

# Loaves & Fishes


Volume 5 • Issue 2 • 2007

Personal Responsibility • 6

Free on the Inside • 11

The Emotion of Anger • 38

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



Larry W. Feathers  
Lansing Correctional Facility  
Lansing, Kansas

# My Shadow

Each morning while the earth revolves  
The light from darkness soon evolves.  
My shadow lies from east to west  
And moves until I stop to rest.

Although this shadow does not last,  
What kind of shadow do I cast  
On those who cross my path each day  
Desiring help along their way?

Will they find refuge from life's storm?  
Rest in a place that's safe and warm?  
Will what I share be straight and true  
To help them, safely, make it through?

Will those in darkness see the light  
Because I chose to do the right?  
Will things I do and words I say  
Direct them to the only Way?

When others fall on shifting sand,  
Will I be there to lend a hand?  
To lift them onto solid ground  
Where constant safety can be found?

For Jesus shed His light on me;  
From sin and shame He set me free.  
The shadow cast upon my soul  
Has cleansed and made me fully whole.

Now in the shadow of the Cross  
I'll be concerned about the lost.  
And as they cross my path each day,  
They won't see me, but see the Way.

As someone in my shadow stands,  
They'll find the hope of helping hands  
Because the shadow cast on me  
Is Jesus Christ of Calvary.



# Loaves & Fishes

Volume 5 • Issue 2 • 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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## *In this issue. . .*

To Gain and Lose God's Pardon.....	2
Bible Reading – Matthew 18:21–35.....	5
Understanding the Bible	
Personal Responsibility.....	6

### **Free on the Inside (11–27)**

The Man Who Shot John Lennon .....	11
Secure Possessions .....	16
The Power of God (Poem) .....	17
I Thank Thee, Lord (Poem).....	18
God's Hospital.....	19
God Is (Poem).....	19
Who's the One? (Poem).....	20
Testimony of Charles J. Manganaro...	21
A Talk With God (Poem) .....	22
Restore Me, Lord (Poem) .....	23
Testimony of Kristy Martinez .....	24
The Lord Is My Shepherd (Poem) .....	25
Jesus, the Chief of Servants.....	26

### The Spiritual War

Battling Sin in Our Homes.....	28
Science in Creation	
Seeds on a Journey .....	32
The Puzzle Corner .....	36
Putting off Anger	
The Emotion of Anger.....	38
The Pursuit of Godly Seed	
Bible Pictures of a Godly Home.....	47
Word Search Puzzle	
Bible Men and Women.....	58
Pilgrim's Progress (Part 13) .....	59

*Loaves & Fishes* Response Form .....

*Inside Front Cover:* My Shadow (Poem)

*Inside Back Cover:* Jesus and I (Poem)

*From someone who cares...*

## To Gain and Lose God's Pardon

Lavern Gingerich



**D**read and anxiety grip his heart. Reckoning day has come. Trembling at the thought of his enormous debt, he realizes that, though he should slave endlessly for the rest of his life, this 10,000 talent debt would only mock him. Even selling himself, his wife, children, and all that he has will never satisfy the demands of his king.

I can only imagine the thoughts and feelings that seemed to overwhelm this man as he realized his helplessness and the implications of not paying his debt. His fate was sealed. There was no undoing wrong choices; it was done, and reckoning day loomed ahead of him.

Picture yourself as this servant, and consider the debt you owe God. Working 300 days a year as a day laborer, it would have taken 20 years to earn one talent. If we subtract his living expenses, this means he could not have paid his debt in 200,000 years! Even if we assume that he

earned ten times this wage as a servant over other servants, it would have taken a staggering 20,000 years to pay this huge debt. This accumulation of debt was totally out of his reach to repay. So it is with each of us. Your sin debt is as that 10,000 talent mortgage with no possible way of ever paying the loan.

When it was told the king that this servant did not have



**Your sin debt is as that  
10,000 talent mortgage  
with no possible way of  
ever paying the loan.**

**Have you felt that unbearable burden of sin roll off your back?**



the means to pay his debt, he ordered for him, his wife, children, and possessions to be sold and payment to be made toward his debt.

Jesus continues the parable in Matthew 18 by saying, *"The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all"* (v. 26). This servant took the best path he could ever have taken, that of lowering himself before his king and pleading for mercy. This is the path we too must take. The downward path of humility is the only way up to grace.

The Lord is full of pity and mercy toward those who are in distress. We may come boldly to the throne of grace and receive mercy from God. We don't need to be ashamed, *"for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:12, 13).

*"Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt"* (v. 27). What a forgiveness was granted that day to the humble servant who came, begging for mercy! The king's heart was touched by his sincerity, and suddenly, he was free! Yes, free indeed!

Do you know the wonderful freedom of Christ's forgiveness toward you? Have you felt that unbearable burden of sin roll off your back and down to the foot of the cross? Jesus said, *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"* (John 8:36). There is no bondage or oppression that the power of Jesus cannot deliver you from if you will humbly call upon the Lord for mercy.

It seems that such newfound freedom should cause one to freely pass on the forgiveness he received to those who wrong him. But the parable goes on to say that this servant went out

and found another servant he worked with who owed him 100 pence (or about 100 days' wages). He took this fellow-servant by the throat, demanding him to pay his debt immediately. This poor servant fell down at his feet, begging, "Have patience with me, and I will pay my debt!" The heartless servant would not hear his plea, but rather had him arrested and put in prison until he should pay the debt in full.

When the king discovered what this unmerciful servant had done, he told him, "You wicked servant, I forgave all your debt because you wanted me to; now should you not have had compassion on your fellow-servant, even as I had pity on you?" Then in anger, the king delivered him to the tormentors until he should pay his 10,000 talent debt.

What is the lesson Jesus wants us to learn from this parable? He concludes by saying, "*So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses*" (v. 35). The lesson is for those of us who have received God's forgiveness and experienced the freedom of a fresh new walk with Jesus Christ. God in His great love and mercy has forgiven us and

on our bill has written "PAID IN FULL." This wonderful truth causes my heart to overflow with praise to Him! But let us remember the parable. In a short time, that servant who found such great deliverance was not only back in bondage under the weight of his debt, but also in the hands of cruel tormentors who would not give him rest until he paid the debt that he could never pay.

You may have a great testimony of deliverance, but do you forgive those who wrong you? God's forgiveness toward you is dependant on your forgiveness toward other people. If you will not forgive, God will void your pardon. You must choose the path of forgiveness if you will be saved.

Many of you still carry deep pain in your hearts from past hurts, and it is only by God's grace that you can forgive. But remember your 10,000 talent debt that God has forgiven! Choose, in gratitude, to also release those who have wronged you. God will help you if you allow Him to.

*"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy"* (Matthew 5:7). God has promised that you will obtain mercy when you show mercy. May each of you obtain that mercy! □



## **Bible Reading**

*Matthew 18:21–35*

<sup>21</sup>Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? <sup>22</sup>Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

<sup>23</sup>Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. <sup>24</sup>And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. <sup>27</sup>Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup>But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him

an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. <sup>29</sup>And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. <sup>30</sup>And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

<sup>31</sup>So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: <sup>33</sup>Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? <sup>34</sup>And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. <sup>35</sup>So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.



# 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.*

## **Personal Responsibility**

**P**ersonal responsibility is an important building block in the Christian faith that must be set to experience freedom on the inside.

### **Sin**

1 John 3:4 tells us that sin is the transgression (breaking) of the

law. This includes not only the law of God, but also every law of the land that doesn't contradict the principles of the Christian life. You are responsible to take the blame for every sin you have committed, regardless of who else was involved. I refer to this as "owning your sin." The Bible says, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).

Often when I speak with someone who visits a prison or writes to a prisoner, they tell me that nearly every prisoner they communicate with claims to be innocent. But I have been there, and even if there are a few minor discrepancies in the case, the majority of us are guilty. Your unwillingness to "own your sin" is proof that you are not being personally responsible. This one thing has kept untold numbers from truly coming to God thru Jesus Christ, and because of it, they sink back into the depths of sin and depravity. Regardless of whether you came from a broken or abusive home, the poor or

the rich side of town, the hood, or the barrio, or used drugs and alcohol; you are responsible before God for your sins.

Friend, Jesus did not die to pay for the things you are falsely accused of. He died for your sins! Until you own your sin and see yourself undeserving of mercy, you are not ready to receive the atoning work of Jesus on the cross. *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:8, 9).

When you agree with God concerning your sin, He will open your eyes to things that must change in your life, such as thought patterns, lifestyle, and friends. You will discover that you are powerless to change on our own. But this is where God wants you! It is then that He looks down from heaven in fatherly love and

pours out His Spirit with the power you need to live the victorious life of the redeemed!

Recognizing that we are helpless, causes us to depend more on God and His Word and less on ourselves. After all, let's be honest. It was *you* that got *you* where *you* are today. The good news is that Jesus wants to make you into someone you could never become on your own!

### **Forgiveness**

All of us must forgive to be forgiven by God. *“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses”* (Matthew 6:14, 15).

Many of you have been hurt, let down, neglected, and forsaken in your growing up years. Often it is the people we love the most that hurt us the worst. I know



**You are responsible  
to take the blame for  
every sin you have  
committed.**

from experience what it's like to turn pain and sorrow into anger and bitterness, and to let them transform a tender heart into a hard heart. If this is your past, you cannot change it, but the future lies ahead and with Jesus there is hope. He is ready to forgive you, live in you, and change you! He has promised to give you a clean heart and make you into a new man, but He says that you must forgive *everyone* that has ever wronged you. *"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses"* (Mark 11:25, 26). Nothing can exempt you from this responsibility.

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful bondage-breaking, chain-snapping, peace-giving, love-building commands God has ever given! It may seem difficult and impossible, but you don't have to do it alone. The Lord will never call you to do something that He will not enable you to do by prayer, His grace, and His Holy Spirit.

Friend, if there is anyone that you have not forgiven and possibly even blame for your problems, it is time to forgive them. Jesus Christ died for your sins so that

you can be forgiven, and you will never deserve His forgiveness and love. In the same fashion, you need to forgive all, despite their unworthiness and regardless of whether they ever forgive you.

On the other side of forgiveness is your responsibility to humbly and sincerely ask forgiveness from all those whom you have hurt, abused, neglected, or forsaken. This often cannot be done without first forgiving them because, when they remind you of your past faults and seek to lecture you, the temptation will rise to defend yourself and point back to their failures and how they contributed to the problem. Don't do it, but take personal responsibility for all you have done without getting caught up in the blame game. Remember, *you* are the one seeking to be forgiven.

*"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift"* (Matthew 5:23, 24).

### **Holy Living**

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adul-*

*terers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"* (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

As a believer, you must choose to keep yourself from sin. God will empower you by His Spirit, guide you by His word, and provide support through His church (other Christians). *"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"* (Ephesians 4:22-24).

*"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Hebrews 9:14). Living a holy life is more than a command or calling; it is the result of a vital relationship with God. The Chris-

tian who before sat in darkness bound by the chains of sin, is now free in Christ! This is why Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"* (John 8:12). Regardless of who you are, what you have done, or where you came from, when Jesus Christ sets you free, you are truly free! You can have a clear conscience, an open heaven, and a freedom in your relationship with God that can only be had between our wonderful Father and His children.

Let's consider a few of the enemies of living a holy life. 1 John 5:21 says, *"Keep yourselves from idols."* The television is an idol for so many in today's society. It spews its evil into the hearts and minds of millions everyday. Murder, adultery, lust, theft, and Satanic powers are just a few of the vile pictures painted before its audience. You cannot sit in front of this tool of the devil without it affecting your thoughts, morals, and beliefs.

The mind is a powerful tool that can be used for good or evil. A mind under the command of

**Every believer must choose to  
keep himself from sin.**

the Holy Spirit and directed by the word of God is a force to be reckoned with in building the Kingdom of God. In the same way a mind under the sway of the enemy (the world, flesh, and devil) is a force of destruction that tears at the very core of Christianity.

You must carefully guard your thoughts and imaginations. Meditate on God's Word and commit verses, passages, and even whole chapters to memory. This will give you ammunition to use in times of spiritual warfare. *"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5).

Never forget that as a believer you are dead to sin and called to a life of sacrifice. *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord"* (Romans 6:11). *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Romans 12:1).

You are called to a life of separation, leaving behind the things that had power over you and kept you from truly living for Jesus.

*"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light"* (Romans 13:12). *"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Corinthians 7:1).

You will develop an earnest desire to live a godly, separated life as you walk with God in His word and through prayer. Don't be self-conscious about praying every morning and night. Use your time to the honor and glory of God. Learn to stand with Jesus uncompromisingly now, so that when the storms of life rage, you will be able to stand by faith, having proven your Lord in the times of peace.

