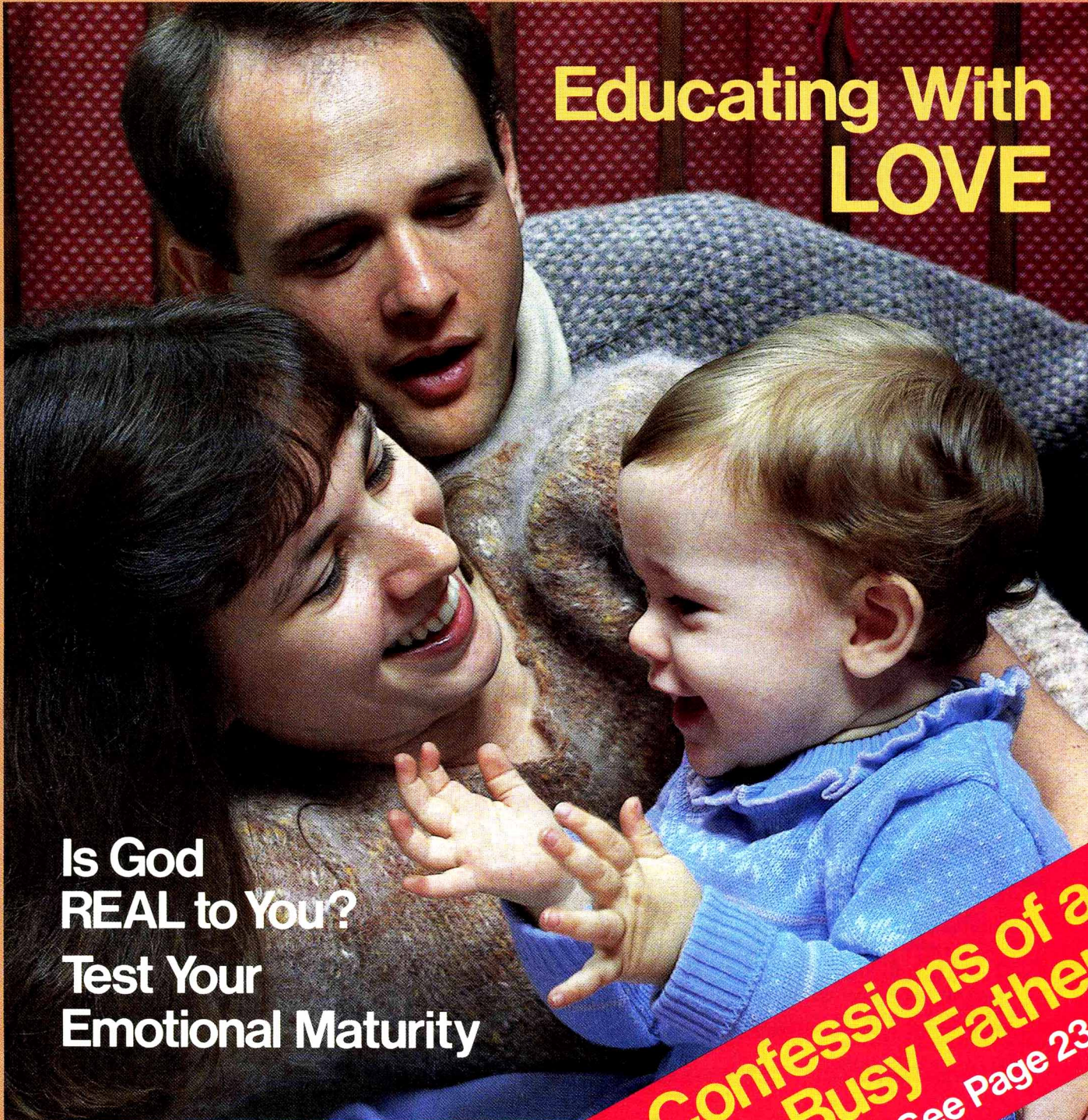


The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

JANUARY 1985



**Educating With
LOVE**

**Is God
REAL to You?
Test Your
Emotional Maturity**

**Confessions of a
Busy Father**
See Page 23

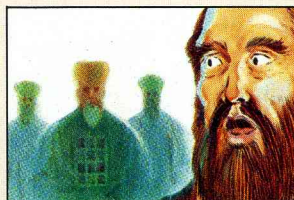
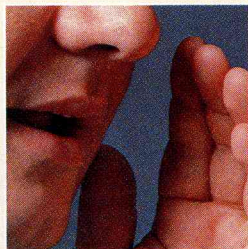
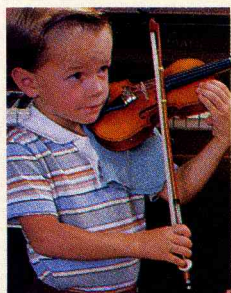
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**Coveting:
Roadblock
to Contentment**
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COVER: A child's future success hinges on early education. "Educating With Love," beginning on page 14, focuses on solid ways to promote strong communication skills. Photo by Hal Finch.

