman > Florence, Arizona



My Lord, thank You for being a Friend. I thank You for opening the door for my salvation, for letting me come to You anytime of the day or night. Thank You for being not only my Savior but also my Friend.

People, let me tell you about a Friend, a Friend we have in Jesus. He loves with unconditional love. He not only knows our good thoughts, but He knows our bad ones as well, yet He forgives us time and time again. We need a friend like that, because you know some of us don't get it right the first or second time around.

Not only will He protect us from our fears, He gave His life for our protection—for our sins—because He loves us. Jesus is my Lord!

Thank you, Jesus, for being a Friend!

# Testimony of Paul Smith

Michaels Unit > Tenn. Colony, Texas

**W**hat is grace to a sinner who has trodden down the name of Christ? Who deserves hell more than a man who has denied his Lord three times by failure? Who would expect they would ever get another chance of forgiveness when they really deserve hell and its torment?

Have you ever experienced the love of God, been filled with His Spirit, tasted the goodness of the living God, seen His hand move, and experienced true church life, and still failed Him? Do you feel or believe that God would take another chance on a person such as you, in cleaning you up again and putting you back in His family? Let's find out what God did with a sinner who did some evil things.

Comparing me with the prodigal son will make the prodigal look good. The prodigal left home (God's presence) only once; I did it three times. I felt what Peter felt, but worse. He denied the Lord three times in

one night; I was released from prison three times, and here I am again.

Filled with pain, embarrassment, anger, and hatred, I didn't even deserve death. That would have seemed like a blessing. Satan had his claws in me really deep and didn't want to let go. I really didn't, either. But Jesus would not leave me alone for months. We fought every day, and I said some nasty things to

Him, but He wouldn't budge one inch. People thought I was going crazy — who else would rebel the way I was doing?



**He can take the worst lump of clay and make it into a beautiful vessel.**



One day the Lord told me that I might as well give up because I'm not going to win and He's not going to give up. Looking at myself spiritually, I was in bad shape. Eventually, I gave up and gave Him what was left of me. Just like the prodigal son, I was dead, but now I'm alive again; He found me and brought me back home.

I don't deserve His forgiveness, His mercy, His love, or His grace. I deserve hell and its torments. I don't deserve anything He offers or gives. But thank God that He operates in love and compassion. If He starts a work

in you, He is faithful to complete that work. He's not going to give you of Himself and get nothing out of it. What does He want? He wants to reveal His glory in you and through you. He wants to use you as a vessel to show the world that even though you may have made the worst mistakes in life, He is still God. And He is still the Potter Who can take the worst lump of clay and make it into such a beautiful vessel, full of His glory, that even the angels in heaven will stand in awe, and all creation will cry "Holy, holy, holy" to our Lord.



## ***Saving Grace***

Jerry Joseph Barber, Jr.  
GHCF > Stormville, New York

He is the way that you can survive;  
He teaches your heart and soul how to fly.  
Cast on Him all your sorrows and fears,  
For only He can wipe away all your tears.  
He is our Savior, our Lord, and High Priest.  
He can forgive all sins, even of a murderer or thief.  
To bear all our sins, He died on the cross.  
To not seek refuge in Him would be your loss.  
He has so much love to give, so for Him you should live.  
Live for our Maker, our Savior, and Lord.  
Read His Word, which is sharper than any sword.  
Come unto Him; live happy and free,  
For He welcomes you into heaven with Him  
As your **saving grace**.

# Testimony of Jeffrey Saye

Camp Hill State Correctional Institution  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

When I was sentenced to prison in June 2005, I was involved in drugs to the point that the world could not help me. My life and family were in ruins. My family was giving up on me because they, too, thought there was nothing that could change me. I was desperate, but didn't know if anything was strong enough to change me.

But then I met Jesus. I began to experience what I had searched so long for—the void inside me, which I had tried to fill with so many other things, was finally filled. I began to excel in things of God. I was filled with the Holy Ghost in my cell

after reading a letter from *Loaves & Fishes*. God's favor has been surrounding me since I've been going to church here, and believing in Jesus Christ as my one and only Savior from sin. God did



for me what I could never do for myself, and it came through *Loaves & Fishes*. I am now deeply in the Word of God. God is using me to share His hope. My family is happy to find out about my faith in God.

I'm free! God is on the move and I'm right in the middle of it. He took me from drug pusher to gospel pusher. I praise the name of Jesus.



**The void inside me, which I had tried to fill with so many other things, was finally filled.**

## ***Spirit of a Dove***

Robert Zukowski, SCI Cresson  
Cresson, Pennsylvania

Born upon this mighty rock,  
A planet we call Earth.  
We search and search all through our life,  
To find out what we're worth.

To know that God created us,  
Just doesn't seem enough.  
We're always out to prove ourselves  
To show that we are tough.

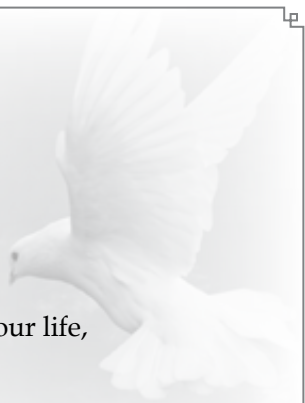
But then one day the world caves in  
And we think that we are through.  
Then God sticks out His mighty hand  
To grab ahold of you.

He will always be your Friend  
When you need Him the most.  
As long as you accept His love  
And never, never boast.

Don't be afraid of what you've done;  
He's seen it all before.  
Try always to remember  
That our Jesus is the Door,

The Way, the Truth, the shining Light,  
He will guide you in.  
It doesn't matter what you've done;  
He's forgiven every sin.

So bow down now before Him,  
And thank Him for His love.  
A gift He will bestow on you;  
The spirit of a dove.



# Testimony of Rhonda Jones

York Correctional Institution > Niantic, Connecticut

**T**he Bible says, *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Philippians 1:6).

This is the first time in my life that I have truly been happy. The Lord knew that even under such dire circumstances, I can be full of joy. Behind bars, yet still free; this is definitely not what I was expecting.

These same bars that confine me here in this prison are the bars that God used to release me. I can’t wait to get back to the outside, but in the meantime, I am happy where I am.

When I was a little girl, my mother taught me Psalm 23. *“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters....”*

This prison property has a lake in the center, surrounded by green pastures. And this is where God is restoring my soul and leading me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.

Only in the spiritual sense can it be understood how a person can be “behind bars, and yet still free.” I’m not allowing Satan to steal the joy of life from me. For now that I am saved, I’m under constant attack, but praise the Lord that the Holy Spirit has my back.



**This is the first time  
in my life that I have  
truly been happy.**

*“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:24).

All the pieces of my life are like a puzzle that I’ve finally succeeded in putting together with

**"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14**

the help of God. I didn't start out to change because it was the right thing to do; God loved me into changing. I've been on a journey all my life, and now that journey has a purpose.

*"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).*

*"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40:29).*

*"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" (Isaiah 40:31).*

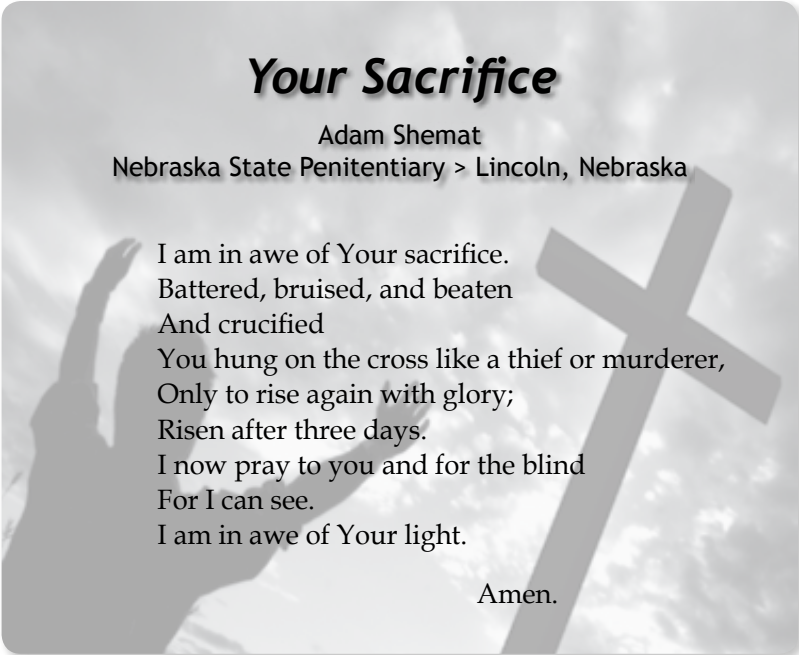
*"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).*



## ***Your Sacrifice***

Adam Shemat

Nebraska State Penitentiary > Lincoln, Nebraska



I am in awe of Your sacrifice.  
Battered, bruised, and beaten  
And crucified  
You hung on the cross like a thief or murderer,  
Only to rise again with glory;  
Risen after three days.  
I now pray to you and for the blind  
For I can see.  
I am in awe of Your light.