Finally, you are called to a life of faithful service to the Lord Jesus Christ and to follow His example in faith, life, and ultimately, in death. *"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour"* (John 12:26).

God has not forgotten about you and He cares for you!

*"Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die"* (Psalm 79:11).





## **Free on the Inside!**

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

# **The Man Who Shot John Lennon**

## **The Inside Story of Mark David Chapman**

Attica Prison > Attica, New York

*I wore a long coat, that night of December 8, 1980. In my pocket rested a .38 caliber revolver. Up and down the asphalt in front of the Dakota building I paced, waiting.*

### **Missing Something**

I was born in Fort Worth in 1955. My dad was an Air Force Sergeant and my mom was a nurse. I grew up and went to school in Decatur, Georgia. I joined the Boy Scouts, tried going to Sunday School, and didn't get into serious trouble. But it was the 60's, the hippie movement was in full swing, and at 14, I began using drugs and listening to rock music. I even dropped out of school for awhile. For two years, I

searched for happiness in all the places I knew to look, but something was always missing. At 3:00 a.m. one morning after a rock concert, I was arrested just a block from my home, and when my father came to pick me up, I saw him cry for the first time in my memory.

### **A Religious Experience?**

My friend Jim once invited me to a weekend "getaway" with his church, at a youth camp in northern Georgia. That night at the peaceful camp by the lake they showed a film about knowing Jesus. Like everyone I knew, I believed in Jesus from Scout meetings and Sunday school classes, but only as a historical

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figure who might be watching me from somewhere far away, not as someone who was interested in being my friend. I was sure a “religious experience” wasn’t for me. Still, there was something different about this Jesus who wanted me to actually know Him, and it intrigued me.

One unforgettable night I was alone at my grandmother’s house in Daytona Beach, Florida. It had been a rough day; I was out of drugs, I was friendless, and I was lonely. There seemed to be no purpose at all to my life. I lay on the living room sofa, reaching my hands toward heaven with my eyes closed, grasping desperately for the hope I had heard about

that could replace my pain. Suddenly, there in that room so quiet that I could hear the clock ticking, I met Jesus. It hadn’t taken any special religious experience at all; I simply called out to Him, and He answered. He was real, and I knew He had accepted me.

### **Cooling Off**

I had met Jesus, but as the rest of my teen years went by, the wonder of what had happened to me wore off, and life went on as usual. I graduated from high school, moved a couple of times, and eventually forgot about God altogether. My life was working at the YMCA, teaching guitar lessons, and driving my 1965 Chevy. I thought I was happy, but I could tell I was missing something again—something precious that I had left behind.

My emptiness, and the knowledge that I had thrown away a better life, gnawed at me, and I began running from myself. I lost my sense of responsibility, and began sinking into darkness and despair.

I went to school at a small college, but I felt like a nobody; my mind was a mess and I couldn’t keep on, so I returned to Georgia and got a job as a security guard. The job fit my self-image, and I worked long

night hours. I guarded others and neglected myself, drifting aimlessly through life instead of searching for a way out, a way I knew is only found in Jesus.

Depression swallowed me like a black cloud. I was a nobody, lost in a dead-end job. Full of anger and paranoia at people around me, I began to fight and argue with my buddy and my girlfriend. I withdrew from my friends and family.

In May of 1977, I sold my things, bought a one-way ticket to Hawaii, and made plans to end my miserable life. I found a quiet place on the coast, hooked a cheap vacuum cleaner hose to my car's exhaust pipe, and sat inside with the engine running, glad that everything would soon be over.

My plan failed, and some time later I was awakened by a concerned fisherman. Bothered by what I had tried to do, I drove back down the highway, seeking help. I found my way to a hospital called Castle, and was admitted to its newly-opened psychiatric unit, where I slept for three days.

### **Better Times**

The Castle was well named, for it seemed a strong refuge of warmth and humanity, and the people there truly cared about

me. Under their care, my clouds lifted, and I eventually got a job at the Castle as a housekeeper. It was a lowly job, but I soon felt steady and well. I made plans to achieve my goal of travelling around the world, and about a year later, I had succeeded. The woman who had arranged all this soon became my wife.

It seemed that my life was back on track; I had a good job, I had travelled the world, and I had a wonderful spouse to share it all with. But although I felt as though I was back on my feet, I was still deeply in need of help.

### **I Had Lost My Mind**

I quit my housekeeping job and started printing for the hospital. The long hours over the printing press began to take their toll on me, and things went downhill. Again I grew lonely and depressed. Again, I drifted away from my friends. Again, I felt sick and horrible.

I began drinking to escape my feelings. Finally, after an argument with one of the nursing supervisors, I was asked to leave the hospital. I tried to find a job, but I thought a security post was the only job that suited the nobody I felt I had become.

Twice in two months I left my home in Honolulu to come to

New York City. I was on a mission to kill John Lennon, but the first time, I changed my mind and returned home. The second time, I would not fail. I arrived at LaGuardia Airport the morning of December 6, 1980, and got a room ten minutes from the Dakota building on West 72nd Street, where John and Yoko Lennon lived.

My mind was consumed with a diabolical plan, and I was here to carry it out. I had a .38 caliber revolver I brought from Hawaii and ammunition I got in Georgia. Inside me, a battled raged. One inner voice still told me to go home and forget it; another voice insisted, "Do it. Do it."

### **"Is That All You Want?"**

John Lennon took the *Double Fantasy* album I held out, motioned to me for a pen, and wrote "John Lennon, 1980." The revolver was heavy in my coat pocket, but I couldn't bring myself to reach for it. Lennon smiled, handed the album back and asked, "Is... is that all you want?" My throat was dry. "Thanks," I muttered, "thanks, John." Dumbfounded, I watched him walk away. The voice screamed at me, telling me I was a coward, a failure who had missed my chance at greatness. On the other hand, I was

pleased to have John Lennon's autograph, and I told myself that should be enough. Maybe I should just go back to Hawaii and forget the whole thing. But the voice still haunted me: "Do it. You're here. Just do it."

I stayed.

### **Obeying the Voice**

I was waiting when John Lennon and his wife returned to the Dakota in their limousine at 11:00 p.m. that night. The back door of the limousine opened and Yoko got out. She walked up the driveway and under the archway toward the steps.

John Lennon climbed out of the limousine. I thought he recognized me, and he didn't smile. He walked past me and hurried under the archway after Yoko. His back was to me, and the voice said: "Do it! Do it! Do it! Do it! Do it!" I aimed at his back and pulled the trigger five times.

A doorman shook the gun from my hand and kicked it across the driveway. "Please leave—please," he said with tears in his eyes. But I couldn't; where would I go?

Later, I slumped in the back seat of a police car, terrified, as police and emergency workers swarmed over the scene. How could I have caused this chaos? Would a fan kill me before they

took me away? I sank lower in the seat. Maybe nobody would notice me.

### **My Fault**

The death of John Lennon was no one's fault but my own. I wasn't on drugs. I wasn't the crazed fan some people tried to label me in an effort to understand. I had become so lost inside myself, so self-deluded, so desperate, that I tried to become a "somebody" by ending the life of a man I didn't even know.

### **Free at Last**

Today I am not the same Mark Chapman. When the doorman ordered me away from the Dakota, I said, "Where would I go?" Now I know where to go: I have the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not perfect, but I am close to the Lord now, and I finally understand why I did what I did and the grief it caused. I am not "copping out" or trying to gain sympathy. I still grieve over what I have done, but the thing that keeps me going is Christ! Without Him, I know I would be dead. He has forgiven me, not because of anything I have done, but because of the cross. He bore that horrible sin with Him on the tree, and now I won't have to pay the eternal penalty for it.

**I had become so lost inside myself... that I tried to become a "somebody" by ending the life of a man I didn't even know.**



Today, I am trying to walk in the strength and power of Christ. I no longer wrestle with demons inside me. There are evil spiritual forces in the world, but I have nothing to fear from them anymore because Jesus the Light lives inside of me. He is all I need here in prison and in my life, and He is the one Friend Who will never leave you or fail you.

Once I asked Satan to help me commit a crime, a crime I deeply regret. Now God frees me from those traps and lies. He can free you from any darkness that is threatening you.

I know He will forgive you. He died for anyone who is willing to call out to Him. Will you,

like me, recognize that you are lost without Christ? Life is too short to fool around. Make Jesus your Savior today!

*“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18).*

*“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37).*

*“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).*



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**“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Romans 8:35, 37

## *Secure Possessions*

Layla Traylor, Payne County Jail, Stillwater, Oklahoma

You can take away my freedom;  
You can take away my life;  
*But you can't take away my Lord Jesus Christ.*

You can put me in a cell and throw away the key;  
*But you can't take away the peace that lives inside of me.*

You can take away my baby girls and my baby boys;  
*But you can't take away my God-given joys.*

You can tell evil lies and persecute me;  
*But you can't take away the Holy Spirit,  
which has already set me free.*



## *The Power of God*

Martin Cszaszar > Hill Correctional Center > Galesburg, Illinois

God has impacted my life in a big way;  
Without Him, I would not be peaceful and humble today;  
    Without His love, I would not know how to love others.  
    I would only be hateful, bitter, and haunted by sorrows.

God has changed my life; He changed everything about me;  
It's so sad that through prison life this all had to be.  
    God gave me a new heart, a new life, a new purpose;  
    He opened my eyes to see His ways for me, and how I can  
    be at His service.

God took my fear, my anger, my depression;  
He turned it into love, hope, and non-aggression.  
    The Lord guides me and protects me each and every day;  
    He watches over me daily and leads me to go His way.

Life behind bars is awful; it's filled with violence, hatred, and anger.  
Thank God that His hand is upon me, and He keeps me away from  
danger.

    No matter what happens to me each day,  
    I know He guides my steps and helps me along my way.

Since God is with me, His presence through this all  
Frees my soul, my spirit, taking me really far.  
    In bondage I'm being held, but just for a little while;  
    My mind has been set free; in God's time, my body will follow.



## *I Thank Thee, Lord*

Franky Hamilton > Bostick State Prison > Hardwick, Georgia

For every day that I arise,  
I thank Thee from the start;  
For friends and family near and far,  
Who have settled in my heart.

For all the blessings I so cherish,  
I thank Thee, Lord above;  
For faith and hope and charity,  
And the greatest one is love.

For the strength and courage I possess,  
I thank thee, Lord with prayer;  
For even in the darkest times,  
I know that you were there.

For all the kindness shown to me,  
I thank thee King of kings;  
For the beauty of this world  
And its many splendorous things.

And as I lay me down to sleep,  
This, oh Lord, I pray,  
Keep safe my soul should I not wake  
To one more glorious day.

# God's Hospital

Stephen Hunter > Arizona State Prison Complex  
Florence, Arizona

**P**rison is God's hospital. I know that may sound crazy, but let's admit we were not doing right on the outside or we would not be here. Prison was the only way to slow some of us down long enough to listen. Now that God has our attention, let's think about this: a lot that we must face up to starts right here in prison. So let us ask for forgiveness and allow the healing to begin. We've sinned against God; let us now repent.

Look around. Did you ever think you would end up here? Did you ever think you would get caught? Most of all, did you think you would become a witness for God? That's God's hospital; it heals if you let it. The Bible says,

*"All things work together for good to them that love God"* (Romans 8:28). Allow this prison to work for your good and for the good of those who love you. Let yourself become a blessing to others. That's what God wants.

I don't encourage anyone to come to prison or to do anything wrong, but while you are here, why not change? Let God's will be done. God loves everyone and doesn't want anyone to perish, but desires that all would come to repentance. Don't let Satan take you down anymore, but live in the name of Jesus, bring glory to God's name, and let the healing begin. After all, we are in God's hospital. □

## *God Is*

Louvenia Hayat > Central California Women's Facility  
Chowchilla, California

God is love from heaven above.

He gives us grace to run this race.

God is the end and your best Friend.

God is the One Who lifts us when we fall.



## *Who's the One?*

Jason Chavanel > Jackson, Louisiana

Who's the One you can go to  
When you don't have a clue?  
Jesus is the One  
Who will help you through.

He will be your Comforter  
Those times you need to rest  
When you don't know how  
You will get out of that mess.

He will be your Protector  
No matter your doubts or fears;  
He is always there  
To dry up all your tears.

He will be your Guide  
When you don't know the way;  
Let Him be the leader,  
And you will make it through the day.

He is your Savior,  
His precious blood He gave  
When He died on the cross  
And the road to heaven He paved.

Though this world is confusing,  
God has provided His Son  
To be our Everything—  
To be the One.

# Testimony of Charles J. Manganaro

Collier County Jail > Naples, Florida

I am writing to you because I am a New Testament Christian, and I recently accepted Jesus in this jail. I am incarcerated at Collier County Jail in Naples, Florida.