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PERSONAL FROM



HOW and WHY We Know We Have the Truth

Here's a sample of clever but faulty human reasoning! Where God or the truth is concerned, it seems natural to reason suspiciously, and with a skeptical or hostile approach.

Would you be deceived by this type of reasoning?

Some time ago a man, who knew little or nothing about the truth that the living God is proclaiming to the world through us, asked:

"How can you know that *you* are any nearer right than anybody else? You say the whole world is deceived. You say the churches are wrong on many points of doctrine, but that you have the TRUTH. You say they are human, and have been deceived. It's human to err.

"But are *you* not also human? Are you not also fallible? How can you be sure you are any nearer right than any of the others?"

I want to give our readers the clear, plain, understandable answer to those questions! I want to EXPLAIN, so plainly you can really comprehend it, HOW and WHY we know we have the TRUTH!

I want to make clear how YOU may know what is the TRUTH, while this whole world is deceived and in utter darkness. I want to tell you HOW *you may be SURE!*

First, are we not also human? Yes, indeed! We can make mistakes, too! We, too, could be in error on this, that or the other point. But *we do not need to be!*

A man may say: "Who does this

Herbert W. Armstrong think he is? Is he any smarter than all these great theologians — these noted preachers and heads of great religious denominations?"

The answer is NO — it is not a matter of intellectual capacity.

We are *all* human. We are *all* fallible. I have been wrong. I have made mistakes. The same is true of all those God is using in His WORK.

That is the very first thing that we *do* recognize. That is the *starting point* in the search for truth. That is one reason why we *do* have the truth, in the midst of a very deceived world. I wish every religious leader would adopt this approach.

God says, "PROVE all things." That means *you* are fallible. That means all the "great" men are fallible! ALL are human. ALL can be *wrong* — and nearly all are. The *whole world* is DECEIVED (Revelation 12:9). That means its religious leaders and churches are deceived!

The very recognition of that fact is the *beginning* of right knowledge. We *do* recognize it — and that we ourselves could be wrong. That is the *first step* toward coming out of the fog of error and deception, starting toward truth. It is not a matter of who has the greater intellect. A man may have the highest IQ in the world, and in his intellectual VANITY refuse to admit he could be wrong — reject all correction — and thus embrace error and deception.

The second step, if you would

know TRUTH, is to be *willing* to admit being deceived, or in error, and to reject it and accept truth. Ask yourself: "Am I really *willing* to confess error — to admit I'm wrong — *when proved* — and reject it? Am I *willing* to accept truth new to me — *when proved* — even though unpopular — even though it cuts me off from my family, friends, associates or club members — even though everything in my selfish and vain nature rebels against it? Am I willing to *act on it* — OBEY the truth — no matter what the cost?"

Ah, yes! Perhaps *now* you are beginning to see why "all these great theologians — these noted preachers and heads of great religious denominations" could be in error. Did you ever know a person of great intellectual powers who did not have the kind of VANITY that shrinks from confessing he has been WRONG — and has misled others? To find and live the TRUTH requires a HUMBLED mind.

These are the first TWO points in which one who has come to the TRUTH differs from those still steeped in deception and error.

Can you be SURE that we have the TRUTH, when we, too, as the critic argued, are fallible, with minds that are not perfect? Yes, *you can be SURE!*

The greatest, ablest intellect in the world is still HUMAN — still fallible — still imperfect. Those who are deceived and steeped in error have simply not stopped to

(Continued on page 19)

Why God Is Not Real to Most People

Millions say they believe in God — but WHY does He seem so FAR OFF to them? Millions have heard ABOUT God, but do not KNOW God. This article tells you HOW you CAN!

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Are you like the person who said to me, “Oh, I believe in God all right, but it seems like He is *so far off* — SO UNREAL”?

WHY do most people feel that way? WHY should God seem UNREAL — like an almost invisible filmy wisp — or a phantom — or something shapeless and ethereal?

Born without knowledge

The instant you were born you knew nothing about God. You knew *nothing* — *period!* You were born with a mind capable of receiving, but as yet unfilled with, knowledge.

Whatever you may know — or *think* you know — about God has come into your mind since birth.

How did knowledge *begin* coming into your mind? There are only five channels through which knowledge may come, naturally, into the human mind — the channels of sight, sound, taste, smell, feel.

But also there are three dimensions of knowledge or consciousness: the *around*, the *within* and

the *ABOVE*. Yet the natural mind of a mortal human comprehends only the first two. Babies grow into childhood with awareness of only the *around* and the *within*.