Amen.



# Go!

**Paul G. Simpson > Frackville, Pennsylvania**

Go! From the bondage of Egypt,  
As a testimony of My love;  
I will lead and guide you with  
A pillar of fire from above.

Go! Into the land of Canaan  
And inhabit all that is within.  
Show all nations I'll care for you  
If you obey and do not sin.

Go! Build a mighty ark of wood  
And fill it as I command;  
Obeying Me and My Word,  
Continue the line of man.

Go! Test My son Job, Satan;  
You'll see his faith is true.  
He will never curse My name,  
Despite what you may do.

Go! To Jerusalem, Judea, and the world,  
Witnessing of Me, coast to coast,  
Filled with and sharing My Word,  
Led by the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord has shown His love  
With this word, throughout creation.  
Using the simplest of His faithful,  
Spreading His love to all nations.

Now I'm here to remind us  
What we are required to sow —  
The life and love of Jesus Christ.  
Rise up, Christians, and go!

Go! Tell your co-workers,  
Your enemies, neighbors, and a friend.  
Show them all Who Jesus is  
By the life you lead. Amen.



## ***I Need You***

**Andrea A. Carrothers > Ft. Worth, Texas**

Oh, God, I don't know what to do;  
My emotional stability depends on You.  
Looking towards my past, I often wonder  
How I avoided going under  
Or ending up in hell somewhere,  
Without someone who would care.

You gave my life new meaning;  
Put back into my heart good feelings.  
I look back and can't see life without You,  
Seeing You in everything I do.  
Everything meaning what it does because of You.  
Before You, I had no one to see me through.

All the tears I have shed got me through  
My life before, and brought me to You.  
Now all my dreams are dreamed with You in mind;  
I can't even imagine leaving you behind.  
Anger and strife I put aside;  
There are no secrets for me to hide.

Open and straightforward, You and I;  
Knowing You're there, my spirit will fly.  
Never to be torn apart,  
Lest the separation of you and me break my heart.

### **We Want to Hear From You!**

If God has done a great work in your heart, share it with others! Send us your poems, testimonies, articles, and stories, etc., and we will consider them for publication in "Free on the Inside." Any material sent to us will be used at our discretion. (Please be patient. We have received a large number of writings.) Any material sent to us becomes the property of Lighthouse Publishing.

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

### God's Wonderful Creation

Genesis 1, 2



Find these words in the puzzle below:

AIR	DARKNESS	GOD	LIGHT	SEA
ANIMALS	DUST	GOOD	LIVING CREATURE	STARS
BEGINNING	EARTH	GREATER LIGHT	MAN	SUN
BIRDS	FISH	HEAVEN	MOON	WOMAN
BLESSED	FOWL	LAND	PLANT	
CREATED	FRUIT	LESSER LIGHT	RESTED	

P K J O L M C T H G I L D E G O  
T A E B E G I N N I N G F L U J  
H E A R T H S E H I L O E E C A  
G C K M S J E D U S T G P S R C  
I Q P E S N A N I M A L S S E G  
L E A H L Z U S C Y W E V E A B  
R T R D M O O E G O O D A R T P  
E F R U A T I L O D C F M L E E  
T V J T N R K M D G E I C I D R  
A W A I P Q K E R I O S U G P U  
E P G U O G Y N I F S H G H D T  
R L I R U H R A E J U E P T Z A  
G A N F I E Z M O S T A R S I E  
D N F J X A T O H J S I F A A R  
E T R P W V A W C N A O R H M C  
S S U N B E C K I H W Y I P O G  
S T X L C N M F H L S G A I O N  
E A B I R D S K J N A O M L N I  
L O E N K H E A V O P N S U Q V  
B I D R S Q L V A Q X A D T E I  
O C A R E S T E D E Y W R Z G L

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*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."  
Genesis 1:1*

# Round Up

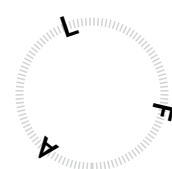
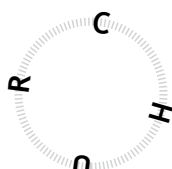
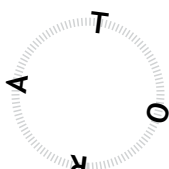
Each of the letter-circles below represents a word (or words) that can be spelled by starting at the appropriate letter and moving clockwise around the circle. You may use letters more than once, but you may not skip a letter.



1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_



5. \_\_\_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_\_\_



9. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_ 11. \_\_\_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_\_\_

*Puzzles by Stephen Sniderman. • Answers will be in next issue.*

**"The foolishness of God is wiser than men;  
and the weakness of God is stronger than men."**

1 Corinthians 1:25

## **MARTYR ALGERIUS**

**A young man who was miserably burned in Rome  
for the testimony of Jesus Christ in the year 1557.**

**T**o my beloved brethren and fellow servants of Jesus Christ, who have gone out of Babylon into mount Zion, grace, peace and mercy from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In hopes of relieving your anxiety over my well-being, I want to share some of the sweetness I am experiencing here, so that you can rejoice with me.

I tell the world an incredible thing: In a dark hole I have found pleasure; in a place of bitterness and death, I've found rest and hope. Finding joy in the depths of hell, I have laughed where others weep. I have found delight in misery, fellowship in loneliness, and rest in the midst of slavery. The gracious hand of God has given me all this. God, Who once seemed far away, is now near me, showing Himself to me clearly, offering me His hand. He comforts me, filling me with joy, strengthening, sustaining, and healing me. How

good He is; He never allows us to be tempted beyond our ability. How easy His yoke is! He heals the bruised and wounded (Isaiah 41; 43:20). No one is like Him! He visits His servants in their trials (Isaiah 43:2) and gives us a cheerful mind and



**Algerius at his execution.**

a peaceful heart. The unbelieving world does not understand this, asking, "Aren't you afraid of the cold, the shame, and the discomfort? Don't you care about losing your money, your reputation, your education, and your family? Don't you know you'll be killed if you go on like this? Don't throw everything



away like a fool!" You unbelievers, listen to me! What is hotter than the fire that waits for you? What is colder than your dark hearts (John 1:5)? What is more miserable and confused than your lives? Tell me, what country is better to live in than heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1)? What treasure is greater than eternal life?

The summer heat is a refreshing pleasure to me and winter a joy in the Lord. I am not afraid of being burned alive; why should I be afraid of a little heat? And icy cold cannot torment a person who falls asleep in the warmth of God's love.

This is indeed a terrible place for evildoers, but to the innocent it is pleasant and sweet; here there is heavenly drink and plenty of all good things.

People consider this a lonesome and disgusting place, yet it is like a vacation resort to me. What could be better than this? Here is Mount Zion; here I rise and enter heaven.

Jesus Christ stands before me, and all around me are the fathers of old, the servants of God. How can I say I am alone, among so many? These are my examples;



**I TELL THE WORLD  
AN INCREDIBLE  
THING: IN A DARK  
HOLE I HAVE FOUND  
PLEASURE...**

some of them were crucified, some beheaded, some stoned, and some cut in two. Some were roasted, some were fried in pans, ovens, and kettles of oil, some had their eyes put out, and some had their tongues cut out. Some had their skin pulled off over their head, some had hands and feet cut off, some were thrown into furnaces, and others were fed to wild beasts. To tell it all would take more time than I have. All of these people are alive now, and free from pain because of the one medicine that cures all sickness. This medicine gives me the strength to endure all the fear and pain here, which is only temporary. The medicine is my hope in heaven. I am not afraid of my unjust persecutors



since I know that God will punish them and heal me. If I were surrounded by a thousand enemies, I would not be afraid; I know God will deliver me. To suffer shame for Christ brings us only joy, for it is written, *"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you"* (1 Peter 4:14).