When I got here, I was only seventeen years old and felt extremely overwhelmed. It was my first time in jail, and I was scared. Then one Saturday I was up early, and the chaplain was holding church in the block. I walked down and started talking to her. She was very nice, and I was happy to talk with her. She didn't judge me like some of the guards do.

She started to talk about me and my sins, and asked if I was sorry for them. I told her that I was feeling guilty and was having suicidal thoughts. She showed me that suicide is one of the unforgivable sins, and that it is the only sin that is not forgivable besides blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. That day I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. It's been a difficult road, and I have been tempted and pushed by the devil. But I haven't given up.

One day the chaplain sent me a magazine called *Loaves and Fishes*. Hearing about people who were in the same boat as I am and are still praising God every day, sent my emotions sailing. The poems are what really touched me.

I'm locked up and can't even write my family; because of my past addictions, I can't remember their addresses. I've been through a lot, and I'm thankful that I ended up in jail and found God. Praise God I came here! The



**It's been a difficult road,  
but I haven't given up.**

people in my block who are fellow Christians help me keep my head up and stay strong. Even if I am sentenced and go up the road to prison, I'll still have God with me. He breaks these chains of confinement. □

## *A Talk With God*

Belinda Cochran > Robert Scott Correctional Facility  
Plymouth, Michigan

Though my path is often weary  
And a toilsome road I plod,  
All my burdens seem much lighter  
When I've had a talk with God.

I can cast on Him my sorrow;  
I can take to Him my fear;  
I can tell Him every heartache;  
I can feel His presence near.

And not only do I love Him;  
Greater wonder is that He loves me;  
And His love shall have no ending  
Now or through eternity.

Oh, why do I doubt Him  
When His love to me is true?  
When He's promised to go with me  
All this earthly journey through.

I could not go on without Him;  
He is all my hope and stay;  
And beneath His mighty shadow,  
Peace attends along the way.

If your life's a field of stubble,  
And your days just seem to plod,  
I can tell you what your trouble:  
Friend, you need a talk with God.



## *Restore Me, Lord*

Marcellus Baylor > Maryland Correctional Institution  
Hagerstown, Maryland

Restore me in You as I sit still;  
Fill me with the knowledge of Your will.

Build a strong faith in me toward You,  
And a desire for the things that You do.

Help me to bear fruit in my walk;  
Give me Your mind and show me how to talk.  
Give me the strength with Your heavenly power  
To be ready every day, every second, and hour.

Teach me to keep seeking the things above,  
Restored by Your Spirit, grace, discipline, and love.

Let me not forget that You love me,  
And that in my darkest moments I am free.

Move me to devote my life in prayer,  
Keeping me covered from all the devil's snares.

Show me how to apply Your word today  
As You guide my steps in Your special way.

Restore me, Lord, for the world to see  
A life of obedience and true humility.

# Testimony of Kristy Martinez

Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, and Correctional Center  
Vandalia, MO

**M**y life was filled with an unquenchable void. I grew up in an unstable environment with an addicted parent. I never knew where I would end up next as my mother moved from one relationship to the next. Eventually as an escape, I got married at fifteen and had three children by my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. They were all I ever thought I wanted. But they couldn't fill that void of loneliness I had felt ever since I could remember. Eventually, history repeated itself, and I became the person I swore I would never become. I cursed God and asked, "Why me? What have I done to deserve this life?"

After two years of allowing my addiction to control my life, I began to ask God for help. One day I was at the food pantry getting food after I had just spent my grocery money on drugs, and I met a lady named Alice. I began helping her translate for Spanish people seeking Christ, and I became interested myself. I wanted what Alice had — happiness. So I asked her if I could go to church. When I found out that all I had to do was confess my sins and simply ask for forgiveness, and God would take

away all my pain, and all the ugly sins of my past would be wiped away, I couldn't resist any longer!

I can't believe that I had even made it that far without Christ in my life! Getting saved didn't keep me from being punished for the crimes I had committed that finally caught up to me, but I have found peace and endurance behind these prison walls. God has filled my life with Christians and given me hope. I am no longer afraid of the future, nor do I worry about all the people and things I have lost. I now consider them to be my steppingstones, and the suf-



**I have found peace  
and endurance behind  
these prison walls.**

fering I had to go through to find Christ. God chose this path for my life before I was born.

Now when I have decisions to make, I stop and pray first and ask myself, "If Jesus were in this situation, what would He do?"

By no means am I saying my life is perfect now. There are many obstacles and temptations, but every step I take in the right direction takes me one step farther away from my sinful past.



## *The Lord Is My Shepherd*

Guy Wentz > Maryland Correctional Institution  
Hagerstown, Maryland

When I am helpless and hurting inside,  
The Lord is my Shepherd to guard and to guide;  
When my heart's empty, my wounded soul bleeds,  
I shall lack nothing; the Lord meets my needs.

When life seems confusing and out of control,  
He leads by the waters that quiet my soul;  
When the road is too rough, and I'm tired of the game,  
He guides me in paths that will honor His name.

When fear chokes my vision and shortens my breath,  
He's with me to walk through the shadow of death;  
Dejected, discouraged, unable to laugh,  
I find comfort beneath the Lord's rod and His staff.

I'm weak and unworthy with nothing to bring,  
But He prepares me a table; I dine with the King;  
I'm safe in His presence, unhurt by my foes,  
For His oil soothes my head and my cup overflows.

Through pressure and problems, in stress and in strife,  
His goodness and love fills the days of my life;  
The Lord's watchful care will not weaken or cease,  
And forever I'll dine at His table in peace.  
Forever I'll dwell with my Shepherd in peace.

# Jesus, the Chief of Servants

Michael D. Matthews

Monroe Correctional Center > Monroe, Washington

*“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:27, 28).*

**H**ave you ever stopped to think about why our Lord and Savior started from such humble beginnings as to be born in a manger? The Scriptures say it was because there was no room at the inn, but there has to be a deeper reason than that.

As I have grown and matured in the Spirit and the word of God, I have begun to understand that the verses of Scripture usually have more than one level of meaning. The verses concerning the birth of Jesus are no exception.

First, let us consider a few facts. This is the only Son of the most holy and powerful God. Surely God could have arranged for a room to be available for the birth of His Son. We know He has the power. After all, this is the same God Who parted the Red Sea so that His people could walk through on dry land – not muddy, but dry! This was the God who rained down fire and brimstone, turning Sodom and

Gomorrah into oversized parking lots. Surely God could have pulled a few strings and opened up a room at the local inn. However, the fact that Christ came into His earthly life by being born in a manger tells us a lot about Who He truly was and the kind of ministry He was to have in the future.

Being born in a manger shows an openness about our Lord. He was accessible to everyone, from the lowly stable hand to the high reaching wise men. There were no desk clerks or security guards screening the visitors; Christ was there for the people.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus remained open and available to the common man, for as He stated in Matthew 9:13, *“I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”* His words – *“Blessed are the poor... they that mourn... the meek... the merciful... the pure in heart... the peacemakers”* – are the outpouring of a loving and caring

heart. When He sent His fisherman and tax collector disciples into the world, Jesus instructed them to *“heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give”* (Matthew 10:8).

Christ would go anywhere needed in order to reclaim one (yes, even just one) of His lost sheep, even to the area of tombs to reclaim a man tormented by many unclean spirits. Jesus loves us all!

The Lord was not impressed with riches or possessions; He cared even less for pompous titles and positions. Jesus pretty much said it all when He said, *“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:27, 28). From the manger to the cross, Jesus was, and still is, always open to those who were in need – anyone, any place, any time.

The Creator of everything in creation became a servant in order to lead the lost back to



**Jesus is always  
open to those who  
are in need.**

salvation. Perhaps we should all take some time to reflect on the example that our Lord set for us, and then move on along a more serving path, for without Christ we are all still lost in our sins.

Jesus Christ was born with a destiny to die, to pay a debt He did not owe for sins He did not commit, in order to offer the gift of salvation to people, many of whom would not even be born for another thousand years.



## **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.



# The Spiritual War

Nathan Stilley



## *Battling Sin in Our Homes*

If a man marries a woman, shouldn't they be joined for life? Marriage should be entered with no provision for ending the relationship other than death. God has never given a right to divorce a partner, yet He has given advice on how to respond to a partner who has broken their vow. So it is with sin. Like divorce, sin was never meant to happen. Sin separates us from God, since it is only on the grounds of perfection that we may see Him. We have all sinned, so in order to bring us back to Him, God had to make a plan to separate us from our sin. Now He has given us advice on how to be reconciled after we have sinned.

Love is the glue that holds a man and woman together in marriage. Have you ever heard of a man marrying a woman on temporary terms until he finds

someone better? Until she is forty? No woman in her right mind would accept this kind of agreement. True love is a life-long commitment that remains true through good and bad times. In the same way, those who serve God must do so even when it brings persecution and suffering. Your relationship with God depends on your love for Him, not unconditional eternal security.

One man and one woman joined together by God equals marriage. God made it that way in the beginning. Yet because of his hard heart, man is often not able to live together in harmony with his wife. Adam, the first man, told God, "This woman You gave me is the problem," and men are still doing that today. So it is with many Christians. When man does not live according to God's law, he

blames the law of God instead of taking the blame himself. Because of his hard heart, man does not follow God; but God tells us that he wants to take out the hard heart and replace it with a heart of flesh (a soft heart).

Children bring another dimension to this relationship. Man blames rebellion on his child, not himself. However, in marriage, children are the product of their parents. If we cannot bring peace and blessing to our homes, then we cannot bring it to the church either. Besides this, the people of the church are the children of God. It follows that it takes some of the same skills to work with the children of God as it does with our own children. Whether in family or in church, relationships can only be properly guided by the principles of Scripture. Proper guidance and discipline create a climate where people can peaceably mature.

Our families are called to represent the church of Jesus Christ. If properly executed, the family paints a beautiful picture of the church. The father represents God. When the father does not live in a holy manner, onlookers can develop a wrong picture of God. This is why God is so intensely interested

## The pursuit of a happy home is a war we all fight.



We should never stop pursuing this noble desire.

in the family—He wants the father to represent His attitudes and behaviors, and the rest of the family to respond to these behaviors as the church to Jesus Christ. This is a high calling for fathers.

The pursuit of a happy home is a war we all fight. All this sounds good, but how many of us grew up in a home where this standard was precisely met? Yet there is a desire in each of us to give our wife and offspring this type of environment. We may never be able to perfectly live out this noble desire, yet we should never stop pursuing it. If our emotional desire for momentary pleasure results in angry outbursts and selfish actions

which hurt those around us, we must keep returning to battle on toward our original goal: providing a kind environment for our families. There is no attitude more destructive than discouragement or despair. Satan uses these as tools to make us give up, and not try any more.

I believe that every one of us understands logically the need to give up temporary pleasure for lasting good, but we often have trouble accepting it emotionally. Many of us think emotionally only for the

moment. When we think logically, we think long-term. Often we make everyday decisions emotionally; buying a snack or certain type of clothing are often emotional decisions. These decisions only last for a short while. But when we make emotional decisions that will affect the rest of our life and the lives of those around us, the consequences can be severe.

Learned patterns of thinking and emotions are hard to break. If Dad did not provide a tender environment for us to live in,



**Restoration is a process of making something which was damaged to appear as it originally was.**

then it is easy to follow his pattern. The real struggle may be taking that first step. But the only way to break emotional habits is to take that first step, and continue in that direction. Many are the men who have failed in life, yet claim to have answers to life's questions. But only those who have succeeded truly have the right to speak. Those who have failed in the past, but are now successful, are also proper examples to follow.

For some of us it is too late to begin life at peace with God and family. But God knew that we needed some way to be restored after that we had failed. Restoration is a process of making something which was damaged to appear as it originally was. Man's original state is sinless in the eye of God. But you may question how restoration is possible. Sin has broken our lives to the point that it will never be the same again. Broken health, separation from children, divorce, and a host of other things irreconcilably break human ties and favor with God. This is true, yet the blood of Jesus Christ can reconcile us to perfection in God's eyes.