But as a child, through the sense of hearing, you probably were *told* something about God. But understandable knowledge of God comes from the third dimension — the *ABOVE*. And the *ABOVE* is spiritual.

God is a spirit. Spiritual things cannot be *seen*, nor heard, nor felt, nor tasted, nor smelled. Understanding of spiritual things cannot enter the human mind through the five sensual channels. Therefore it is probable that the adults trying to tell you about God did not have true perception and understanding. And it is natural that whatever knowledge about God entered your mind — through the ear, or the eye — was vague, misty, UNREAL. You couldn't SEE God. Spirit is invisible to human eyes (except, as has happened, by some miraculous “materializing” or means of manifestation).

You couldn't *hear* God. You had no actual conscious *contact* with Him. You probably formed

some *imaginary* picture in your mind of what you *supposed* He must be like — based on what might have been told you, or what you may have read. But you didn't SEE or HEAR *Him* — you read or heard only something ABOUT Him! And the picture was unclear, clouded, out of focus, ethereal.

Is it any wonder He did not seem REAL — that He seemed so far off?

There are millions of professing Christians and Jews who *say* that they believe in God. Many profess to know more or less about Him. But knowing *about* Him is a far cry from knowing Him!

The INVISIBLE “first cause”

The very presence of the *around* seems to the normal mind to demand a “*first cause*” to have produced it. Yet — MYSTERY of MYSTERIES! The “*first cause*” is not seen, heard, smelled, tasted or felt. So many ideas, concepts and conjectures have been brought forth out of human imagination as to the nature of that “*first cause*.”

Yet the true God *does* reveal

Himself, to those who are willing to comprehend and to obey. And He says these people, conscious of the *around*, who formulate their own ideas as to the "*first cause*" are without excuse for denying the true God and putting in His place some fanciful conjecture of their own making through distorted human reasoning.

"Because what *may be* KNOWN OF GOD is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are *without excuse*" (Romans 1:19-20).

Or, as the Moffatt translation makes plain, "His invisible nature, his everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what he has made."

That is, the material things He has created and made reflect plainly the nature, power and divine being of the invisible MAKER.

The verse preceding the above says the world's leaders have known the truth, but have *held it back from the people* — prevented them from receiving a clear understanding: "But God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the impiety and wickedness of those who hinder [hold back] the Truth by their wickedness" (Romans 1:18, Moffatt). So what is usually told to a growing child *about* God usually is a very distorted picture, indeed!

Still, hearing *about* a person is not really *knowing* the *person*!

One man's experience

There was super-righteous Job, the greatest man in all the East. God even challenged Satan, the accuser of God's people, to find a single sinful or unrighteous flaw in his character. Even though allowed to put Job through the most painful and severe trials, Satan could find nothing against him.

Of course there *was* something very unrighteous about Job. All have sinned — including Job. His

great sin was his very SELF-righteousness. Satan could not recognize SELF-righteousness as a sin.

But after God whittled Job down to size, humbled him, made him see his own insignificance and vanity — his nothingness compared to the great God — Job said: "I have *heard of You* by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye *sees You*. Therefore I *ABHOR MYSELF*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Getting to *KNOW* God is quite different from *HEARING* about Him.

So, what do people, on the average, know about God? They started out, from youngest childhood, knowing whatever they had *heard* or been told by parents or others. And since those leaders who once *did know* God (Romans 1:21) *held back* the truth and, becoming fools (verse 22), gave a distorted and untrue teaching, most of what has been told growing children in our time has been a perversion of the truth.

Perhaps some children were told *NOTHING* about God at all as they were growing from babyhood toward adolescence and into early adulthood. But most probably they have been *told* more or less *about* God before they actually *read* anything about Him *IN THE BIBLE*. Also they very probably had read what others had written about Him before reading anything in the Bible for themselves.

So what did they know? They knew only what had been told or communicated to them by those *AROUND* them. They knew only what they had received from *other people* who did not themselves *KNOW* God. Those from whom they learned knew only what they, in turn, had gathered from still *other* misinformed and deceived *people*.

Not from the *ABOVE* — but from the *AROUND*! Not from God Himself, but from the *AROUND*. And your Bible says the *other people* constitute a deceived world!

And when such a person, approaching or reaching early adulthood, does read the Bible,

his concept of God has been so firmly implanted in his mind *by other people*, he continues picturing God in the same way.

He probably is just as I was for many, many years: I did read the Bible at times — but I then said, "I just can't understand the Bible."

Well, NO WONDER, then, that most people who profess to "believe in God" say God seems unreal to them!

They are like Job. Job's source of knowledge, before his personal confrontation with God, had been from the *around* — he had heard *about* God by the hearing of the ear, *from other people*. God never seemed real to him until he gained *PERSONAL CONTACT* — until he got to really *KNOW* GOD!