I have no permanent home on earth; my home is in heaven. I am on my way to the new Jerusalem—a home, a family, pleasure, and honor are waiting for me there. The talents God has given me were once merely enjoyable things that brought me pleasure; now they bear holy fruit. It's true that I have sweated, shivered with cold, and stayed on the alert day and night, but all this has only made me better; not an hour passes without some improvement. God has given me great joy, and I am resting peacefully in Him (1 Peter 1:8).

Since death with God is not really dying, why do unbelievers come against me to try to make me avoid death? Didn't Jesus say that people would do to us what they did to Him (John 15:20)? Let

the foolish world keep silent, for I am saying with the apostle Paul, "Neither tribulation, nor distress, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor danger, nor persecution, nor sword shall be able to separate us from the love in Christ. We are killed all the day long: we are led to death like sheep for the slaughter" (See Romans 8:35, 36). So we are partakers with Christ, Who said that the disciple is not greater than his master, and Who commanded us to pick up His cross and follow Him.

Be comforted, fellow servants of God, and be patient since you know Jesus promised that people will kill us, thinking they are pleasing God (John 16:2). We rejoice in a future life and shout joyfully in the Lord since it is better to suffer for doing good than for wrong. When Jesus and the prophets spoke God's word, the wicked murdered them just as they are doing to us. We are happy if we remain faithful since we know we are innocent. God will punish our persecutors.

People call me a fool for speaking openly about God, but remember that Jesus said, *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be*



*hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house"* (Matthew 5:14,15). Another time, He said, *"Ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake... Fear not them which kill the body... but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body... Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:18, 28, 32). When Jesus has spoken so plainly about this, by what authority do people try to persuade me to be quiet about Him? I will never disobey God to follow human advice since it is written, *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful"* (Psalm 1:1). The officials that try to force me to abandon my faith are mighty on earth, but they need to become perfect in the Lord; they are just, but they are without Christ, Who is the foundation.

Please tell me, how do I deserve to be condemned? Is it just because I did not give the officials the answers they wanted? In any

case, whatever I did say was not my own words since the Lord says that His Spirit will speak through us to the authorities (Matthew 10:30). How could I oppose the will of God (Acts 11:17)?

Do what you wish to me. Can you make the words of the Lord less effective, or take away the authority of the Gospel? Certainly not; the kingdom of God will only become more precious and desirable to His true people. But whoever kills the righteous will receive great judgment from God (2 Thessalonians 1:6). Raise your eyes, beloved ones, and take God's counsel into your hearts. Not long ago the Lord sent you a plague, in order to lead you to repentance. If you ignore this warning, He will pull His sword from its sheath and strike with war, disease, and famine everyone who stands proudly against Christ. May God in His mercy save this place from such a punishment.

From the zealous servant of all believers, the imprisoned and bound Algerius. Written in the delightful pleasure garden of the Leonia Prison, July 12, 1557.



Revised by Lighthouse Publishing.



# Pilgrim's Progress

## Part 12

Welcome to John Bunyan's classic story of Christian's journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City!

*Pilgrim's Progress* was written over 300 years ago by a faithful street preacher, who was confined 12 years in a loathsome British prison for preaching without a license. As you read this allegory, remember who wrote it – a man who was free on the inside. God could use him in a great way even while he was in prison!

### What Happened So Far...

*After leaving the City of Destruction and losing his burden at the cross, Christian has traveled a long and sometimes frightening path toward the Celestial City. With his new friend, Faithful, he has faced and conquered many dangers. But now they are both in jail at Vanity Fair and their enemies are out for blood. They're heading into a trial with the deck stacked against them and it looks like the only way to survive is to give up their faith. Can they stay true and reach the Celestial City, or will Judge Hategood and his crooked jury destroy them first?*

### The Trial

The rulers of Vanity Fair set a trial date for Christian and Faithful, and when the time came, they were brought out of prison and arraigned by their enemies. The judge's name was Hategood. The indictments of the two men were worded differently, but amounted to the same thing. The accusations were as follows:

Christian and Faithful were enemies of the town of Vanity and were disturbing its business. They had made trouble and division in the town and, contrary to the king's law, had gathered a party of people who agreed with their dangerous ideas.

Faithful answered first; he said that the laws he had disobeyed were already in disobedience to the highest law of all. "I didn't make a disturbance," he said. "I am a man of peace. The people who joined us were convinced

simply by watching our honesty and innocence, and they are all the better for it. As for the 'king' you talk about—since he is Beelzebub, the enemy of our King, I openly defy him and all his angels." The court then announced that anyone who had something to say on behalf of King Beelzebub against the prisoner at the bar should come forward and give his evidence. Three witnesses came in; their names were Envy, Superstition, and Pickthank.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" asked the clerk.

"Yes, we do," they answered.

"And what do you have to say against the prisoner," he asked.

Envy spoke first. "My Lord," he muttered, "I have known this man a long time, and I can testify under oath before this honorable bench, that he is—"

"Hold it!" said Hategood. "Give him the oath."

So they swore the witness in, and he began once

more, "My Lord, this man has a fine-sounding name, but he is one of the vilest men in our country. He pays no attention

**"My Lord, this man has a fine-sounding name, but he is one of the vilest men in our country."**

to rulers or citizens, to laws or customs. He does his best to convince everyone to believe in his disloyal ideas, which he calls 'principles of faith and holiness.' I once heard him say that Christianity was the opposite of the principles of our town, and that the two could never work together. My Lord, by saying



Drawing by Robert Tupper

this, he is condemning all the business of our town. And My Lord, worse still, he is condemning us for doing these things.”

“Have you anything more to say?” asked Judge Hategood.

“My Lord,” answered Envy, “I could say much more, but I don’t wish to weary the court. If the other gentlemen do not produce enough evidence to condemn the prisoner, I will gladly testify further against him.” So they told Envy to stand aside.

Superstition was called in next. “Look at the prisoner,” said the clerk. “What can you say against him for our lord the king?”

“My Lord,” said Superstition, after they had sworn him in, “I don’t know this man well, and I don’t wish to know him better. But from a talk I had with him the other day, I know he’s bad news. He told me that our religion is worthless, and no one can please God with it. My Lord, you know what that means — he’s implying that we’re worshipping in vain, and that we’re still sinners, and that we’ll all be damned in the end. That’s all I have to say.”

Next, they swore in Pickthank, and asked him what he had to say for their lord the king against the prisoner at the bar.

“My Lord, and all of you — eh — gentlemen,” said Pickthank,

“I’ve known this fellow for a long time. I’ve heard this man say — eh — things that should never be spoken. He has railed on our noble prince, Beelzebub. He has spoken — er — quite disrespectfully of our prince’s friends — such men as Lord Old Man, Lord Carnal Delight, Lord Luxury, Lord Cool, good old Lord Sexy, Sir Getstuff — and all the rest of our upper class. He said that if everyone agreed with him, not one of those — eh — fine gentlemen could stay in this town another day. In fact, he even spoke against you, My Lord, who are now his judge; he called you an ungodly villain, and referred to you and most of the gentlemen of this town with shocking and libelous words.”

Judge Hategood glared at the prisoner. “Apostate, heretic, traitor!” he growled. “What do you think of that? Have you heard what the honest men have said about you?”

Faithful replied, “May I speak a few words in my own defense?”

“Little sneak!” snapped Hategood. “You don’t deserve to live another second; I should have you killed on the spot. But as proof of our gentleness to you, we’ll listen to what you have to say, you disgusting turncoat.”



"First," said Faithful, "in response to Mr. Envy, all I said was that any rule, law, customs, or people, which are against the Word of God, are entirely opposed to Christianity. If I was incorrect in saying this, show me where it is wrong, and I'll be glad to take it back.

"Second, in response to Mr. Superstition's accusations, I said only that those who worship God must have divine faith, and that divine faith comes

only by a divine revelation of God's will. So anything in the worship of God which does not agree with God's revelation comes from man-made faith, and man-made faith is useless for eternal life.

"Finally, as for Mr. Pickthank's claims, I won't go into details, but I will say that the prince of this town and his entire gang are more fit for hell than for living in this country and this town. May God have mercy on me!"

The Judge now turned to the jury. "Gentlemen of the jury, you see this man who caused such an uproar in this town, and you've heard what the honorable gentlemen testified against him. You've also heard his answers to the accusations.

Now it is up to you to hang him or spare his life. However, I must remind you of our laws.