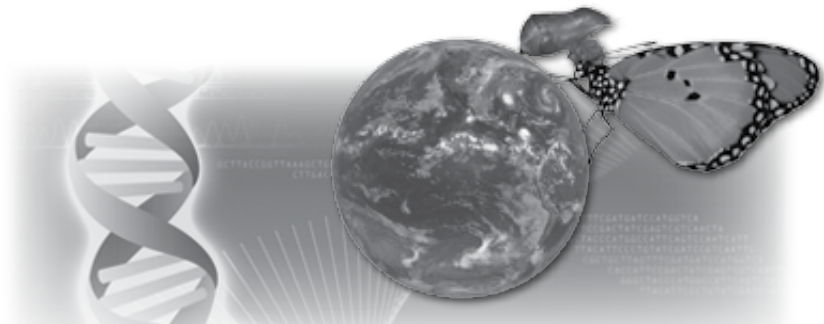
So it is in family relations. By forgiveness and true repentance, we may come to oneness with

**As God cleans us  
for Himself, we  
will have peace  
in our homes.**

each other. It takes willingness on both sides to work out differences. God is always willing to reconcile us to Himself. He will heal our souls and give us strength to bear our emotional scars. He will guide us by His Holy Spirit to make proper emotional decisions. God will cleanse us and make us so clean that we will appear to Him as though we had never sinned.

As he cleans us for Himself, we will have peace in our homes. If God truly cleans you on the inside, the outside will also change. This change will cause you to pursue the eternal good of others. Your emotions, though still of the same material, will be changed to work for the kingdom of God. You will be able to say that God's law is perfect and its rewards pleasant. And you will be able to love your wife and be pleasant with your children.





## Science in Creation

### Seeds on a Journey

Andrew Zimmerman

One day in late summer I was waiting at a bridge over the Juniata River. I had dropped off my son and his friends several miles upstream with their canoe and planned to meet them at this bridge. They would be arriving shortly. While waiting, I passed the time tossing “helicopter” seeds over the side. Watching them float through the air, then land on the water and float downstream, made me think of the intricacies of design evident in creation.

Tiny seeds hold the nucleus of life that can grow into a large tree. An acorn, for example, contains the complete genetic instructions for a tall oak tree, with long, spreading branches and green leaves. God designed trees to produce seeds so they can continue to grow all over

the world for thousands of years. In Genesis 1:11, on the third day of creation God said, *“Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.”*

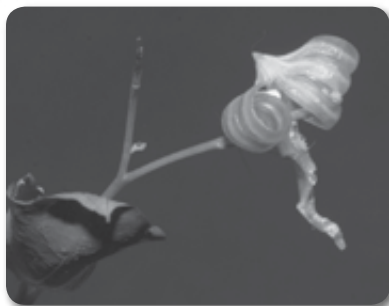
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- Brother Andrew has had an
- avid interest in science since
- he started studying it in his
- early years of school. More
- recently, he has been blessed
- by studying the work of cre-
- ation scientists such as Henry
- Morris and Ken Ham. Because
- 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.

With a bit of moisture and the right temperature, a seed sprouts and starts to grow into a tree. For seeds to germinate and produce a new tree, they must be transported from the parent tree to a location where they can grow. This process of getting the seeds to a place where they can grow is referred to as seed dispersal. Seeds can be carried great distances to spread and keep alive their species. If all of the seeds simply fell to the ground below the parent tree, they wouldn't get enough sunshine and water to flourish, and wouldn't have room to branch out.

Jesus told the story of the sower who sowed seeds. Some of the seeds fell on good ground, and some fell on stony ground. Cultivation by humans is one way that seeds are dispersed, but most seeds don't need humans to plant them. There are at least four methods that our Creator uses to get seeds distributed to spread living plants all over their habitable territory. The four ways are wind, water, animals, and mechanical dispersal.

Let's discuss that scientific sounding one first. Did you know that some seed pods explode to spread out the seeds? As seed pods mature and dry, tensions are set up in the wall of the pod. When the tension force becomes

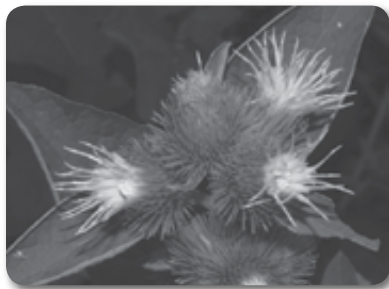


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### The remains of an exploded *Impatiens* seed pod.

great enough, the pod segments separate suddenly, violently ejecting the seeds. This is mechanical dispersal, also called discharge dispersal. Jewelweed and yellow wood sorrel are two species that use this type of dispersal. Another species, witch hazel, can project its seeds up to thirty feet! The slightest touch causes the seed pods to burst and throw the mature seeds through the air.

Then there are the hitchhikers. Our God has designed some seeds with miniature hooks to stick to the fur of animals, or even



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### *Burrdock Burrs* have hooks that cling to fur and clothes.



Berries contain hard-shelled seeds that pass through an animal's digestive system.

people's clothes. Did you ever get burrs stuck all over your socks as you walked through a patch of weeds? These hitchhiking seeds can be carried long distances. Burdock burrs were the inspiration for the invention of Velcro.

Some seeds are contained inside juicy, tasty fruit. Animals often carry away their food to a safer place to eat. When animals eat the fruit, they discard the large seeds and leave them lying to germinate and grow. Small hard-shelled seeds that are



*White Oak* acorns rapidly sprout into new trees.

ingested with the fruit can pass through the animal's digestive system and are expelled with the animal's droppings.

There are animals, such as squirrels, that bury seeds to store them for eating later, like when you keep food in the refrigerator. Sometimes the squirrels forget where they buried their cache of nuts, and the seeds sprout into new trees.



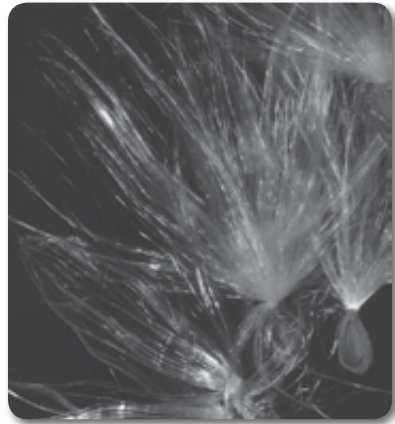
Double-winged *Red Maple* seeds use a spinning motion to slow their descent.

Some trees produce seeds that can use the wind to carry them away from the parent tree to a suitable place for them to grow. Earlier in this article we mentioned "helicopter" seeds. Double-winged seeds, like those of the Maple tree, are called schizocarps. As they drop from the branch, they develop a spinning motion that slows

their descent, allowing more time for the wind to carry them away from the tree. There are a number of other different types of “glider” seeds. Some tropical varieties can be very large, and have a large wing area to give them an effective glide path.

Dandelion seeds have a parachute-like attachment made of feathery hairs. The seeds are very light and can be blown high and far away by the summer wind. When I was a boy, I liked to pick the dandelions with the whitened seed heads, blow them as hard as I could, and watch as hundreds of seeds drifted in the breeze. Cattail seeds are similar to the dandelion seed, but smaller. A single cattail can contain one million seeds. Milkweed and thistle are other examples of flying seeds.

The helicopter seeds I threw from the bridge would often land in the water. This is another important means of transportation for our traveling seeds. They can be carried far downstream until they’re washed up on the bank. There they wait until they germinate, take root, and grow into another tree. Eventually, the seeds from this tree again fall into the river, and are carried farther downstream. As the years progress, the species can spread over a large area of



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*Milkweed* seeds are carried along in the wind by their parachute-like attachments.

land. Willows and cottonwoods often grow along streams or creeks, and drop their seeds in the water.

In the parable that Jesus told about seeds and a sower, many of the seeds landed in an inhospitable location and didn’t produce anything. Only a small fraction of the seeds that are dispersed actually germinate and grow into another plant.

What happens to the good seeds that land on your heart? Like the schizocarps floating gently to the river far below, God offers His seeds of love and truth to your heart. What kind of soil will the Sower’s seeds find? Will they bring forth fruit?

□

## Crossword Puzzle

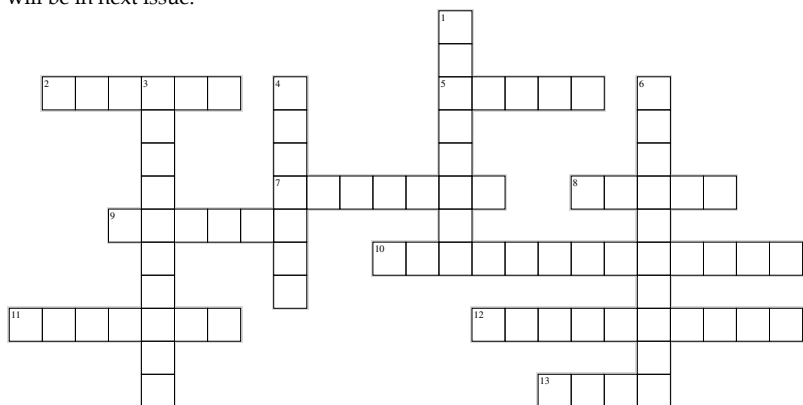
# Verses on Forgiveness



Fill the blank squares of this puzzle with the missing words from the numbered Bible verses below and to the right.

These verses are taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible. Answers will be in next issue.

Created with EdipscCrossword • www.edipscrossword.com



### Across

- Even as \_\_\_ forgave you, so also do ye.
- For thou, Lord, art good, and \_\_\_ to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.
- Forgive us our debts, as we \_\_\_ our debtors.
- Then said \_\_\_, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.
- If my people, which are called by my name, shall \_\_\_ themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
- Be ye kind one to another, \_\_\_, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
- When ye stand \_\_\_, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.
- The lord of that servant was moved with \_\_\_, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

13. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my \_\_\_\_.

**Down**

1. Forgive, and ye shall be \_\_\_\_.
3. Blessed are they whose \_\_\_\_ are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.
4. If we \_\_\_\_ our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
6. If ye forgive men their \_\_\_\_, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.



**Exercise your mind with a Sudoku puzzle!**

To solve this puzzle, fill the blank squares with numbers from 1-9, arranging them so that each row and column and each of the 3x3 grids contains the numbers from 1-9.

Difficulty level: Easy  
 Answers will be in next issue.

“Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.”  
 Job 28:28

3		2			6			
		1	5		4			
				1				
8			6			5		
			4			6		
5							3	8
	2	8			3		7	
9		7	8				1	
4								2

# Putting off Anger

John Coblentz



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## ❧ The Emotion of Anger ❧

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“I’d just as well tell you. You’re looking at an angry, bitter man.” Larry’s dark eyes flashed and his body tensed as he leaned against the door to leave.

I had been talking to Larry for over an hour about his shaky marriage. Indeed, for months I had met repeatedly with Larry and his wife, and for a time we had made progress. But the situation had deteriorated again. Larry wanted desperately to save his marriage, but he was hurt and frustrated. And in his hurt and frustration he was contributing heavily, albeit sometimes unintentionally, to the deterioration. *“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God,”* the Apostle James wrote (1:20).

Countless wounds—physical, emotional, and spiritual—painfully attest to the truth of that Scripture. Anger kills people, turns children into rebels, disintegrates families, and divides churches.

Nobody disputes the destructive force of anger. Each of us has “anger stories” about ourselves or others, stories humorous or pathetic, about angry acts and the resulting damage. There are anger seminars, anger workbooks, anger therapists, and anger-control programs by the dozen. But their answers are nearly as diverse as the programs. The wide variety of solutions to this difficult human problem should hint strongly that we need more than “experts” to deal with it adequately.

The Scriptures are not silent on the subject of anger. There are references to anger in one form or another in virtually every book of the Bible. To gain a Biblical understanding of this powerful emotion, and more importantly, to find help for controlling it, we will consider both prescriptive passages (where God tells us what to do or what not to do) and descriptive passages (where we will observe anger in action).

### **Why Do People Get Angry?**

We like to ask “why” questions. Sometimes why questions are merely attempts to shove off responsibility or to challenge authority. But in this case the question is asked to gain insights that will help us face and deal with the problem of anger.

**1. A person gets angry because he doesn't get his way.** King Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard. When Naboth refused to trade or sell, Ahab went home *“heavy and displeased... and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread”* (1 Kings 21:4). We often see this in children. Their will gets crossed and they explode. But unfortunately, the problem is not limited to children, as Ahab aptly demonstrates. No matter what our age or status, when

we don't get what we want, our natural response is anger.

**2. A person gets angry because things seem out of his control.** The more Saul lost control over David, the shorter his temper became. Praise for David shocked Saul's ego like an earthquake. The more Saul sought to eliminate David, the more miserably he failed, and Saul became a very frustrated, angry man. Most of us will not readily identify with Saul—he is the bad person in the story. We identify with David. But under our masks, we are more often like Saul than we care to admit. When people do things that threaten our security or slight our ego, our efforts to counteract them seem only to result in more of the same.

A wife is trapped in a lifelong relationship with a man who seems oblivious to her. A minister wants desperately to have peace in his church, but certain trouble-makers refuse to cooperate. Frustration over situations and people we cannot change eats in us like a cancer.