There is a way in which *YOU* can establish *actual, direct, personal contact* with God — if you have not done so already. Then He will become *REAL*!

Let me give you an illustration. Let's say you have heard *about* Raymond F. McNair. He is Deputy Chancellor of Ambassador College in Pasadena. You may have read one or two of his articles in *The Good News* or *The Plain Truth*.

But let us suppose you have never seen his picture — you have never seen him in person, you have never talked with him. Suppose someone has told you a few things *about* him, twisting the facts and giving you untrue information. You may know a few things *about* him — and some of those distorted — but you surely could not say that you know *him*. If you have not even seen his picture you don't know what he looks like. Many people, having heard me on the radio, said on seeing me in person, "Why, you don't look a bit like I pictured you in my mind."

In the same way, if you should come into personal contact with Mr. McNair, you'd probably be surprised to see that he wouldn't look at all like you pictured him. But, if you were suddenly thrown in his company almost constantly,

(Continued on page 20)



When All Is Said and Done, Will You Hear the Words: **‘Well Done’?**

Are you using your talents? Or are you, like the wicked servant in the parable, burying what Jesus Christ expects you to put to work for Him?

By Robert C. Smith

For salvation's sake, let's consider!

Jesus Christ was not pleased when His servant told Him he had not used the talent he had been given. That servant feared Jesus' authority, for he "knew" Jesus was a "hard" man (Matthew 25:24). Jesus called him a wicked and lazy servant — and cast him out!

Are you hiding a talent?

God created human beings in His own image — the only part of the physical creation given the prerogative of thinking, planning, designing and bringing to fruition the results of that creative

effort. We are to become part of the supreme creating Family of almighty God.

To prepare to be creators, we must be learning to be creative.

Quite often we nurture ideas, thoughts and concepts that seem to have some degree of merit, but we fail to act upon or follow through with them. For one reason or another, we fail to exercise our potential to contribute constructively to areas where we have responsibility.

Paul reminds us: "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world . . . and God has chosen the

weak . . . and the base . . . and the things which are despised" (I Corinthians 1:26-28).

If we are not careful, we can be deceived into thinking we are totally useless and incapable of producing any good fruit. We can become fearful, just as did the servant in Matthew 25.

We all have talents

God called each of us separately (John 6:44) because of something He saw in us that He can use in His overall plan of salvation. Of course, the ultimate reason for our calling is eternal life in the God Family, but that opportunity is to be offered to all humanity later on (II Peter 3:9). God's is not a hit-or-miss process

Photos: Hal Finch, G.A. Belluche Jr.

like throwing darts at a board, but one of design — of creativity. There are no chance callings — each is thought out in advance.

God had an idea — a thought, an effective, helpful, productive concept — and He is bringing that idea to fruition. Each of us, as part of His begotten Family, has the same potential to create — to add to the plan of salvation. We have minds with which we can contribute to God's work.

But what we have been given is not a potential only. It is an absolute responsibility!

If we are not "using" the office of Creator now, we may not have the official title bestowed upon us later on in a marvelous resurrection into the creating Family. We are in jeopardy of becoming unprofitable servants of Jesus Christ. If you underestimate yourself, draw back and become fearful to present that which God has given you the ability to produce, you truly have put away in a handkerchief that "talent" or "mina" entrusted to you (Luke 19:20-21).

If we allow ourselves to assume a station in life that suppresses our abilities — if we become weary and downtrodden, wrapping ourselves into a cocoon of introversion — we can become like that servant whom Christ called "lazy." We will be guilty of not fulfilling our responsibilities.

Jesus Christ encouraged the development of natural abilities. In Matthew 25:21, 23, He said: "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord." Jesus was pleased that the servant was a thinking servant. He accepted with joy the contributions offered. He encouraged by reward.

It's not always easy

The recognition of our responsibility does not always automatically open the doors to accomplishment. Solomon was inspired to admonish us, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). We might set out to change our lives,

to use our talents and abilities, only to find unexpected obstacles and roadblocks that seriously hamper our efforts.

The normal tendency is to become discouraged — to give up — to quit.

Joseph, the second-youngest son of the patriarch Jacob, had obvious talents and abilities, much to the consternation of his brothers, who vented their displeasure with him by selling him into slavery (Genesis 37). Joseph was purchased by the wealthy captain of the guard in the household of Pharaoh, the monarch of Egypt, and was given responsibilities that placed him second in command over the household of Potiphar (Genesis 39).

However, circumstances suddenly propelled Joseph into a diametrically opposite position, and he found himself in prison, stripped of many opportunities to utilize his many talents.

However, God did not desert Joseph during his period of long-suffering: "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison" (Genesis 39:21). Although he was stifled in his efforts, frustrated by the seemingly inescapable situation, Joseph did not lose heart. He applied himself as the circumstances allowed, and grew in patience and character.