"In the days of Pharaoh the Great, a servant of our prince, there was an act made that, in order to keep the people of another religion from multiply-

**"You don't deserve to live another second... But as proof of our gentleness to you, we'll listen to what you have to say."**

ing and becoming too strong for him, their male children should be thrown into the river (Exodus 1:7-22). Later, Nebuchadnezzar the Great, another of our prince's servants, made a law that whoever would not fall down and worship his golden image was to be thrown into a furnace (Daniel 3:1-18). King Darius made a law that, for a certain length of time, anyone who called on any God but his would be thrown into a lion pit (Daniel 6:1-9).

"The rebel before us has broken the principles of these laws, not only in thought, which is bad enough, but also in word and action, which is utterly intolerable. Remember, Pharaoh's law

was made simply to prevent trouble, before any crime was committed, but here the crime has already been done. As for

**As soon as his enemies had destroyed his body, Faithful was taken into the chariot and rushed away...**

the second and third examples I gave—well, he argues against our religion, and you have heard him confess to doing so. For that, he deserves to die.”

The jury then left the room. Their names were as follows: Mr. Blindman, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-lust, Mr. Low-living, Mr. Big-head, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enemy, Mr. Liar, Mr. Cruelty, Mr. Hate-light, and Mr. Heartless. Each member gave his private verdict, and among themselves they decided unanimously to find the prisoner guilty before the judge.

“I can clearly see that this man is a heretic,” said Mr. Blindman, the foreman.

“Away with him!” yelled Mr. Nogood.

“Right,” said Malice. “I hate his guts.”

“I can’t stand him,” said Mr. Love-lust.

“Me neither,” said Mr. Low-living. “He would always be condemning my lifestyle.”

“Hang him! Hang him!” shouted Mr. Big-head.

“A sorry tramp,” muttered Mr. High-mind.

“My heart rises against him,” said Mr. Enemy.

“Hanging is too good for him,” said

Mr. Cruelty.

“We need him gone!” said Mr. Hate-light.

Mr. Implacable added, “If you gave me the whole world, I couldn’t make peace with him. Let’s find him guilty and worthy of death, without delay.”

So the jury found him guilty, and he was condemned to be taken outside and given the cruelest execution that could be invented. First, they whipped him, then they beat him, then they sliced him with knives. Next, they hurled heavy stones at him and stabbed him with their swords. Last of all, they burned him to ashes at the stake. And that is how Faithful came to the end of the road.

Now, behind the mob, I saw a two-horse chariot waiting for Faithful, and as soon as his enemies had destroyed his body, he was taken into the chariot and

rushed away through the clouds by a shortcut to the gate of the Celestial City.

The people of Vanity gave Christian a little more time, and sent him back to prison, where he stayed for awhile. But the Ruler of everything, who could control even the rage of the wicked, arranged events so that Christian could escape the city and continue his journey. As he traveled, Christian sang a song in memory of Faithful.

*"Well, Faithful, you have faithfully professed, faith in your Lord, with Whom you will be blessed when the faithless, after all their vain delight, are crying out beneath their hellish plight. Sing, Faithful, sing! Long may your name survive, for though they killed you, you are still alive!"*

I saw in my dream that Christian did not leave town alone; with him was a man named Hopeful (he had become Hopeful by watching the words and actions of Christian and Faithful when they suffered at the fair). Hopeful had made a brotherly covenant with Christian, promising to be his traveling companion. So one man died as a testimony to the truth, and another rose from the ashes to accompany Christian on his journey. Hopeful told Christian that many others in the city would follow them before long.

## Mr. By-Ends

Soon after they left the fair, Christian and Hopeful caught up with a man traveling the same direction. His name was By-ends.

"Where are you from, and how far are you going this way?" they asked him.

He told them he was from the town of Fairspeech, and that he was on his way to the Celestial City, but he didn't reveal his name.

"Fairspeech!" said Christian. "Are there any good people living there?" (Proverbs 26:25).

"Why yes," said By-ends, "I certainly hope so!"

"What should I call you?" asked Christian.

"I'm a stranger to you, and you to me," said By-ends. "If you're going the same direction, I'll be glad to walk with you; if not, I'm okay with that."

"I've heard of this town of Fairspeech," said Christian. "They say it's a wealthy place."

"That's for sure," said By-ends. "I have many relatives there who are doing quite well."

Christian questioned him further, "If you don't mind my asking, who are your relatives in Fairspeech?"

By-ends chuckled. "Actually," he said, "they're almost



## The Waterman

*"Facing one way and  
rowing another"*

all related to me. There's Lord Turnaround, Lord Time-server, and Lord Fairspeech (the town was named after his ancestors). Then there's Mr. Smoothman, Mr. Facing-both-ways, and Mr. Anything. Our preacher, Mr. Two Tongues, is my mother's first cousin on her father's side. To tell you the truth, I'm a fairly prominent citizen of the town myself. My great-grandfather was just a boatman, facing one way and rowing the other way, and I've made most of my money doing the same thing."

"Are you married?" asked Christian.

"I am," said By-ends, "and my wife is a fine woman, as virtuous as her mother was. She is the daughter of Lady Pretend. As a result of her excellent upbringing and education, she has the ability to look good at all times, whether she is with princes or peasants. Our religious beliefs are a little different from your stricter folks,

but only in a couple of little ways. One difference is that we never go against the wind and the tide; the other difference is that we are always more zealous for Christianity when it walks the street in fine clothes. We especially like Christianity when the sun shines and people applaud us."

Here Christian stepped aside and said privately to Hopeful, "I suspect that this is a fellow named By-ends, from Fairspeech, and if it is him, we've been joined by the biggest crook in this part of the country."

"Well, ask him," said Hopeful. "He certainly shouldn't be ashamed of his own name."

So, coming up to By-ends again, Christian said, "Sir, you talk as if you know a little more than everyone else, and I think I've guessed who you are. You're Mr. By-ends of Fairspeech, aren't you?"

"That's not my name," said By-ends, "it's a nickname used by people who don't like me. I must just be content to carry the shame of it, as other good men have done before me."

"Did you ever give people a reason to call you that?"

"Never!" said By-ends. "The most I have ever done to earn that name is that I have always been lucky enough to sense the current trends and flow with

them, and I've made quite a bit of money that way. If things work out well for me, I consider it a blessing; I don't see why malicious people should censure me for that."

"I thought you were the one I had heard about," said Christian, "and in my opinion, that name fits you better than you want to admit."

"If that's what you want to believe, I can't help it," said By-ends. "But you'll find me a fine traveling companion if you aren't too good to walk with me."

"If you go with us," said Christian, "you'll have to travel against wind and tide, which as I understand doesn't fit your beliefs. You'll also need

to stand with Christianity when it is dressed in rags as well as when it wears good clothes; you'll need to be loyal to it, not just when it is applauded and praised in the streets, but also when it is imprisoned in shackles and chains."

"You have no right to push your ideas on me and lord it over my faith," said By-ends. "Let me have my Christian liberty, and we'll get along fine together."

"Unless you will do as we do in these matters, we can't

go another step together," said Christian.

"I'm not going to give up the principles I live by," said By-ends. "They're harmless and profitable. If you won't let me travel with you, I'll do as I did before I met you — walk by myself until someone comes along who's glad to be with me."

Now I saw in my dream that Christian and Hopeful left By-ends and stayed to themselves, but one of them soon looked back and noticed three men catching up to Mr. By-ends. As they came

**"If you go with us," said Christian, "you'll have to travel against wind and tide."**

up to him, By-ends bowed low, and they greeted him warmly. Their names were Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all, old friends of Mr. By-ends.

These men had, in fact, been schoolmates with By-ends, back when they studied under Mr. Gripe-man, a teacher in the town of Love-gain, which lies to the north in the country of Coveting. The old teacher had taught them the art of getting, by violence, fraud, and flattery, even

by pretending to be religious, and so well had the four of them learned the art, that they each could have taught such a school themselves.

Soon after they had greeted each other, Mr. Money-love asked Mr. By-ends, "Who are those people ahead of us?"

"Oh, a couple of foreigners," said By-ends. "In their own way, they're going on pilgrimage, too."

"It's a pity they didn't stay with us," asked Money-love. "We could have traveled together, since all of us are going on pilgrimage, I hope."

"Yes," By-ends sighed, "we are all going on pilgrimage. But those men ahead of us are very rigid. They love their own ideas so much and think so little of anyone else's opinion, that no matter how godly a man may be, they'll have nothing to do with

him unless he agrees with them in every detail."