**3. A person gets angry to control.** This is only an extension of the former reason. Saul, like many of us, learned that anger makes people back off and often give in. It even makes some people willing to cater to you. A loud voice, a fist on the



## Covered sin makes us touchy.

table, a lethal glare keeps others hopping. Anger controls. Rather than face the difficulty of confrontation with an angry person, most people bend. The ironic result, however, is more insecurity. Control gained through anger is generally good only as long as the controller is around. Nobody really respects the person who controls through intimidation. But anger, like most other emotions, doesn't have much foresight. It is focused on the immediate situation.

**4. A person gets angry in response to hurt or mistreatment.** When David and his men were rebuffed by Nabal, David put on his sword and set out to annihilate the whole Nabalite "tribe." David's reaction was typical. Sharp, sudden pain easily triggers curses and unleashes blind rage. And it matters little if the pain is physical or emotional. Vengeful anger may also grow

little by little over years of mistreatment. And once a wound is open, the angry person may become extremely touchy. Slight mistreatment, even words or actions not at all intended to hurt, may trigger angry reaction.

**5. A person gets angry because his pride is wounded.** The Bible records that King Asa faced a horde of invading Ethiopians that outnumbered the Israelite army two to one. Asa humbly and fervently sought the Lord. God not only gave him a tremendous victory, but also brought a great revival among the Israelites—many from the northern tribes went over to Asa "*when they saw that the LORD his God was with him*" (2 Chronicles 15:9). Shortly after this, however, and perhaps in retaliation for the political fallout, Baasha, king of the northern tribes, came against Asa. This time Asa sent a "league payment" to the

Syrian king Ben-hadad to get him to break off his agreement with Baasha and form a union with Asa instead. It worked. But Hanani, a prophet of God, rebuked Asa for relying on a heathen king instead of relying on the Lord. Asa's response? *"Then Asa was wrath with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time"* (2 Chronicles 16:10).

How could Asa switch so rapidly from urging people to follow the Lord to lashing out at the godly? Someone touched his ego, that's why. That Asa's pride was founded on his spiritual progress made it all the more subtle. Out of wounded pride a minister may make an angry reply to a just criticism, or a father may lash out at children who see through his mistake. Wounded pride hurts.

**6. A person may get angry as a spill-over from unresolved guilt.** David was guilty of immorality and covered-up murder. When he was told a story about a rich man who took advantage of a poor man, however, he exploded. Covered sin makes us touchy. A man who secretly looks at pornography or attends peep shows on the sly will almost invariably be harsh with his children. A person who lives with a burdened con-

science often wields a criticizing tongue. Such a person is continually engaged in the subconscious task of trying to transfer his guilt to someone else.

**7. People also get angry in order to set wrong things right.** We all have a sense of justice. When David heard about the rich man taking his poor neighbor's only sheep to feed unexpected guests, David was incensed. Rightly so. There is a righteousness in this kind of anger. When a situation is wrong, anger is a motivation to set things right. Moses saw the lewdness of the calf-worshipping Israelites and was furious. Jesus saw the irreverence of the moneychangers in the temple and took decisive action. When we see two big boys beating up on a little boy, we have the same emotional response. We call it righteous indignation, and it is.

But there is a very subtle catch to this last kind of anger. Because it stems from our sense of justice, it feels right. It is *justifiable*. And without further thought, we easily make two mistakes. First, we transfer the rightness of our anger to whatever action we choose to take. Anger, like dynamite, is extremely explosive. Action powered by anger can cause terrible destruction. So right with the label of the Biblical command, "Be ye angry," comes the

warning, “*Sin not!*” (Ephesians 4:26). Being right in our assessment of a wrong situation does not mean we are right in using any means to set that situation straight. Although the anger may be justified, the action motivated by that “righteous anger” may be more wrong, more destructive, and more wicked in its hate and vengeance than the original injustice that stirred our anger. Wars erupt out of righteous anger. Once the fuse is lit, the most heinous crimes are committed to “make wrongs right.”

The second mistake we easily make under the halo of righteous indignation is considering all our anger to be righteous. No matter what stirs our anger, our mental processors make it out to be a wrong of some sort. Maybe we didn’t get our way, our pride may have been wounded, or we may be touchy as a result of carrying unresolved guilt, but in our minds we turn the episode into a wrong that needs to be made right. A young man is not allowed to go with his friends, and mentally he turns it into an injustice. An inconsistency is pointed out to a minister, and immediately he balances this against all the good he has done and the sacrifices he has made, and he feels terribly misunderstood.

Again, once the anger seems justified, so do the words and actions that follow. The young man slams the door of his room and shuts himself in for the evening. The minister says, “If that’s all you think of my hard work for this congregation these past ten years, I’ll go somewhere else.”

As we can see, anger wells up for a variety of reasons. And if we glance over the Biblical examples, we can see also that anger takes a variety of forms. It may be an explosive temper, a seething rage, a pout, a sob story, or a long-term, low-burning resentment. Or it may be a zeal that cries out for appropriate action.

### **Understanding Anger**

*“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil.... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice”* (Ephesians 4:26, 27, 31).

How do we understand the command to be angry followed so closely with the command to “put off” anger? As we have seen, righteous people sometimes become angry (e.g. Moses, David, Jesus, etc.). But righteous people cannot be called angry people. They are, in fact, distinct for their meekness, or control, under provocation.

To further understand anger, consider these facts.

**1. Anger is an emotion.** When we get angry, we feel something deep within us. Physically, a chemical reaction takes place in our brain cells which triggers a release of adrenaline, pumping more blood to the brain and increasing heart rate and blood pressure. Depending on the intensity and focus of our anger, we may or may not be aware of these physical responses. But we are distinctly aware of how we feel deep inside.

We can mentally categorize our emotions into roughly two groups: what we like and what we don't like. We like to feel happy, safe, loved, needed, pleasantly surprised, relaxed, trustful, friendly, etc. We don't like to feel threatened, anxious, angry, disappointed, panicky, used, betrayed, or embarrassed.

Viewing anger as an emotion helps us understand it. Anger is part of human experience. It fits into the range of feelings affecting who we are, how we interact with others, and how we respond to life's problems and challenges.

**2. As an emotion, anger is involuntary.** We must distinguish here between anger as a feeling and anger as action. In our day-to-day speech (and often in Biblical usage) no such distinc-

tion is made. When we say "He has a terrible anger problem," we are usually referring to the expression, not the feeling, of anger. Likewise, when the Bible tells us to put off anger, it is not so much forbidding the feeling of anger, but forbidding those destructive words and actions provoked by anger.

As an emotion, anger is not primarily a choice (this does not relieve us of all responsibility, as we shall see shortly). Although our feelings are affected by our choices, we do not choose to feel angry any more than we choose to laugh or feel secure. The Biblical command "*Be ye angry*" (Ephesians 4:26) is translated in the NIV as, "*In your anger, do not sin.*" Although this softens the imperative of the Greek, it conveys the assumption that anger is part of our experience. Sometimes we will feel the emotion of anger.

**3. Emotions are reflectors.** In his book *Competent to Counsel*, Jay Adams refers to emotions as reflectors. Though certainly more than that, our emotions do reflect our situations. Part of being human is to respond emotionally to what is going on around us. This makes life meaningful, colorful, and real to our senses. When a loving husband emerges from a jet

**“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).**



walkway after two weeks away from home, his family not only knows he is returning, but they feel longing, love, gladness, inquisitiveness, excitement, and security in the reunion with him. Have they chosen these emotions? Certainly not. Their emotions involuntarily reflect their situation. And imagine at that moment an announcement comes over the PA system to evacuate the airport immediately because of a bomb threat. Will they choose to feel tense or afraid? Or would they consciously choose to retain their former feelings because they like those feelings better? The point is that our emotions reflect our circumstances.

Emotions reflect more than circumstances, however. Included

in the reflecting process is the person himself. Differences in people result in differences in emotional reflections. A situation that amuses one person may disgust another. If a big boy threatens a little boy, the little boy may feel fear, but an adult hearing the same threat may feel indignant.

Because character plays a part in emotional reflection, and choices form character, emotional responses are not totally involuntary. To the extent we are responsible for the kind of person we have become, we are also responsible for our emotional responses to situations. The goal of every Christian should be to become like Christ. This is primarily to bring glory to God; but the emotional result of Christlikeness is that in any situ-

ation, our feelings will be what Christ's own would have been in just such a situation. What would make Him happy, will make us happy. What would disgust Him, will disgust us.

Therefore, if I am angered where Jesus would not have been angered, something in my life needs changing. I must not use the logic, "I just couldn't help myself," to justify my anger. Rather, I must acknowledge that my temper (or resentment or self-pity or vengeance) reflects un-Christlikeness in my life. I must accept responsibility for my anger as well as for my need of change.

**4. Anger is a powerful emotion.** Emotions not only reflect our circumstances, but also urge responses to our circumstances. Some emotions particularly urge action. Anger is one of the most powerful emotions. In the Bible, one of the primary measures of a person's strength is the ability to control this powerful emotion. *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit [controls his temper, NIV] than he that taketh a city"* (Proverbs 16:32).

**5. Uncontrolled anger is destructive.** We have already noted Biblical examples of anger's destructive power. Anger has been the motivation behind the most terrible acts in history. Daily the

papers are filled with the results of uncontrolled anger—a policeman is shot, a suicide bomber kills an entire busload of people, a child suffers permanent brain damage from a beating. But underneath and behind that physical destruction is emotional destruction just as horrible. Grief, terror, anxiety, bitterness, loneliness, despair, and inferiority fester and ooze like open sores on the soul and spirit.

The destructive effects of anger are not limited to those stung by outbursts of angry words and actions. Anger's destruction is inward also. In fact, terrible as the outward effects are, the inward effects on the angry person himself are worse. An angry person destroys himself. The destruction is the more terrible because it is not obvious. Frederick Beuchner wrote, *"Of all the seven deadly sins, anger is probably the most fun. To lick your wounds, smack your lips over grievances long past, roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back—is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you."* □

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# *The Pursuit of Godly Seed*

**Denny Kenaston**

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All rights reserved. • Web site: [www.homefirespub.com](http://www.homefirespub.com).

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 life-style. 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!*

# Bible Pictures of a Godly Home

Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table... thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD. Psalm 128:3, 4

**W**hat a rich and full picture we have in these verses! They are pregnant with meaning, and deeply spiritual, as God's Word always is. Jehovah promised the men of Israel an abundant family life with lots of children if they would walk before Him and be perfect. How much more are these promises sure to us who now live in New Covenant relationship with God! There are several pictures just like this one found in the Old Testament Scriptures. They are waiting for us to glean a wealth of wisdom, vision, and insights from them. Shall we go digging for hidden treasure? In this chapter and the next, I draw out some jewels from several of these pictures of a godly home in the Old Testament.

Let me remind you before we start that the warriors we mentioned in the last chapter knew the verses we are going to consider. Those godly men—those men of war who came home from the battle to care for their

families meditated on these Bible pictures. The verses we are going to peruse were their scriptures. This is what they heard preached at the temple and in the synagogues.

God has used these pictures to challenge and inspire His people for three thousand years. I pray for another burst of inspiration for us as we gaze into them.

## **Mature, Nurtured Plants**

David cried from his heart to the Lord to end the wars, and bring the men of Israel home, *“that our sons may be as plants, grown up in their youth”* (Psalm 144:12a). The prophet David was making an analogy between our dear sons and plants. He was praying that God would bring the men home to their sons. As I studied this phrase, the picture became clear. David was talking about a plant that had been nurtured to the point of fruit-bearing maturity. He was talking about a plant that had been nurtured carefully through the whole

process of growth, and was now ready to bear fruit. The ground had been cultivated, and the seed had been planted. The shoot had pushed up through the ground and had been cared for all along the way.

Can you picture the farmer caring for his plant with a dream and a vision in his mind? The plant has been watered; the weeds have been pulled; and fertilizer has been applied. He is now looking at a mature plant, healthy, strong, and ready to bear fruit. There is nothing more beautiful to a farmer than a plant that is just ready to bear fruit. You know, once the plant starts producing fruit and gets a little age on it, it starts losing some of its beauty. But right before it's ready to start bearing fruit, that plant is in its prime. It is beautiful! It is strong! The farmer looks at his plant, and he knows that the stage is set. The fruit is coming, and he rejoices. Some of you gardeners and farmers can relate to what I am saying. Plants grown up, still in their youth, but ready to bear fruit—this is the picture Israel had to inspire them.

Now let us relate this analogy to our dear sons. What is our goal? What do we see? God is giving us very clear direction through this picture. I see a young man, maybe eighteen

years old. He is upright in his heart, with a clear countenance because he has a clear conscience. He loves the Lord Jesus with all of his heart, and his testimony is sound among those who know him. He is a virgin, saving his purity for the wife of his youth. He is filled with the Spirit, filled with the Word, and busy about the Master's business. He loves his parents and finds great delight under their authority. He is ready for a life of bearing fruit to the glory of his God.