And God honored that patience. Through perseverance and diligence, Joseph was catapulted from the depths of prison, with its attendant restrictions and limitations, to the very height of responsibility, as the leader second in command of the entire nation of Egypt. He answered only to Pharaoh himself (Genesis 41:40).

Joseph labored with his might — and won the battle.

Joseph's example is for our edification and encouragement. The lesson reveals the need for godly character in our lives, in order to ultimately complete our purpose for being. Joseph saw the overview in his mind's eye. He kept the big picture foremost in his thinking. He knew God had a

purpose for him personally. Creative fulfillment should rate extremely high on our list of priorities, but patient enduring under less-than-ideal circumstances will produce godly character for all eternity.

Remember Solomon's admonition: "Do it with your might."

In all relationships

We can develop our talents in all areas of our lives. Notice, for instance, the Bible instruction concerning employer-employee relationships: "Servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Ephesians 6:5-6).

As employees with the knowledge of God's plan, regardless of where we work, we become employees of Jesus Christ, actually serving in God's work. We become part of the instrument that God is using to shout out the good news of His coming Kingdom to a dying world.

We must recognize that as part of the Body doing that work, we should be operating at full capacity. Our minds must be fertile. We must be interested enough and concerned enough in the overall plan that whatever part we have in it becomes an exciting challenge. We must want to contribute ideas, suggestions and proposals.

However, in that desire there must be balance. Our approach to those over us should be one of humility. A strutting, swaggering attitude can only lead to strife.

Conversely, those in authority, capable and responsible to fairly evaluate the ideas of subordinates, must be careful to never squelch good ideas, enthusiasm or desire, through misguided application of that authority.

Leaders should approach any such situation as did Jesus Christ when the productive servants brought increased talents to Him. He is pleased to have thinking employees — thinking husbands

and wives, thinking children, thinking, concerned human beings — all working with Him toward the overall goal (Matthew 25:20-23).

In marriage situations

Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). And, “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself” (verse 28).

Do we husbands solicit input from our wives? Do we encourage as Jesus did? If our austerity has made us “hard men” — rigid taskmasters — we may be guilty of squelching our wives’ pursuit of talent development.

A husband who rules with the proverbial iron hand can seriously retard the growth that the living Jesus Christ expects from a wife. A husband should help his wife want to be the helper God created her to be (Genesis 2:18).

In like manner, the wife who ridicules, resists and argues with her husband can be guilty of jeopardizing his eternal life. Paul wrote: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body” (Ephesians 5:22-23).

What a responsibility!

Parents and children

The husband-wife team has an obligation to the children in the family. During his or her formative years, a child should be encouraged to contribute to the family sphere. He must be made to recognize he is an integral part of the overall picture.

Too often the parental tendency, for whatever reason, is to ignore or ridicule suggestions from the young family member. This can be devastating to the pliable young mind that desires recognition and acceptance.

Of course, our talents or gifts must be placed in proper perspective. Failure to recognize that all good gifts are from God (James 1:17) can cause an erroneous

overestimation of our self-worth. Our respective talents truly are gifts from our Creator, and we are expected to develop any such abilities to the optimum.

In Ephesians 6:4 we read, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

This is important to God, important enough that He inspired this passage in Malachi 4:5-6: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

Children are also given an exhortation that will lead to development of real character: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth’” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

What about the elderly?

Notice Titus 2:1-5: “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Here is an exciting command to the elderly to draw upon the archives of their minds to teach.

We live in a society that has lost its balance. Rather than using the wisdom of past generations, gained through years of experience and suffering, we look rather to the youths of the world for our standards. Truly, the words of Isaiah ring out loud and clear: “As for My people,

children are their oppressors” (Isaiah 3:12).

The elderly members of the society have the responsibility to inspire and encourage the youths with their experiences.

What is your part?

Jesus Christ inspired John to write, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (III John 2).

God began a marvelous plan in which each of us is destined to play a major role. We are created in the very image of that God — first from the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), but for the long-range purpose of becoming Creators with Him (I John 3:1-2).

The answer, then, is to recognize the ultimate demand for the development of our personal talents. If we are to become Creators, we must first be using the office.

The greatest way by which we may prosper is to know that we are needed — to know that our efforts will produce happiness in the lives of others — to know we are a necessary part of the Body of Jesus Christ. We have no excuse for hiding our talents or claiming to be devoid of talents, for being created in the image of the all-talented God necessitates that we be talented!

If frustrations, circumstances, environment — even a “hard” man — cause you to hesitate and procrastinate about developing your own personal talents — if you cannot yet see where those abilities will be used — be encouraged by the words of the giver of all good gifts: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:23).

Finally, if we are faithful in developing our talents — preparing ourselves for maximum service — we will hear the words, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (verse 34). □

GRACE

Do You Really Understand It?