"That's a shame," said Mr. Save-all, "but the scriptures speak of those who are overly righteous; such men feel the need to judge and condemn everyone but themselves. What were your disagreements with them?"

"In their stubborn way," said By-ends, "they think it is their duty to rush forward on their journey in all kinds of weather, where I believe in waiting until the wind and the tide are favorable. They want to risk everything at once for God, while I believe in taking precautions to protect my life and my things. They hold on to their ideas even if everyone else is against them, but I hold to religion only as long as it is well-accepted and safe. They want to stand with Christianity when it is ragged and in disgrace, but I prefer to support

it only when it appears well-dressed and popular."

"Indeed," agreed Mr. Hold-the-world, "Stick to your guns, good Mr. By-ends. In my opinion, anyone who loses what he has, when he is free to keep it, is nothing but a fool. We need to be as wise as ser-

### **Do you have a Bible to read?**

If not, we would like to send you one! Just write to us and ask for your free hardcover Bible. (Let us know if hardcover books are not allowed in your facility.)

*Please note that supplies may be limited. Available for prisoners only and as the Lord provides.*



pents; 'make hay while the sun shines,' as they say. Look how a bee hibernates in the winter, and comes out only when she can enjoy herself and make a profit. Sometimes God sends rain; at other times He sends sunshine. If those men are foolish enough to travel in the rain, we'll be glad to let them do so, and enjoy the fair weather for ourselves. My favorite religion is one that offers the security of God's good blessings to us. Any reasonable person can see that if God gives us the good things of life, of course He wants us to keep them. Abraham and Solomon became rich through religion, and the book of Job says that a good man piles up gold like dust. That certainly doesn't match the men ahead of us, if they are as you describe them."

"I think we all agree on this," said Mr. Save-all, "so there's no need to talk more about it."

"Right," said Mr. Money-love. "We need not speak any more about it; the only people who don't know their liberty or seek their own safety are those who refuse to believe Scripture and reason, which are both on our side."

"Brethren," said By-ends, "as you see, we are all on a pilgrimage, and, just to keep us out of trouble, let me pose a question for us to consider as we walk: Sup-

pose a man—say a minister or a businessman—has an opportunity to gain some great blessings of this life. However, he can't get them unless he at least appears to become extra zealous about some religious issues that didn't interest him before. Could he use religion to get what he is after, and still be an honest man?"

"I see what you're getting at," said Mr. Money-love. "If the other gentlemen don't mind, I'll try to give you an answer. First, let's consider the minister you mentioned. Suppose a minister, a worthy man, who has a low-paying position, is looking at a better position with a far higher salary. He has an opportunity to gain the better-paying position, but in order to do so, he must study harder, preach more often and more zealously, and change a few of his beliefs to better fit the desires of the people. Personally, I see nothing wrong with doing that, if he has a good reason. In fact, he could do a lot more than that, and still be called an honest man. Why do I say this?

"First, there's nothing wrong with him wanting a better position since God has given him the opportunity; thus, if he can get it, he may do so with a clear conscience.

"Second, his desire for the position makes him study harder



## Christian Meets Mr. Money-love

and preach with more zeal—in short, it makes him a better man. It causes him to cultivate his gifts, which is according to God’s will.

“Third, if he is willing to bend some of his beliefs to better match the people’s wishes, it shows self-denial, as well as an agreeable and considerate nature, proving that he is fit for the work of a minister.

“So, my conclusion is that a minister who trades a poor position for a better one should not be judged as covetous. Rather,

since the change causes him to cultivate his abilities and to work more diligently, he is simply a man who is following his call and accepting an opportunity to do more good than before.

“Now for the second part of your question, concerning the businessman. Suppose a poor man realizes that, by becoming a Christian, he could get ahead—maybe he could get a rich wife, or attract more customers to his business. The way I see it, it should be perfectly all right for him to do so. Here’s why:

“First, becoming a Christian is a good thing, whatever your motive for doing so. Second, there is nothing wrong with marrying a rich wife or receiving more customers. See, he gets these things by becoming a Christian, so he is getting good things from good people, by becoming good himself. A good wife, good customers, good money—all by becoming a Christian, which is certainly good. There’s no way around it; to become a Christian to get these things is a good and profitable plan.”

The others applauded Mr. Money-love's answer to the question, and they all agreed that the situations he had described were wholesome and healthy. They were sure that no one would be able to argue against their logic. Remembering how Christian and Hopeful had opposed Mr. By-ends before, they decided to catch up with them and challenge them with the same question. They called ahead to Christian and Hopeful, who stopped to let them catch up. As they approached, the four friends agreed that, instead of By-ends, old Mr. Hold-the-world would ask the question, so their answer would not be affected by any feelings they might have against By-ends from the previous disagreement.

After a brief greeting, Mr. Hold-the-world asked Christian and Hopeful the question about the minister and the businessman and told them to answer it if they could.

"Even a spiritual infant could answer a thousand such questions," said Christian. "If it is wrong to follow Christ just for the food (John 6:1-14, 22-71), how disgusting is it to use Christ and Christianity as mere tools to

help us get and enjoy the world? The only people who believe in doing this are heathens, hypocrites, devils, and sorcerers, as I will show.

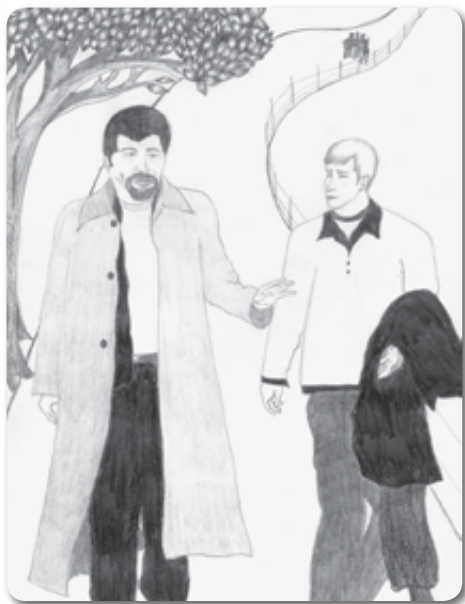
"First, heathens do this; when Hamor and Shechem wanted the daughter and the cattle of Jacob, they saw that there was no way for them to get these things, except by becoming circumcised.

**If a man picks up Christianity  
to gain the world, he would  
also throw Christianity away  
to gain the world.**

So they said to their friends, 'If every male of us be circumcised, as they are circumcised, shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours?' (see Genesis 34:20-23). What the heathens wanted was the girl and the livestock; the religion was only a tool to get them.

"The hypocritical Pharisees would also have agreed with you; their long prayers were a fake; their real intention was to get the houses of widows, and they received damnation from God for it (Luke 20:46, 47).

"Judas the devil, too, had your religion; he was religious so that



## Christian and Hopeful

he could be treasurer for the disciples and dip into the money bag now and then. He was lost and rejected, and he went to eternal destruction.

“Finally, Simon the Sorcerer was your kind of man; he tried to buy the Holy Spirit, hoping to make money with it, and Peter told him what he deserved to hear (Acts 8:18-23).

“Also, I can’t help thinking that if a man picks up Christianity to gain the world, he would also throw Christianity away to gain the world. Look at Judas; just as sure as he followed Jesus for worldly gain, so he sold his religion and his Master for

the same reason. For you to give a “yes” to that question is heathenish, hypocritical, and devilish, and you will pay the consequences of your deeds.”

The other men stared at each other, and none of them could think of anything to say. Hopeful complimented Christian’s answer, but Mr. By-ends and his friends were very silent. They slowed down and allowed Christian and Hopeful to get ahead of them again.

Christian turned to Hopeful. “If these men can’t stand up to the sentence of a mere human,” he asked, “what will they do when they hear the sentence of God? If they are speechless against a vessel of clay, what will happen to them when they are rebuked by the flames of a devouring fire?”