I'm not sure how this picture sets with you. Maybe you feel the standard is a bit too high or unrealistic. But this is exactly the picture that the analogy portrays. This is what spiritual Israel was working toward with their sons, and many of them obtained what they sought, prayed, and labored to achieve.

Three solid examples come to my mind immediately. Remember David the shepherd boy, who was anointed to be king at about eighteen years of age. Remember Daniel, the young man carried away to Babylon, who stood for right in a test that many would have failed. Finally, remember Joseph, the young seer of visions, who was placed in very difficult circumstances and passed the test.

Each of these youth was probably about eighteen years old. Ponder their young lives. They are “plants grown up in their youth.” The Lord wants to lift our sights higher by these testimonies of godly young men. There they stand, each one of them clear, mature, and ready for a life of fruitfulness. This is what God wants of our young men. It can be done by the grace of God and our willing hearts. We can have youth that are mature, stable, and ready to face real life in righteousness. But we must see it with the eyes of our heart as I have said earlier in this book.

Let’s go back to the farmer and the plant for a moment, and look deeper into this analogy. The nurturing of this plant is a process. We all know enough about gardens to realize that many things need to be done to produce a healthy plant. It is the same with our sons. There is a vision, and there is work to be done. When a farmer plants the seed, he already “sees” the plants growing tall with fruit on them. If he didn’t have a vision,

he wouldn’t go to planting. It works the same way with our sons. Oh, may God give us a vision of a plant, a son who is standing tall, ready to bear fruit. Then may He give us the holy grit, the character, and the discipline it takes to carry out all the nurturing, planting, cultivating, weeding, and fertilizing. May He move us to spend all the hours of time it takes to raise a mature plant, one that we can send out into a real world to bear fruit.

### **Polished Cornerstones**

As David gazed longingly into the prophetic realm, he also saw some lovely daughters of Zion. This vision was part of his prayer. Lord, deliver us from our enemies, *“that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace”* (Psalm 144:12b). He is praying that God will bring the men home to their daughters. Many Christians feel that a father doesn’t have much influence in his daughter’s life and training. God’s Word says nothing like this. What a danger-

**We can have youth that are  
mature, stable, and ready to face  
real life in righteousness.**

ous teaching this is, and one that has already given us two generations of mothers who have lost their way! This is changing, and I praise God for this change in theology.

Cornerstones are very important stones in a palace. They are the stones that give stability to the walls of the building. They are the stones that connect the whole building together in strength. They are the stones that the builders use to plumb the rest of the stones into the walls. Therefore, they must be right. Because of this, they were carefully carved by hand.

Finally, the cornerstones of a palace must be beautiful, to give some ornamentation to a stark stone building. The palace must have strong flat walls, or it will not stand, so they use the corners for ornamentation, which makes the palace beautiful. Because of this, special care and lots of time is given to carving and polishing these stones. The prophet David is drawing an analogy between these special stones and our precious daughters. There is a wealth of inspiration and instruction in this illustration that guided the life of spiritual Israel.

Now, let us also relate this analogy to our daughters, as we did with our sons. What

do we want our daughters to be like? What do we see, and where are we going with them? I see a lovely young lady about eighteen years old. Her face is shining because her heart is clear. She is one of the King's daughters, all glorious within, waiting to be placed in a building somewhere in God's Kingdom. God's grace is upon her, and everyone around her knows it. She is a virgin, saving her purity of heart and body for her husband. She stands prepared, ready to guide her home and care for a family. She is beautiful, like beauty used to be—no outward show, but an inward clothing of quietness and meekness. Can you picture her? She is truly beautiful.

Doesn't this picture stir something inside of you that says, "This is the way it should be"? She is a cornerstone, polished after the similitude of a palace. Brothers and sisters, I want this kind of daughter and the kind of son described earlier in this chapter. What must I give for precious sons and daughters who have this kind of testimony? God has clearly revealed in His Word the price I must pay. In a sense, that is what the content of this book is all about, the price we must pay, and the precious jewels we will receive.



We must see where God  
wants us to go with our  
families.

Let us turn back to our analogy and draw some practical applications from it. Again, there is vision in this Old Testament picture. When the craftsman, that special carver of cornerstones, steps up to a stone to carve and polish, he has a vision of the finished stone.

He has a vision in his mind of what the stone is going to look like when he gets finished. He sees that cornerstone already shaped out, exactly the way he wants it. He sees that cornerstone already sitting in that building, beautifying it, and making it look like a palace. He sees all of that. But, oh, a lot of work must be done before that cornerstone fits into the building.

The man who does the carving has tools. He has a hammer, chisels, and some scraping instruments to carve and mold the stone. When he goes to work on that stone, he is going to make some noise, and there will be

some pain involved as parts of that stone are chipped away by the hammer and the chisel. Do you see the meaning and the methods hidden in this inspiring picture? This is what David prayed for. It was a prophetic burden to him.

We must see, dear parents, where God wants us to go with our families. A haphazard approach does not fit this analogy. God has plans for each of our daughters. They are to be strength and beauty to a household someday. They are going to be an example by which to plumb the building, and the vital connection to other stones in the house. Do we see the eternal implications in this? It is true that the mothers of a nation are one of the strongest influences to a people, but godly mothers don't just happen. They are molded day after day in the hands of parents who see a place where their little girl will stand someday.

## Olive Plants

Isn't it amazing how the Lord teaches us humans the lessons He want us to learn? Nurtured plants, polished stones, and olive plants are used to help us understand what His will is for our children. There are some sweet promises found in Psalm 128 which have been a source of encouragement and instruction to many throughout the history of Israel and the church.

*"Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD: that walketh in his ways... Thy children [shall be] like olive plants round about thy table"* (Psalm 128:1, 3b).

I remember when I was a young man with only two children around my table, and one in Jackie's arms. I would meditate on this Scripture and dream of a day when I would have many children sitting around my table. If you are a young couple reading this, this is a good vision for you to ponder. The Lord eventually placed eight olive plants around my table, and my dream was fulfilled.

Olive plants for a man in Israel were a very meaningful illustration. An olive tree was a valuable piece of property. Olive oil was a symbol of peace, health, and wealth in Israel. It was used for many different things in Bible days. The oil was used to make a fire, which illuminated the house

at night. It was used to make special anointing oils for health and healing. It was used to make the holy anointing oil which was used to consecrate certain prophets, priests, and kings. It was used to make soap for cleansing, and it was sold for cash to buy many other necessities. If you had eight or nine olive trees, you were a blessed man. An olive tree lived a long time; it seems, in fact, it lived almost forever. Let me explain.

An olive tree could live for two or three generations just by itself. However, when the old gnarled tree was ready to die, its roots would send forth several new shoots, and the tree would continue to produce through them. Can you see how this picture of promise would light up a man's countenance when he thought upon it?

How do these thoughts relate to our children? What can we learn from Israel's picture of promise? Once again, there are many beautiful correlations that we can glean for our modern-day families. Consider a few of them:

**1. We see the treasure we have when God gives us children.** The Lord could have used many other blessings to describe the man who is blessed by God. He chose to inspire us with the picture of a wife bearing many children and the picture of many

children gathered around a man's table. God is using two of the most valuable assets in Israel to show us how highly He esteems children.

**2. We see tremendous usefulness in the olive tree.** Just as olive oil is used to benefit others in many ways, so also our children are to be great assets to us as parents, and to the society in which they live. They are to be lights to illuminate a lost and dying world, and a healing balm for the broken and wounded. We know that God called His two witnesses olive trees in Revelation 11. What a picture from which we can draw inspiration, a table full of witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ! Lord, make our children olive trees from which the oil of the Holy Ghost flows.

I want to say something about the financial blessing that children are also. I realize that many of you see your children as a financial burden, but that is because our society has drastically changed. The family farm and family business setting are almost gone. Consider the help that children are to their families when all work together to meet the needs of the home. That is the way it used to be everywhere. Oh, how far we have fallen!

**3. Let us remember, these are olive plants, not olive trees.**

It takes about fifteen years to nurture an olive plant into its fruit-bearing stage. These are years of tender care.

There were many wild olive trees in the land, but they had absolutely no value. A wild olive tree was an olive plant that was left to itself, to grow however it chose, without being cared for. Such a tree looked more like an ugly bush, than a tree, and the fruit was small with almost no oil in it. When a man had several olive plants, he had no problem spending his time caring for these promising plants. He knew that they would bless him and his generations with many years of valuable oil. What a perfect picture of child training. Does it get any clearer than that? A man had to water these plants because of the type of soil in which they grew. He had to loosen the soil several times each year for the same reason and apply fertilizer to the roots. He needed to do this faithfully for many years because he wanted to have a fruitful tree. We must do the same thing if we expect to see an olive tree that will bless the world some day.

**4. Consider the generational aspect of olive plants.** I mentioned how the old olive tree

would put forth several branches from its roots before the trunk of the old tree died. This is a beautiful picture of our heritage going on and on through our children. Because the men of Israel knew the nature of the olive tree, their vision for the next generation was greatly enhanced. This is how we should be looking at our children, even when they are young. As fathers, we need to see way beyond the life of our child. As we nurture our “olive plants,” we need to see the influence of our children reaching out for generations. If we see our children in this light, in a sense, we do not die. Our children are sprouts that eventually become trees right out of our root. Let us carefully nurture these plants. They will extend our life and influence after we are gone.

Do you see your children as olive trees, with oil flowing out of them to a dark and troubled world? This is the picture that God is giving us in this psalm. It is a picture packed with powerful visions. The most influential blessings on this earth are godly children who have been raised with purpose to be useful witnesses because the oil is on them. Let us believe God for olive plants that are growing up into olive trees and are a fruitful and influential force in the world.

This was God’s vision for Israel, and it is His vision for the church today also.

### **Building a House**

In Psalm 127:1 we have the next picture from which I would like to glean treasures. I would like to consider the building of a house: *“Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.”* As I studied the word “house” in the Hebrew language, I found that it is used two ways: to refer to an actual physical house, and also to refer to a household. Because of this, the context must be considered in deciding which meaning is being used.

In this psalm, the word “house” is being used both ways. God uses the analogy of building a physical house to challenge us about building our households, our homes. This picture is not a promise, but a challenge and a warning to the men. The double use of this word is powerful if you understand life in Israel.

In Bible days, when a young man was ready to begin his household, he was the builder of the house for his wife and family. It is like that to this day in parts of Africa; every man builds his own house. Now, let’s picture a young Jewish man for a moment. He has his espoused wife, and he has gone to prepare

a place for her, so he can come again to receive his bride and begin his home. If he is a spiritual man, what do you think he is going to be meditating on while he builds his house? I think we would all agree that he will be dreaming dreams and seeing visions of his future family. In that context, these words come to his mind again and again, "*Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.*" God in His wisdom gave this verse to Israel, and especially to the young men, who build their own houses.

Now let's go on to the actual building of the house. When someone is going to build a house, he has a clear idea of what the house will look like before he starts. He has a blueprint, a builder's layout of the details of the house. He has materials and tools, and he must put much labor into it. All of this is involved in the building of a house. Again, we see how the illustration is perfectly tailored to relate to the building of a home for the glory of God.

As we seek to apply this ancient snapshot, we can draw from two different comparisons. First and foremost, we see a striking portrait of the Lord building a house. He is the Master Builder Who oversees the whole project. I have often

envisioned the Lord working behind the scenes, blessing, watching over, and protecting our homes. At other times I have envisioned a much more intimate and co-operational scene. I have seen the Lord with His hands on my hands carefully building the house through me. The first vision requires a great deal of trust and confidence in God. The second requires a continuous yielding of my heart to God, so I can be an instrument in His hands. My heart thrills at the potential of this kind of house building. O the depth of the wisdom of Almighty God. If the whole project is to be done right, it must be done His way, and His way is the way of utter abandonment.

The second comparison refers simply to the building of a house. As we have already stated, there are many different aspects involved in construction: the plans, the tools, the materials, the foundation, and the construction itself. I know that we are all in different stages of building our households, and some of us have awakened in the middle of the building. But for the sake of a pure model, I am going to give the ideal. Don't be condemned or discouraged if you started late: Jackie and I also began late.

God wants to enable  
you to do it, and then  
He will get the glory.



Rather, I challenge you to dream for your children.

The laying of the foundation begins in the hearts of godly youth who set themselves by their own choice to serve the living God with a pure heart fervently. As these youth are drawn together by the Lord, they enter into a courtship relationship, with marriage as their goal. Their hearts continue to unite around likeminded dreams and visions. Can you see the foundation being laid? It is powerful.