The word grace is part of every Christian's vocabulary, yet for many the subject is confusing. Let's let God's Word give us a clear understanding.

By Douglas G. Peitz

Few people — even professing Christians! — really understand what grace is.

And rather than searching the Bible for God's teaching on the subject, they get bogged down in debate over whether grace does away with God's law.

Is grace, as many assume, merely unmerited pardon for sin — or is it much more? Why do we need grace, if we do? Does grace abrogate the need to keep God's commandments? We need to know! Let's go to the Bible and let God's Word answer.

Grace in the New Testament

The New Testament Greek word translated "grace" is *charis*. *Charis* was a widely used word in the first century; its primary meaning is "that which gives pleasure or delight." But, like the English word *grace*, *charis* held a variety of associated meanings not dealing with the grace of God toward man. Before we see what God's grace is, let's first look at these other uses.

Luke, in describing Jesus' childhood development, wrote, "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40). In other words, God was well pleased with Jesus Christ. Obviously, *charis* is not used to mean unmerited par-

don for sin in this case, since Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15, II Corinthians 5:21).

In the book of Acts, Luke uses *charis* to express kindness, favor or goodwill toward another. God gave Joseph "favor [*charis*] and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt" (Acts 7:10). Also, the Church was given favor, or *charis*, with the people around Jerusalem (Acts 2:46-47).

Charis can also express thankfulness. Paul said, "But thanks [*charis*] be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 15:57).

Finally, *charis* can be used to denote a gift or favor done as an act of goodwill: "Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him [Festus] against Paul; and they petitioned him, asking a favor [*charis*] against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem — while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him" (Acts 25:2-3).

God's grace

Charis was used by the Greek world in all the above senses. But the New Testament writers applied this word in a new sense to describe what God is doing for humanity. They realized that God's plan of salvation is so kind, so merciful, so unmerited and so thankworthy that it is the ultimate *charis*!

God's purpose is to reproduce

Himself. Those whom God calls (John 6:44) are given the chance to repent and accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Then, upon being baptized, they are given God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), which enables them to develop godly character and ultimately be born into the very Family of God (I John 3:1-2).

Charis is an all-encompassing word for this whole process of conversion that is being accomplished by God's power.

Why grace is necessary

Why is grace essential to salvation (Ephesians 2:8)? And why are all efforts to earn salvation futile (verse 9)? There are two reasons.

First, "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23) — sin being the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4) — and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). We have all earned the death penalty. And just as any government today realizes, the violation of law cannot go unpunished, or anarchy would ensue.

No, a penalty must be paid, regardless of how sorry the criminal is or how good he promises to be in the future.

Similarly, our regret and subsequent good behavior can never pay the penalty for sin, because the penalty is death. And God's laws are enforced. God does not compromise with sin by allowing a way of life that leads to unhap-

pininess, misery and death to go unpunished. The penalty for our sins must be paid.

Second, not only have we sinned, but man by himself is incapable of overcoming sin. Paul said in Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." Our best efforts are futile unless God gives us the help we need.

God's grace toward us begins when God begins calling us. Unless God opens our minds, we cannot understand His purpose (John 6:44). Paul commented, "God . . . called me through His grace" (Galatians 1:15).

The very fact that you can understand the truths of God as revealed in the Bible is because of God's grace. But being called is just the beginning of grace.

The process of conversion requires more than understanding. It requires change, or repentance. We must freely choose to obey God — and unless God shows us what to repent of and the importance of obeying Him, we cannot repent. "The goodness of God leads you to repentance," Paul explained in Romans 2:4.

But being sorry for sinning, and changing, is not enough. So God's grace continues with Jesus Christ's sacrifice: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation [an atoning sacrifice] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness" (Romans 3:23-25).

Jesus Christ paid the penalty of sin, which is death, in our stead. Christ's sacrifice is the supreme expression of divine grace. It is totally unmerited (Romans 5:6-8).

Christ's sacrifice frees us from the penalty of breaking God's law. But it does not do away with the law! Think: Would God now allow the violation of laws that necessitated the death of His own Son? Of course not.

Grace does not nullify God's law. Rather, grace is necessary

because God's law is eternally binding. As Paul explained: "Shall we continue in sin [the transgression of God's law — I John 3:4] that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1-2) Continuing in sin would mock Jesus Christ's supreme sacrifice.

Unmerited but not unconditional

Here is where many misunderstand. Grace is unmerited but it is not unconditional. There are two conditions: repentance and faith (Mark 1:5, Acts 2:38). Although we can never earn salvation, God does set certain requirements for receiving His grace.

Let's understand. Once God, by His grace, reveals to us the need to repent and humbly accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice as payment for our sins, we must do our part. We must voluntarily yield ourselves to God, admitting where we have been wrong, and make the necessary changes. Then we must be baptized as an outward expression of our repentance and faith (Romans 6:3-6).