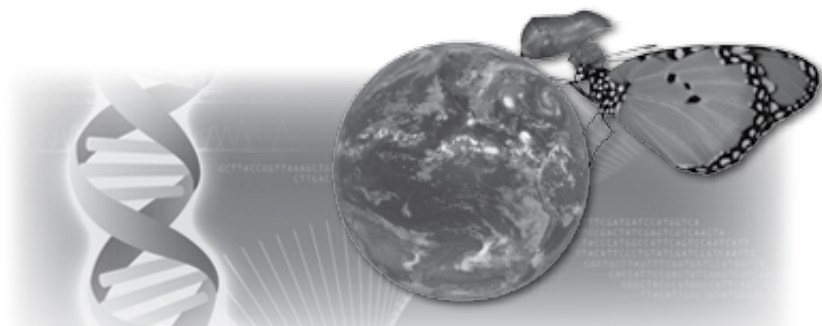
— *to be continued*

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## Science in Creation

### The Wonder of Distant Starlight

Andrew Zimmerman

*"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names" (Psalm 147:4).*

**W**alk outside on a dark, clear, moonless night, preferably away from city lights. Take in the vast panorama of space, dotted with literally thousands of stars. Can you imagine how great God is, knowing how many stars there are and calling them all by their names? With binoculars or a telescope you can see many, many more celestial lights. These pin-points of light are incredibly large suns at unimaginable distances from our planet. The sun that lights our daytime is a relatively small star.

Bible history tells us that God created the earth about 4,000 BC (before Christ). In a previous article we looked at a number

of geological "clocks" supporting that time frame for creation. There are many scientific evidences for a young earth. But how can we explain the fact that we can see light from very distant galaxies and other celestial objects?

*continued on next page...*

- Brother Andrew has had an
- avid interest in science since
- he started studying it in his
- early years of school. More
- recently, he has been blessed
- by studying the work of cre-
- ation scientists such as Henry
- Morris and Ken Ham. Because
- of his interest in science and
- his belief in a literal six-day
- creation, he enjoys telling oth-
- ers about creation science. He
- lives in Central Pennsylvania
- with his wife and ten children.



How can we  
see the stars  
that are more  
than 6,000 light  
years away?

Distances to the stars are usually expressed in light years, the distance light travels in a year. When you flip a light switch, the light starts shining, and it seems to instantly fill the room with light. But even light has a speed limit: 186,282 miles per second. It can travel nearly six trillion miles in a year. That's 6,000,000,000,000 miles.

The closest star, Alpha Centauri, is just over four light years away. If you're in the Southern Hemisphere and see this star in the sky, you're actually seeing light that left the star more than four years ago. Some of the stars in the night sky are thousands of light years away. Some are even millions and billions of light years distant. How can we see the stars that are more than 6,000 light years away? How many stars could

Adam see the first he looked at the night sky?

At first you may think that this question automatically proves that the earth is billions of years old, as the Big Bang theory says. But there are actually several possible explanations. While we may not be able to determine which answer is correct, we can look at some concepts that satisfactorily explain the evidence.

The simplest, seemingly most obvious, answer is that God could have created the light from the stars to the earth at the same time that He created the stars on the fourth day. God is certainly able to do that. This would make the stars, in fact, the entire universe, appear as if it were billions of years old. God could have created starlight to appear as though it had been



shining from all the stars for the past billions of years.

There is at least one problem with this explanation, however. On February 23, 1987, astronomers observed a supernova, an exploding star, in the outskirts of the Tarantula Nebula. Named Supernova 1987A, it was 164,000 light years away, so the light should have taken 164,000 years to reach Earth. Did the star that exploded really exist? While God could have created the light that shows supernovae, collisions of galaxies, and other astronomical events that didn't happen, why would He? Why would God create light to make it appear that all these fictional events happened hundreds of thousands of years ago? Wouldn't that be almost deceptive? I don't believe He created fossils to make it look like the earth is millions of years old. Just as the Flood explains the fossils, I believe there's a better explanation for distant starlight.

You might wonder if the stars and galaxies are really as far away as astronomers say. There is plenty of evidence for the estimated distances to the stars. Astronomers use various techniques, such as parallax, angular speed, Doppler shift, and the standard candle method to confirm that the galaxies are indeed very distant. I won't go into these

methods in detail, but we really can't say that the stars must be a million times closer than the astronomers are telling us.

Recently I had the opportunity to attend a creation science seminar by "Answers in Genesis." Astrophysicist Dr. Jason Lisle gave us several possible answers to the question of distant starlight.

One explanation that creation scientists have proposed is that the speed of light has decreased. Could the speed of light have been much faster in the past? A problem with this explanation is that the speed of light is not arbitrary. It is closely related to other constants in nature. You've probably heard of Einstein's famous formula:  $E=mc^2$ . This formula describes the relationship of mass and energy. The speed of light is referred to as 'c' in mathematical equations. If the speed of light is changing, what happens to the relationship of energy and mass in the universe? This explanation of the speed of light decreasing is sometimes called c decay, abbreviated CDK, to refer to decay of the speed of light.

Dr. Lisle shared two other, perhaps better, explanations for the distant starlight that you can see in the sky. Did you know that gravity can affect the flow of time? This phenomenon is

called gravitational time dilation, and was predicted by Einstein in his theory of general relativity. It has actually been measured with atomic clocks. The clocks in GPS satellites need to be adjusted for their height above earth, where the pull of gravity is weaker than it is at the surface. The atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado runs slightly faster, about five microseconds per year, than its counterpart in Greenwich, England. The clock in Colorado is at a higher elevation, with slightly less gravitational pull on it. Time slows with stronger gravity.

If we assume that the universe is finite, or of a limited size, and place the earth at or near the center of the universe, the gravitational force of the galaxies would be more concentrated around earth. The increased gravity would cause time to flow a bit more slowly here in the center of the universe.

There is evidence that the universe was smaller in the past and has been expanding. That would make the gravity well (the region of increased gravitational force) at Earth even stronger in the past. A number of Bible verses refer to God stretching out the heavens. *"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded"*

(Isaiah 45:12). Astronomers can detect the expanding of the universe by analyzing the colors of starlight. As the universe and starlight are "stretched," the wavelengths of light become longer, and the colors shift toward red.

Can the rate of expansion required for this gravitational time dilation answer be reconciled with observed red shifts? There are still a lot of details to be worked out. Some day we may have a scientific model that explains the expanding universe, gravitational time dilation, red shifts, and distant starlight. For more information on this subject, read *Starlight and Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*, by Dr. Russell Humphreys, PhD.

Dr. Lisle also discussed a simpler explanation, called Alternate Synchrony Convention, or ASC. This has to do with which convention of time measurement was used in the Genesis account.

We are familiar with the differences between local time zones on earth. The sun is high in the sky at noon local time. The concept of varying time zones can also be applied to space.

ASC says that we can assign an event to the time we observe it. With distant events, the time we observe the event (the local

time) could be considered the “real” time when the event occurred. Consider the supernova 1987A. Did 1987A really happen in 1987? No, it actually happened long before, but since we don’t know the precise distance to the supernova, we can’t calculate the precise time when it occurred. We have to use observed, or “local” time, which says the supernova occurred in 1987.

In the Genesis account, God could have used observed time to describe the events in creation. Since people have only recently calculated the speed of light and the distances to the stars, the calculated time of creation of the stars would have been meaningless to humans. And if He actually brought the stars into existence on the fourth day, and the first star blinked on as its light reached earth four years later, it would have looked from earth as if God was not finished creating things.

It is easy to believe that God may have attached the words “He made the stars also” to the fourth day merely because that was the day when the starlight first became visible on earth. Just as the supernova, which actually occurred long before 1987, could be said to have occurred in 1987, local time, God could have timed the creation of the stars so that

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## Distant starlight in no way disproves a literal interpretation of the Genesis account.

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their light would have arrived on earth on the fourth day, making the time of their creation day four, local time. Perhaps the time convention used in Genesis is observed, or local time.

To summarize, we can’t prove why we can see the distant galaxies. God didn’t choose to tell us in His Word. Astronomy has not yet given a definite answer. But there are several possible explanations. The two best solutions are:

GTD – gravitational time dilation. Time may have flowed more slowly on earth.

ASC – alternate synchrony convention. Using the convention of “observed time,” light leaves the stars on day four and arrives at Earth on day four.

We conclude that distant starlight in no way disproves a literal interpretation of the Genesis account. We can be assured that God’s Word is true, from the very first chapter!