From here, they enter into holy matrimony or marriage, and a new household is begun. As they continue to walk with God together in unity of heart and purpose, a beautiful structure of peace, love, and holiness begins to rise. When God gives children, they receive them with reverence and joy, and begin to raise them according to the pattern given in the Book.

These little olive plants are planted in a powerful, fertile atmosphere of love, and they begin to grow and prosper. Do you see the house going up? Isn't it beautiful? Praise the Lord. This holy structure continues to rise as the parents pray, nurture, and discipline. The house takes thirty or more years to build, but oh, what a beautiful house it is. Dear fathers and mothers, I want this mountain. I know that many of you do also. The Lord has given it to us. Let us rise up and possess it. Let us, with the vision before us, reach for our tools and build.

### **I Can't Do It**

This is a statement that I hear often when I speak about the home and the raising of children. Parents say, "I don't see how I can do it! I don't have the abilities to handle the task. Please pray for me."

I understand what they mean when they say these words. Parents sincerely feel overwhelmed when they hear all the sermons, and many times they don't have the personal gifts to carry them out. However, let us reason together from some Old Testament stories.

Consider the building of the Temple in Solomon's day, and the building of the Tabernacle in the days of Moses. Did you know that when God wanted to build the Tabernacle, He put the Spirit of God and of wisdom upon the craftsmen so that they would be able to build that tabernacle exactly the way He wanted it built (Exodus 31)? When it was time to build the Temple, the Spirit of God and of wisdom lighted upon its craftsmen also. God gave them special abilities to build according to the pattern given to David.

Let us reason together again. If God was concerned enough about an earthly tabernacle and temple to give extra grace to the builders, *how much more is God concerned about our little temples,*

our children in whom He will dwell one day? How much more will God pour the Spirit of wisdom and love and power upon the hearts of every Christian father and mother. He will surely give grace to those who will, with all their hearts, cry unto Him daily.

You are right. You can't do it. But God wants to enable you to do it, and then He will get the glory. I think we have not because we ask not! And many times, we don't ask because we don't have a vision! We don't have a vision of what God can do through us! Beloved, let us wait at the gate of wisdom morning by morning. God will give you the deep desires of your heart. Only believe.



## *Prayer ~*

*Dear Father in heaven, hear our cry. You are the builder of the house. We acknowledge this before You. Many of us are overwhelmed at this very moment because of the needs in our homes. Have mercy on us and teach us where we lack. We see the pattern very clearly, but how to make it all work seems very far away. Give us faith to move forward and build the temples in which You will dwell one day. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Word Search Puzzle

# Bible Men and Women



Find these words in the puzzle below:

Abel	Cain	Elisha	Isaiah	Moses	Samuel
Abraham	Caleb	Esther	Jacob	Naboth	Sarah
Achan	Daniel	Eve	Joseph	Noah	Saul
Adam	Ehud	Gideon	Lydia	Paul	Solomon
Ahab	Elijah	Hannah	Mary	Ruth	Timothy
Ben	Elisabeth	Isaac	Matthew	Samson	

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*"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 1:27*

# Pilgrim's Progress

## Part 13

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!

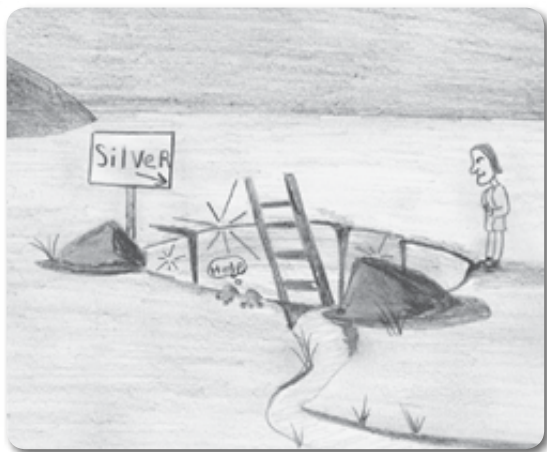
### What Happened So Far...

*Christian has learned much during his long and dangerous journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. Since losing his best friend, Faithful, to a martyr's death at Vanity Fair, he has been traveling with a new pilgrim named Hopeful. As they meet the crafty salesmen of temptation, Christian's wisdom protects the inexperienced Hopeful from the many mistakes that can lead a traveler astray. Yet experience can also lead to carelessness. In this issue, Christian learns how dangerous it is to ignore warnings, even from younger travelers. When an inviting shortcut leads Christian and Hopeful to a giant's dungeon, it looks as if they've made their last mistake. Can they escape before Giant Despair destroys them both?*

### Demas

Soon after Christian and Hopeful left By-ends and his friends behind, they came to a pleasant meadow called Ease, where they found the traveling quite pleasant. The meadow was narrow, however, and they crossed it quickly. On the far side of the meadow was a small hill called Lucre, which contained a well-known silver mine. Many pilgrims who had passed that way had turned aside to see the mine, but when they came near the edge, the unstable ground gave way, plunging them to their deaths. Others were merely crippled or had such head injuries that their minds were never the same afterward.

Now I saw in my dream that not far off the road and next to the silver mine stood a pleasant-looking man named Demas, calling to passing travelers.



## The Silver Mine

“Come over here for a little,” he shouted to Christian and Hopeful. “I’ll show you something worth seeing.”

“What is so wonderful that we should leave our path to see it?” asked Christian.

“A silver mine!” Demas shouted. “And treasure-hunters digging for riches. Join us and you’ll soon be rich.”

“Come on, Christian,” said Hopeful, “Let’s go see!”

“Not I,” answered Christian. “I’ve heard about this place. Many people have died here, and at best these riches trap people and slow them down in their journey.”

“Demas!” he called. “Isn’t this place dangerous? Hasn’t it hindered many pilgrims?” (Hosea 4:16–19).

“Errm, no,” Demas stammered. “Not *very* dangerous, anyway. Only if you’re careless.” He glanced around nervously.

“Not one step toward it,” said Christian to Hopeful. “Let’s get going.”

Looking over his shoulder, Hopeful remarked, “I guarantee you By-ends

won’t turn down that invitation.”

“His principles would lead him straight into that place,” said Christian. “The odds are a hundred to one that he dies there.”

“Aren’t you coming to see the silver mine?” shouted Demas.

Christian replied, “Demas, you are an enemy of the Lord of this path; one of His judges has already convicted you of leaving the right way, and now you’re trying to get us condemned, too [2 Timothy 4:10]. If we turn aside, the King will hear about it, and we’ll stand before Him with shame instead of boldness.”

“Who do you take me for?” bellowed Demas. “I’m a pilgrim, brothers! I’m planning to hit the road again soon myself; just wait here till I’m ready, and we can travel together.”

"What's your name?" asked Christian. "Isn't it the one I just called you by?"

"I'm Demas, sure. In fact, I'm a son of Abraham."

"Then I know you," said Christian. "Your great-grandfather was Gehazi and your father was Judas, and you walk in their footsteps. This is a devilish trick of yours; your father, the traitor, hanged himself, and you deserve no better reward than he [2 Kings 5:20; Matthew 26:14, 15, 27:1-5]. Be sure that, when we get to the King, we'll let Him know what you're doing here."

By the time Christian and Hopeful walked away from Demas and his silver mine, By-ends and his friends had almost caught up with them. Sure enough, they hurried over to the mine the instant they heard Demas call. I don't know whether they fell in while looking over the edge, or whether they went down to dig and were poisoned by the vapors that are common there, but I do know that no one ever saw them on the path again.

Thinking about this, Christian composed this little song:



Drawing by Robert Tupper

## "Remember Lot's Wife"

*"By-ends and 'Silver' Demas both agree; one calls; the other runs, that he may be*

*A sharer in his lucre. So these two take up in this world and no farther go."*

## **Remember Lot's Wife**

Now I saw that on the other side of this hill the pilgrims spotted a monument next to the highway. They were immediately curious at its strange shape; it seemed to be a woman transformed into a pillar. For awhile they studied the strange

statue, trying to figure out what it was, until at last Hopeful spied a notice above the head, written in an unusual hand. Not being very scholarly, he asked Christian if he could read it. Christian studied the sign carefully, fit the letters together, and read, "*Remember Lot's wife.*" In a moment they both realized what they were seeing—the pillar of salt into which Lot's wife had been transformed when she looked back covetously while fleeing from Sodom [Genesis 19:29].

"Ah, brother," said Christian, "This is a timely thing to see after the invitation we just had from Demas. Had we listened to him and gone to see his silver, as you were inclined to do, we may well have become just like this woman—a warning to all the travelers who would follow us."

"I don't know how I could have been so foolish," said Hopeful. "I wonder indeed why I am *not* like Lot's wife; wasn't my sin the same as hers? She merely looked back, while I actually wanted to go and see. May God's grace be adored, and may I be ashamed that such a thing could have been in my heart!"

Christian then said, "In the future, let's remember what we saw here. While this woman escaped the judgement of Sodom,

she was destroyed by another judgment; as we see, she was turned to a pillar of salt."

"True," Hopeful agreed. "She should serve as both a warning and an example to us, so that we avoid her sin, knowing what severe judgment we will receive if we ignore the lesson. Look what happened to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who died with their two hundred and fifty followers; their sin and its terrible punishment became a warning to others who were tempted to do the same [Numbers 26:9, 10]. I'm really amazed that Demas and his friends can go on treasure-hunting so shamelessly, almost in the shadow of this symbol of judgment on a woman who merely looked behind her. We don't read that she stepped even a foot off the path, yet she was turned into a pillar of salt. Those men can't help seeing this monument if they look up at all."

"It's amazing," said Christian, "and it shows how far gone they really are. They are like a thief who picks pockets while the judge is watching, or like someone who stands beneath the gallows and mugs passersby. The Scripture says of the men of Sodom that they were 'sinners exceedingly' [Genesis 13:10, 13] because they sinned 'before the Lord;' that is, they sinned in plain sight of

Him, in spite of the kindness He had shown them in making the land of Sodom like the Garden of Eden. This is what angered the Lord and made their punishment as hot as heavenly fire could make it. It is reasonable to conclude that people like those we just met, who sin in plain sight and ignore constant reminders of their error, will be punished the most severely of all."

"No doubt you are right," said Hopeful. "What a mercy it is that neither you nor I have become examples of judgment ourselves. Let's use this occasion to thank God, to fear Him, and to always remember Lot's wife."

## Respite

I saw then that they continued on their journey until they reached a beautiful river, which King David called the "River of God," and John, the "River of the water of life" (Psalm 65:9; Revelation 22:1, 2; Ezekiel 47:1-12). Their path led along the bank of the river, making their travel quite delightful; they drank the river's water, which refreshed and brightened their weary spirits, and on both banks stood

green trees, which bore all kinds of fruit, and whose leaves were good for medicine. They greatly

**People who sin in plain sight and ignore constant reminders of their error, will be punished the most severely of all.**

enjoyed the fruit of the trees, and they ate the leaves to prevent the illnesses that affect travelers.

On either side of the river was a meadow, beautiful with lilies and green all year long. In this meadow they lay down and slept, for it was a safe place (Psalm 23:1-3, Isaiah 14:30). When they woke up, they picked more fruit from the trees and drank more water from the river; then they lay down and slept again. After living this way for several days, they sang this song:

*"Look now at how these crystal streams do glide, to comfort pilgrims by the highway side;*

*The meadows green, besides their fragrant smell, yield dainties for them, and he who can tell*

*What pleasant fruit and leaves these trees do yield, will soon sell all, that he may buy this field."*

But they were not yet at the end of their journey, so they ate, drank, and traveled on.

## By-Path Meadow

Now I saw in my dream that before they had gone far, the path left the riverbank. The pilgrims were much disappointed by this, but they didn't dare leave the path. Traveling was much rougher now, and with feet which were tender from their long walk, they found the path very discouraging (Numbers 21:4) and wished for a better route. Soon, however, they saw a meadow on the left-hand side of the road, and a set of steps to climb over the fence into it. The name of it was By-path Meadow.

Christian turned to Hopeful and said, "Look, that meadow is right next to the road; let's go over there." He went to the steps for a closer look and saw a path running along the other side of the fence. "It's just as I hoped," he said. "This is much easier walking. Come on, Hopeful!"

"Well," said Hopeful, "what if this path leads us astray?"

"Not likely!" Christian answered. "Can't you see it runs right next to the other one?"

Hopeful was convinced, and followed Christian over the steps into the meadow. Sure enough, the path was much easier on their feet than the other had been, and they even saw another man going the

same direction ahead of them. His name was Vain Confidence, and they called to him and asked where the path went. "To the Celestial Gate!" he answered.