Don't misunderstand — God's grace is free and unmerited, but if we refuse to change our lives — to obey God — He is under no obligation to bestow His grace upon us. God will not allow Christ's sacrifice and His grace to be taken lightly.

The process continues. Peter tells us we must now "grow in grace" (II Peter 3:18, Authorized Version). Grace is unmerited pardon for sin, but it is much more. For if grace were merely the unmerited forgiveness of sin, how could we grow in grace except by sinning more? No, we must, while coming under God's grace, overcome sin.

If you are truly under God's grace, you will be striving diligently to obey God's commandments. Paul said: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in

the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:11-14).

We are to develop godly character by growing and overcoming in order that we can ultimately be born into the very Family of God. But we cannot do this alone (Matthew 19:25-26). We need God's Spirit. And His Spirit, by His grace toward us, is a gift (Acts 10:45, 11:17).

God's Spirit gives us the power we need to develop character. But we must work at it. Paul said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (I Corinthians 15:10).

To grow in grace is to overcome sin through coupling God's Spirit with our own efforts. Without God's help, overcoming sin would be impossible.

Finally, after we have developed godly character through God's Spirit, one final act of grace is bestowed upon us — eternal life! We deserved death, but will receive life eternal. As Paul said, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The world is deceived into believing in a shallow, limited concept of God's grace. True grace is more than the forgiveness of sin; it is the total process of salvation.

Peter summed it up beautifully: "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. . . . I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand" (I Peter 5:10-12). □

I Wish There Was Another Word for Grace

Someone once remarked that working too hard without taking care of yourself was like "burning the candle at both ends." It was a good analogy, but it has been used so much that it has become a cliché.

that) he must find a different, less predictable way to make a point.

This is particularly important when making a religious point. Religious writing is sprinkled with terms like *grace*, *glory*, *sanctified*, *redeemed*, *righteousness*, *faith* and *born again*. You probably recognize these words,

especially if you've grown up with some contact with the Bible and traditional religion.

But have you become so familiar with them that you no longer stop to think about what they mean? Have they become clichés — religious clichés?

Even entire scriptures from the Bible have become clichés. Favorites like "God so loved the world" and "The Lord is my

shepherd" and "Thy word is truth" crop up all the time, even on greeting cards and souvenirs. They are standard fare for comforting, inspiring and encouraging, and they generally make people feel better for a while.

But do we let them off too lightly? Are we content with only a superficial understanding of these scriptures?

Take, for instance, the expression "Jesus died for you." You've heard that all your life. But have

you ever thought about what it means? Let's look at it more carefully. *Jesus* (the Son of God) *died* (gave up His existence, allowing Himself to be put to death) *for you* (so that you would not have to have the same thing happen to you).

Now, have you ever seriously asked yourself why Jesus had to die like that *for you*? What have you done that deserved death? Surely God would not have allowed Jesus to be tortured to death just to get some concept across to help us "feel better."

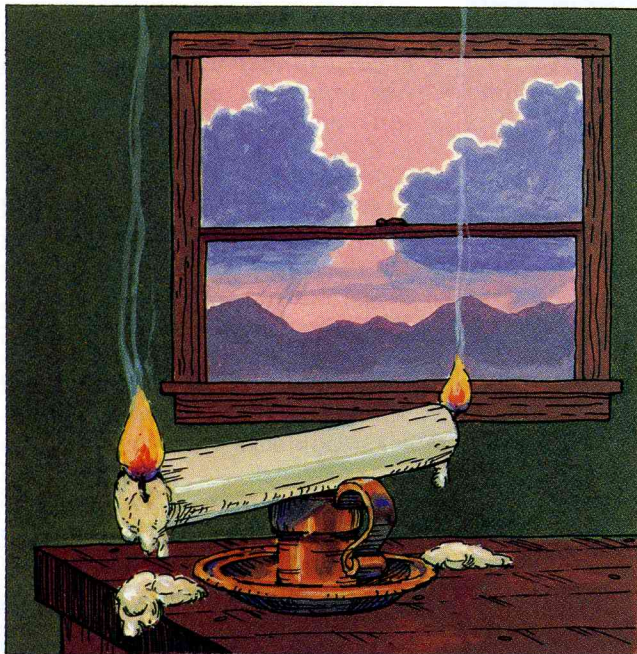
Jesus had to die so that you wouldn't have to.

More "old favorites"

Several other popular (perhaps too popular) scriptures should explain this point further. I'm sure that you've heard that "the wages of sin is death" — a quote from Paul's epistle to the Romans (Romans 6:23). What that means is that what you earn if you break God's law is the loss of your life, your consciousness, your total existence. Putting it bluntly, it means that if you sin, you are finished. You have received a death sentence and are doomed to destruction.