□

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Written by John Coblentz. Used with permission.*

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*Answering the upward call brings us into the way of discipleship. The way of discipleship is a process that takes time. It calls us to stop, step out of hurry, sit down, meditate, and study. This book, The Upward Call, is not a three-hour miracle course. Much rather it is a tool to help you grow and to apply the principles of God's Word to the challenges of real everyday life.*

*In the first three lessons, we explored God's call to follow Jesus. We studied what the call is and what it means to us. In Part 2, we considered some practical issues that face anyone who is serious about following Jesus. Part 3 brought us to a study of our responsibility to work with other members of God's kingdom, passing on the gifts He has shared with us. This lesson, Reaching the Lost, brings us to the end of our studies in The Upward Call.*

*Will you rise to the challenge of this upward climb with Jesus? It calls for courage. It demands discipline. But this walk also has a destination. Up there, forever with Him, we will seize the prize, and every difficulty we faced here will seem as nothing!*

## Lesson 12 **Reaching the Lost**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We live in a sinful world. The judgment of God is already passed on this world, and the judgment is unequivocal: this world will pass away and all sinners will be cast with Satan and his hosts into eternal perdition. God has provided a way of escape through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. And He has commissioned all disciples of Jesus to spread the word of redemption to those who do not know. This is the Gospel—the good news of salvation through Jesus.

It is impossible to be a follower of Jesus without hearing His call to become involved in reaching the lost. Disciples will be involved in different ways. Some will be called to focus their lifework on evangelism. Some will be organizers of the work. Some will give resources to help support the work. All can share their personal testimony with those around them in one-on-one encounters. And yet, while each individual may have his part, it takes the church—the living body—to reach the lost effectively. A sinner can see Jesus in a Christian, but the fullness of Jesus is revealed through His body.

Evangelism is more than leading people to receive Jesus; it includes “teaching them [literally, “discipling them”] to observe all things” that Jesus taught (Matthew 28:20). Reaching the lost, then, is more than getting people to confess their sinfulness; it is discipling them out of sinful practices and into the ways of God. It begins with reaching the sinner, and it continues with teaching and training him as a child of God and as a member of God’s family. Jesus came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10), and His church is commissioned to carry on the work in His name and by the power of His Holy Spirit.

## PERSONAL INVENTORY

1. In what specific ways have you been involved in reaching the lost?
2. In what areas of evangelism do you feel a personal need? (Vision? Understanding? Methods? Opportunities? etc.)
3. When was the last time you shared your faith with an unbeliever, and how did it go?
4. What specific plans does your congregation have for reaching out with the Gospel, and what has been your involvement?

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

*“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18–20).*

## **OBSERVATION #1: Evangelism has been authorized by the risen Son of God, and it has His unwavering support.**

When the Lord commissioned His disciples to go make other disciples, He did so after His earthly work of redemption had been completed. He had died and He had risen from the dead. He had conquered death and broken the power of sin and Satan. On the merits of His death and resurrection, He had received from the Father the “power” — the authority, the full rights — to be Lord of heaven and earth. By this authority, He commissioned His disciples to disciple. All the authorities in heaven must bow to this risen Son of God; all authorities on earth must bow to Him. Jesus has been given all power, and those who go forth go in His worthy name.

Those who go forth to evangelize in Jesus’ name have His unwavering support. “I am with you always,” the Lord says. The magnitude of that support is appreciated only when we lift our eyes to the heights to which Jesus ascended. He is Lord of all. He can command angels to attend His sent ones; He can command the hills to bring forth for their needs; He can command mountains to make a way for His disciples; He can still the storm, multiply the loaves, bless the children, curse the unproductive trees, and cleanse the corrupted temples. Thus, He did not leave us alone when He went to heaven. He is Lord of all, and by His Holy Spirit, He is with us always.

## **OBSERVATION #2: Evangelism rests entirely on the redemptive work of Jesus.**

Those who evangelize have one foundation on which to build. They do not build on their credentials, they do not build on their denomination, they do not build on their heritage. They build on the redemptive work of Jesus. Jesus died and rose from the dead. The evangelist is spreading this truth, showing men and women that this work of Jesus on their behalf is fully sufficient to change their eternal destiny.

It is important to note here that the redemptive work of Jesus includes both His death and resurrection. By His death, Jesus effectively made the sacrifice so that sins can be forgiven. By His resurrection from the dead, Jesus entered into the work of living “to make intercession for us.” He can save from sins past, and He can save “to the uttermost” (Hebrews 7:25). We need the Saviour’s



death on the cross to deliver us from the guilt of sin, and we need the Saviour's life in heaven to deliver us from the power of sin.

### **OBSERVATION #3: The essential call of evangelism is to make people disciples of Jesus.**

The translation loses some of the force in the original language. The emphasis of the commission in the English is on the first word, "Go." The Greek conveys more the idea of "going," so that the emphasis actually falls on the next imperative, "Teach!" In other words, "In your going, teach." The word translated "teach" is translated elsewhere as "disciple." In our going, we are to disciple others; that is, we are to cause them to be disciples of Jesus.

Evangelism is not something done primarily in remote areas, but rather, it is something done in the normal round of going. Wherever we go, we are under commission to make disciples. This will certainly take some to areas far away, but it will happen wherever God's children are. Every Christian is going, and every Christian is an evangelist. Every church is a mission church. As congregations grow, it is right that they reach out to other areas by sending missionaries. The mother church, however, is no less a mission church — she must continue the work of discipling people for Jesus.

### **OBSERVATION #4: To disciple people means to cause them to walk according to the teachings of Jesus.**

Jesus came as a revelation of the Father. The Law revealed God in word; Jesus revealed God in life. Jesus did not destroy the Law, but rather, He showed us the full intent and purpose of God's Law. Thus, Jesus' teachings and His example become for us the expression of the Father's will for our lives. Disciples of Jesus will want to know what He said. They will study His teachings. They will view Jesus as their model for living.

Following Jesus is not merely academic, however. It is not textbook learning only. The disciple of Jesus learns to walk according to Jesus' teachings, yes; but in spirit, he learns to walk with Jesus Himself.

In discipleship, zealous people can fall into a trap on two sides by emphasizing one truth against another. Some will emphasize the teachings of Jesus as a catechism to the neglect of the living

relationship with Jesus in the heart. They know the doctrine. They teach the doctrine. Outwardly they follow the doctrine. But their hearts are sterile of true life. Others (often in reaction to doctrine without life) will emphasize the inner relationship to the neglect of sound doctrine. They scoff at doctrine. They equate structured teaching, careful interpretation, and godly application with legalism. To them it matters not so much that Christians believe the same thing, but only that Christians can testify of inner life. The Christian life is left to the interpretation of every man according to his personal experience. The unfortunate result of both errors is drift from true discipleship.

The truth is that we need to know and study and live by the teachings of Jesus even while we live in spiritual union with Him. It is in living relationship with Jesus that the beauty and rightness of His teachings are made known. And it is in living by His teachings that we come to know Him better and love Him more dearly.

### **Study Questions**

1. What is the meaning of the Greek word translated “power” in Matthew 28:18? How does it compare with the Greek word translated “power” in Acts 1:8?

2. What does “all authority” mean in relation to Jesus? How do the following passages further help us to understand the authority that has been given to Jesus?

a. Ephesians 1:19-20   b. Philippians 2:9-11   c. Colossians 2:15

3. Read the Great Commission in several other translations. What additional insights do you receive?

4. What is the purpose of baptism in making disciples?

5. What teachings of Jesus are commonly neglected in discipleship today?

6. List examples from the New Testament that show that Jesus was “with” those who did as He instructed. What examples do you find of His authority?

*“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).*

## **OBSERVATION #5: The work of evangelism calls for the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.**

To disciple people for Jesus means they must be made alive spiritually. It also means they need spiritual growth—an ongoing inner spiritual work of sanctifying the heart and shaping the character. Accomplishing these things involves disciplers, but the actual work is a work of God. The Apostle Paul expressed it thus, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6). Every part of the work, therefore, must have the anointing and direction of the Holy Spirit. Every discipler must be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The first disciples were told to wait in Jerusalem for the anointing. The need was all around them. The need was all the time. But the first lesson in evangelism is that it is God’s work. It takes God’s power. No one can bring others to Jesus apart from the power of God. No one can testify effectively without that power. No one can lead them onward in spiritual progress except God is working and moving by His power.

This is humbling. We are not sufficient for the work of evangelism. We must have God.