Christian turned to Hopeful, and nodded. "Didn't I tell you?" They kept following Vain Confidence, but night came and it grew so dark that they lost sight of him. Vain Confidence couldn't see the path either, and he soon fell into a deep pit which had been built to catch self-important fools, and was smashed at the bottom.

Christian and Hopeful heard the man fall, and called him to ask what had happened, but they heard no answer, only groaning. "Now where are we?" muttered Hopeful.

Christian, worried that he had gotten them both lost, said nothing. Just then a terrible storm broke over them with rain and lightning, and the area began to flood.

"If only I had stayed on the right path!" moaned Hopeful to himself.

"But who would have guessed that this path would lead us astray?" cried Christian.

"I was afraid of it at the beginning," said Hopeful. "That's why I tried to caution you. I would have said more, but you're older than I."

“Don’t be offended, good brother,” said Christian. “I’m sorry I’ve led you astray and gotten you into this mess. Forgive me, brother; I didn’t mean to do wrong.”

“Don’t be hard on yourself,” Hopeful answered. “I forgive you, and I believe this will turn out for our good in the end.”

Christian replied, “I’m glad you’re so merciful, but we can’t stand here like this. Let’s try to go back.”

“Let me go ahead, brother,” said Hopeful.

“No, let me,” said Christian. “That way if there are any hazards ahead, I’ll get to them first. It’s my fault that we’re lost.”

“No,” answered Hopeful, “you’re too distraught; you might lead us astray again.”

Suddenly they heard an encouraging voice calling to them. “*Set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again*” (Jeremiah 31:21). But the water was very high by this time, and going back was dangerous. (Watching, I realized how much easier it is to leave the path when we are on it than to return to it when we have left it.) As



Drawing by Robert Tupper

## Giant Despair Holds His Club

they tried to find their way back to the right path, the night was so dark and the flood so severe that nine or ten times they were nearly drowned.

## Giant Despair

Try as they did, the pilgrims couldn’t make it back to the steps that night. At last they found a little shelter, and sat down in it to wait for daybreak, but they were so weary that they fell fast asleep.

Not far from where they slept stood Doubting Castle, owned by

Giant Despair; they were in fact sleeping on his property. The giant rose early that morning, and was strolling up and down his fields when he found Christian and Hopeful still sleeping.

"Wake up!" he snarled at them. "Who be ye, and whaddye think yer doin' on me land?"

They told him they were pilgrims who had lost their way.

"Ye trespassed on me land," yelled the Giant. "Tramplin' all over me fields and sleepin' in 'em too. Now yer comin' wiv me." The pilgrims knew this was their own fault, so they said little. The giant chased them ahead of him to the castle and threw them into a dungeon, dark, stinking, and filthy (Psalm 88:18). There they lay, from Wednesday morning to Saturday night, without a bite of bread, a drop of water, or a single visitor. It was certainly a terrible situation, but it was worse for Christian, for he knew it was his mistake which had put them there.

When Giant Despair went to bed Saturday evening, he mentioned to his wife Worry that he had thrown a couple of men into his dungeon for trespassing. He then asked her what she thought he should do with the prisoners.

Worry asked who the prisoners were, where they came from,

and where they were going. When Despair told her, she advised him to beat them without mercy. This seemed like good advice to Despair, so as soon as he rose the next morning, he grabbed a fierce-looking crab-apple club, slouched down to the dungeon, and began yelling at the prisoners as if they were dogs. When they gave him no answer, he attacked them, beating them so mercilessly that they were unable even to roll over on the floor. Then he left them alone, and they spent the rest of the day sighing and lamenting bitterly.

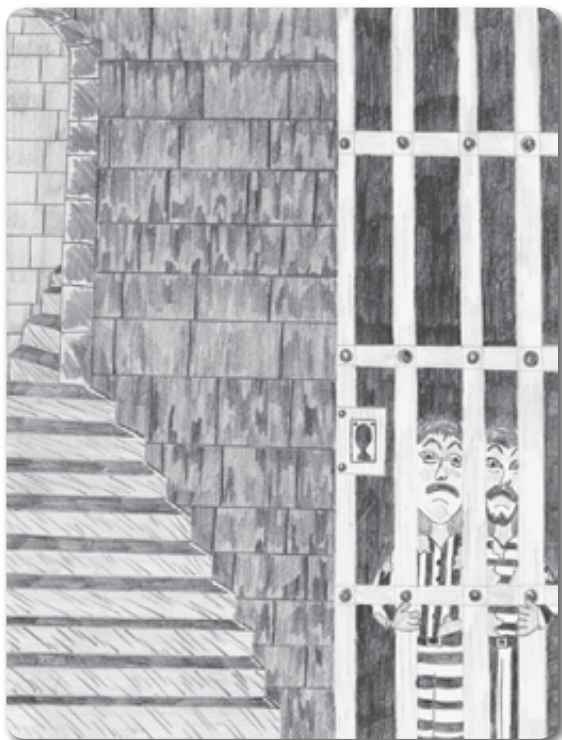
The next night, Worry asked again about the prisoners, and hearing that they were still alive, she advised the giant to suggest suicide to them. Accordingly, the next morning he went down to the prison, grouchy as usual. He noted how sore they were from the beating of the day before, and told them that since they were unlikely to ever get out, they should do away with themselves using a knife, rope, or poison. "Aye, no sense livin' any more in sich trouble as ye be in wiv me," he growled.

Instead of taking the giant's advice, Christian and Hopeful begged him to free them. At that, Giant Despair, his face twisted with rage, lunged at them and would undoubtedly have killed

them himself, but just then he had an attack of convulsions, as he often did on sunny days, and lost the use of his hand temporarily. He shuffled away, leaving them alone to puzzle over what to do next.

Before long Christian spoke. "Brother, what should we do? This is a miserable life. Personally, I don't know if it's better to live this way or to kill myself. My soul chooses strangling rather than life [Job 7:15], and the grave sounds inviting after this dungeon. Do you think we should do as he says?"

"Our situation is bad, no doubt about it," said Hopeful, "and death would be better than staying here forever. But remember that the Lord of the country to which we're going has told us never to murder another person. Think how much worse it would be to murder ourselves! The person who kills someone else only



Drawing by Robert Tupper

## Christian and Hopeful Trapped in the Dungeon

kills the body, but killing ourselves would be killing both body and soul. Besides, brother, you talk about rest in the grave—have you forgotten that murderers go to hell? No murderer has eternal life. Remember too that Giant Despair isn't invincible; I've heard of people escaping from him. The God Who made the world could cause the giant to die, or he could forget to lock us in. He could have another fit of convulsions in here and become helpless

again. If that does happen, I'm determined to gather my courage and do my best to escape; I was a fool not to try the first time. Let's be patient, brother, and give it some time. We might be free before long; let's not be our own murderers." With such talk, Hopeful cheered Christian a little as they passed another long, gloomy day in the dark.

Toward evening, the giant visited the dungeon to see if the

prisoners had taken his advice. He found them alive—alive, and little more, for with nothing to eat or drink and after the brutal beatings he had given them, they only had strength to breathe. Still, he was enraged that they had disobeyed his advice, and as he left, he threatened to make them wish they had never been born.

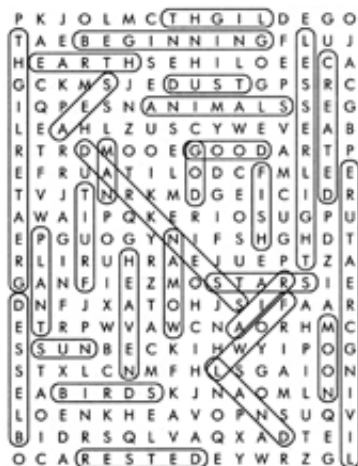
The prisoners trembled at the giant's threats, and Christian fainted, and when he came to,

they began again to discuss whether they should take the giant's advice. Again Christian seemed willing to follow it, and again Hopeful tried to persuade him otherwise.

"My brother," said Hopeful, "have you forgotten all the bravery you used to show? Apollyon couldn't crush you, and you never turned back in spite of the terrors you heard, saw, and felt in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Think of all the challenges and dangers you've already conquered, and now do you have nothing but fear? Look, I'm in this dungeon, too, and I'm a much weaker man than you. The giant has hurt me, denied me food and water, and kept me in the dark, just like you; let's be patient. Remember what a man

### Puzzle Answers for Last Issue

*God's Wonderful Creation Word Search  
Puzzle on page 36:*



*"Round Up" on page 37:*

1. Insulin
2. Phonograph
3. Murmur
4. Sheepish
5. Abracadabra
6. Miter,
- Termite
7. Ion, Onion
8. Entertainment
9. Orator
10. Church.
11. Heartache
12. Alfalfa

you were at Vanity Fair; they couldn't scare you with the chains, the cage, or even the threat of a bloody death. A Christian should never do something as shameful as suicide, so we've got to hold out."

That night when Giant Despair and his wife were in bed, Worry asked him whether the prisoners had taken his advice.

"Nay," answered the giant. "Sturdy rogues they be. They be a choos'n to suffer anything, but make away with 'emselves they won't."

His wife answered, "Why don't ya take 'em out to yonder yard 'dere, and show 'em da bones and skulls from da folks you's already fetched off. Make 'em tink dey's to be ripped to shreddies like doze poor fellas was."

In the morning, the Giant headed down to the prison again and lost no time taking the prisoners out to the yard. "Look ye here," he glowered. "These was pilgrims, too, as ye be, and they trespassed on me property, as ye done, and, when it did seem good to me, I tore them to pieces, as I shall tear ye to pieces in less than ten days, mayhap. Now get ye back to yer den!" And he

## Do you have a Bible to read?

If not, we would like to send you one! On a separate sheet of paper, clearly print your request for your free KJV Bible and send it to us, including your name, ID, and address.

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

beat them all the way back to the prison.

All day Saturday, they lay in misery. When night fell, Giant Despair and his wife Worry went to bed as usual, and began to discuss the prisoners. The giant said it was amazing that he couldn't destroy them by his beatings or his bad advice.

"Hmm," said Worry, "I fears dey may yet have some hope. Do dey tink somebody may come to help dem out—or no, maybe dey has some lockpickers in dere pockets, and dey be makin' plans to 'scape! Ha!"

"Now ye be sayin' so, Dearie," said the giant. "Might be, might be. Come mornin' I'll search 'em good."

At about midnight that night, the pilgrims began to pray, and they continued until almost day-break. Suddenly Christian burst out in amazement, "What a fool I am! Lying here in a stinking dungeon when I can go wherever I please! Inside my shirt I have a key, called Promise, that

will open any lock in Doubting Castle.”

“That’s good news,” said Hopeful. “Pull it out and give it a try!”

Christian pulled out the key and shoved it into the lock on the

After crossing the steps, Christian and Hopeful considered what could be done to keep others from making the same terrible mistake they had made. They decided to set up a pillar engraved with the following

words: “Across these steps is the path to Doubting Castle, owned by Giant Despair, who hates the King of the Celestial City and tries to destroy His holy pilgrims.”

**They still had to get through the castle gate, and that lock was terribly stiff, but it opened with Christian’s key.**

dungeon door. When he turned it, the deadbolt shot back and the door swung open easily. They hurried through and ran to the outer door leading to the castle yard; the key opened that one, too. They still had to get through the castle gate, and that lock was terribly stiff, but it opened with Christian’s key.

Eager to escape, they shoved open the gate, but its creaking was so loud that it woke Giant Despair. He jumped out of bed and rushed to catch them, but suddenly his arms and legs gave out and he went into convulsions. He couldn’t follow the pilgrims, and they never stopped until they were back on the King’s highway, where they knew they were safe at last.

Many people who followed them read what they had written and escaped the danger because of it.

When they were finished with their job, they sang this song:

*“Out of the path we went, and then we found what comes of walking on forbidden ground.*

*And let all those who follow take due care that carelessness does not attract them there,*

*To trespass and become the prisoners of Doubting Castle, ruled by Despair.”*

– to be continued

Artists:

Randy Tupper

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Coal Township, PA

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# Jesus and I

Frederick L. Miles  
Terrell Unit, Rosharon, Texas

In the darkest of night,  
I sought His face;  
I wanted His love;  
I needed His grace.

In anguish of soul,  
Tears filled my eyes;  
Heart broken in pieces,  
Spirit filled with deep sighs.

His hand reached down;  
He wiped away my tears.  
Tenderly He touched me,  
Redeeming many years.

Hope filled up my soul;  
Love washed o'er my heart;  
Joy filled my spirit;  
Never more will we part.



“Be ye kind one to another,  
tenderhearted, forgiving one  
another, even as God for Christ’s  
sake hath forgiven you.”

*Ephesians 4:32*

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