## **OBSERVATION #6: When evangelism is empowered by the Holy Spirit, it spreads.**

Notice outward movement of Acts 1:8—Jerusalem (the birthplace of the church), Judea (the immediate surrounding area), Samaria (next-door territory, both in location and in culture), and then, out to all the world. What Jesus described here is verified in the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit came upon the believers at Pentecost in that upper room in Jerusalem. Daily, for some time, the assembly was limited to Jerusalem—in the temple, in homes, but always under the powerful, Spirit-filled teaching of the apostles. More came to the Lord and were added to the church. As the group grew, so grew the opposition. Finally, it broke out in the stoning of Stephen and in Saul’s hate-filled campaign against all followers of Jesus. The believers were scattered, and like flaming fragments of a growing fire, wherever the believers went out, they spread the Gospel. Instead of putting out the fire, the scattering only increased it. Into Judea it went, into Samaria, and then, under the direction of the Holy Spirit,

it broke out into the Gentile community at Antioch, and from there Saul, converted from church hating, was sent out to evangelize in new communities. The fire spread all over Rome.

Such is the effect of the Gospel under the direction of the Spirit. It grows. It spreads. It cannot be contained under a basket, confined to one person, one family, one community, one race, or one culture. It breaks through man-made limitations and surprises our expectations. It is indeed a work of God.

### **OBSERVATION #7: The Holy Spirit causes people to testify of Jesus.**

While this may seem like an obvious point by this time in our study, we pause to note this because sometimes when the Spirit is working, people get sidetracked.

“Ye shall receive power” rings pleasantly in our ears. We are drawn to power. Our eyes open when we see miracle-working demonstrations of God. Unfortunately, even very carnal people can get excited about the power described in Acts 1:8. We would like to run around doing great things and telling exciting stories.

The Holy Spirit is not impressed with the ambitions of the natural man. His work is to lift up Jesus. His empowering is for those who have renounced self and are wholly taken up with Jesus. When our desire is only to exalt Jesus, when our burden is to testify to those who have not heard, when our yearning personally is to know Him better each day, the Holy Spirit is willing to come upon us, move within us, and speak through us. He will take our words and make them trumpet blasts of the Gospel. He will take our weaknesses and turn them into powerful messages of Christ’s grace. He will energize and fill and accomplish beyond our awareness, until the only reasonable response from us is “not I, but Christ.”

### ***Study Questions***

1. What kind of power was promised here? How is it essential to the task of witnessing?

2. What examples can you give of people wanting power, even spiritual power, for wrong motivations? How does Acts 8:19 show this danger?

3. What does it mean to be a witness of Jesus?

4. The Greek word translated “witness” is also translated “martyr” at times. What does this add to your understanding of this promise?

5. What is your Jerusalem? Judea? Samaria?

6. Are there areas in the “uttermost part of the earth” that still need the Gospel?

7. Try to determine as clearly as you can how long the work of witnessing was largely in Jerusalem. How many years was it until the Gospel was preached in Samaria? How long was it until there was an organized effort to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles? How does the passage of years and the activity of the apostles during those years help us to understand effective evangelism today?

*“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.... And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts 16:6–10).*

## **OBSERVATION #8: Evangelism calls for sensitivity to the Holy Spirit’s direction.**

We are limited in our vision. We don’t know the future. We don’t even know many things about the present. If we were on our own, the work of saying the right things at the right time to the right people would be largely guesswork. The Holy Spirit doesn’t operate by guesswork. He knows the heart. He knows the time. He knows the words that will be effective. Those who would do the work of the Lord must have hearts and ears that are tuned to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit’s direction may sometimes go against our ideas. It sounds strange indeed to read that Paul and his companions were “forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.” But

God knows all things. He is always right. A woman named Lydia needed Paul at a certain day by a certain river in Macedonia. An exploited slave girl needed him another day on a certain street. And a jail keeper needed to hear the Gospel at a certain time of the night. The Lord directed Paul to these people through various means, but through it all Paul could not glory in his insight—he went by the Lord’s direction.

Learning to hear the inner voice of the Spirit is important for every believer. Those who are carnal are easily misled (recall Lesson 8, the section on impressions). As we walk in step with Jesus, we can trust Him to guide us.

### **OBSERVATION #9: Evangelism carried out under the direction of the Holy Spirit is effective.**

When we are faithful in obeying the voice of the Spirit, He is faithful in doing His part. Lydia was saved, the slave girl was delivered, the jailer and his household were baptized, and a church was established at Philippi.

These results are not a tribute to Paul but to the Lord. He gives the increase.

### **Study Questions**

1. On a map, trace out the regions of Paul’s preaching activity in Acts 16:6-10. How does this area compare to his work in his first missionary journey?
2. When in Paul’s ministry did he go to those regions in Asia that he was here told not to go into?
3. What new territory was opened up by the call from Macedonia?
4. List specifically the people who were brought to the Lord after Paul went into Europe. List also the places where churches were established. What do these responses tell about the wisdom of the Spirit’s leading?

*“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body*



*of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11–13).*

**OBSERVATION #10: Evangelism is a function within the church that calls for the contribution of each member and cooperation of the whole body.**

The work of making people disciples of Jesus is a church work. Many members have a part in the salvation and spiritual growth of any one believer. For example, a man may look back on all of the following: someone's personal testimony first brought him under conviction, another's life verified the truth of the Gospel, someone else may have given him a Gospel tract, still another person actually led him to repentance and faith in Christ, church leaders instructed him, and numerous others prayed with him, held Bible studies, gave encouragement, worked alongside of him in worship and service opportunities, and as he grew, the church assigned him spiritual responsibilities that stimulated growth. Who discipled this Christian? The answer is that the church did.

When we come to faith in Christ, we come into the assembly of believers, and every member becomes the means of nurturing, shaping, and bringing us to maturity in Christ.

May God give us not only Spirit-filled evangelists, but Spirit-filled assemblies to disciple people for Jesus till He comes.

### **Study Questions**

1. Look at the different gifts named in Ephesians 4:11. By studying the words, write a definition for each gift and tell how that gift is necessary in the work of discipling people for Jesus.

2. From the New Testament, give several examples of each gift mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. What were the specific results of their discipling others?

3. List the goals of exercising these gifts, as described in Ephesians 4:12, 13.

4. What different words are used in this passage to describe spiritual progress? Check the meaning of these words in the original language, or read the passage in several other translations. What do you learn?

5. This passage is actually describing the maturing process of the church, not an individual Christian. How does this concept add to your understanding of the passage? In what way does a group mature spiritually? What are the results if a group stays spiritually immature?

6. Think of the church as a body. How does it take the whole church (not just an individual) to do the will of Jesus? How does it take the whole church (not just an individual) to show Jesus to the world? (See John 17:23.)

## **APPLYING THE SCRIPTURE**

1. How can Christians sometimes lose sight of the authority of Jesus, and how does this affect the work of discipling people for Jesus? What are some ways this can be regained?

2. Paul said he became all things to all men to win them to Christ. How does this principle apply to evangelism today in America? How does it apply to Americans going to Guatemala or Haiti or Africa?

3. What methods are most effective in reaching American unbelievers? What methods are not as effective here (which may be effective in other settings)?

4. How can believers work together in evangelism and discipleship? What are ways we can sharpen vision, encourage participation, and develop skill in reaching the lost?

5. What are some essentials for the church to be effective in evangelism and discipleship? What attitudes in the church are especially harmful to the work of evangelism? Is it possible to develop a “closed-circle” mentality in a congregation in such a way that people who are seeking spiritual fellowship do not feel welcome? How does such a problem develop, and what can be done to help it?

6. How should we feel about unreached areas in our world today? What might we be doing more effectively? How might we go about making plans to reach these areas? To what extent should we join with other groups who are targeting unreached areas?

7. How can we encourage and support workers in other places? What can we do for missionaries in Central America, for example? Would there be ways to support them more effectively?



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A photograph of a forest with tall, slender trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a dappled light effect on the ground. The ground is covered with fallen leaves, mostly in shades of brown and orange. The trees are mostly bare, with some green leaves still visible in the upper canopy. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

# Into the Light

William Ferris Billington  
CCI—Cheshire, Cheshire, CT

A voice is calling softly  
From the stillness of the night.  
God's peace and joy will follow  
When you walk into His light.

I'd leave behind my sadness,  
Tear off this fake disguise,  
And stop the war that's raging  
Between my tears and eyes.

No longer will I travel  
A road that has no end.  
No sign ahead will tell me,  
Go back and start again.

I've found what I've been missing—  
It's Jesus in my life.  
Let peace surround my body  
When I walk into God's light.



“Be filled with the Spirit... giving  
thanks always for all things unto God  
and the Father in the name of our  
Lord Jesus Christ.” *Ephesians 5:18b, 20*

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