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," wrote the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 18:4, Authorized Version). That also has become a cliché, its meaning dimmed. Most people still seem to believe that their souls are immortal, and that the souls of sinners live on forever in hell fire.

Perhaps the most popular scripture of all is the so-called golden verse: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only



It is the same with sayings like "Every cloud has a silver lining" and "All's well that ends well." They have become stereotyped and hackneyed by overuse.

That's the trouble with clichés — their very familiarity works against them to blunt their impact.

No writer or speaker who is "worth his salt" (oops) dares risk clichés. If he wants to "strike while the iron is hot" (sorry about

begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

But wait a minute. If you have an immortal soul that is going to live forever in either heaven or hell, why do you have to believe in Jesus Christ in order to get everlasting life? Don't you already have it? But then, if you have it, how can the soul that sins die?

Do you see the trouble with clichés? You accept them without really stopping to think about what they actually mean. If you let the true significance sink in, you would quickly realize that there is something drastically wrong with some of the popularly held ideas about religion.

Here's another example. Everyone knows the "beatitudes." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," said Jesus in Matthew 5:3. Now that's clear enough, isn't it? If you are "poor in spirit" — that is, humble, not proud or conceited — you will go to heaven when you die, won't you?

But two verses later, Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Now does this mean that the poor in spirit go to heaven, while the meek remain on earth? Does that make any sense?

Does *any of it* make any sense?

Don't blame the Bible

It is not surprising that many people who start to seriously study the Bible give up in frustration. The Bible may be a great book for spiritual-sounding quotes and comforting platitudes, but when you try to put it all together, it seems to dissolve into a mass of contradictions.

But that is not the Bible's fault. Too often we bring to our study of the Bible some firmly held beliefs that are just plain wrong.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus warned His disciples, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). That warning is just

as important today. Don't be so sure that you know what Jesus said. Can you explain clearly what *the Kingdom of God, sanctified, glory, redeemed and righteousness* really mean?

And what exactly is *sin*? Different churches and denominations have their own definitions — dancing, drinking, playing cards, eating meat or drinking tea, coffee and alcohol. But what does the Bible say sin is?

The answer is in I John 3:4, AV: "Sin is the transgression of the law." (That is one scripture that has never become a cliché — most people don't even know it's there.) *Transgress* means "to infringe, overstep or violate."

So sin is the violating of God's law. A popular teaching today is that the law was "nailed to the cross," and so after Jesus' death we aren't bound to keep it anymore. But have you ever seen that in the Bible? Are you sure that Jesus taught His disciples to believe it?

Because if He didn't, then maybe the law is still in effect, and maybe you've been transgressing it. And that, according to I John 3:4, is sin, and the wages you get for sinning is death, remember (Romans 6:23).

Could you, then, in spite of what you have always believed, have been lulled into a false security, because you have not really thought deeply about these favorite scriptures and concepts?

Now if you are indeed guilty of sin, you need help. Either you need a pardon, or you need to have someone pay the penalty for you.

You can't expect a pardon. That would involve a waiving or dismissing of the penalty, and sin is too serious for that. God doesn't just overlook the transgression of His law as if it was some minor offense — a slap on the hand and "try not to do it again." Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, explained Paul in Hebrews 9:22.

God will, however, accept someone else's death in your

place. But who can take that death penalty for you? "All have sinned," said Paul (Romans 3:23), so everyone else has received the death sentence.

Except one. Jesus Christ never sinned. He is the only person ever to live and not earn the wages of sin (I Peter 2:21-22). So He and He alone can pay the death penalty that your sins have earned you.

That is why He allowed Himself to be cruelly put to death. That is what "Jesus died for you" means. It is a matter of life and death — yours!

Clearing up clichés

Once you let yourself think beyond a superficial understanding of these easily digested clichés, you will find that the Bible does not contradict itself. On the contrary, it begins to make wonderful sense. Words like *sanctified* and *redeemed* and concepts like *glory* and *Kingdom of God* will explode into new and rich meaning.

When you fully comprehend what Jesus Christ meant by being *born again*, it will change the direction of your life forever. Don't assume that you know — you could cheat yourself from finding out. "Born again" has become a cliché — and clichés are roadblocks to understanding. Dig deeper.

Have you noticed that many of the booklets and articles that the publishers of this magazine have to offer are designed to confront clichés head-on? Challenging titles like *Just What Do You Mean . . . Kingdom of God?*, *What Is the Reward of the Saved?* and *What Do You Mean — Born Again?* are designed to clear away the fuzzy concepts that you may have now, and make the truth startlingly clear.

Please ask us for these booklets. They have helped thousands of people to really begin to grow in "grace and knowledge" (II Peter 3:18). "Knowledge" hasn't become a cliché yet. But I wish there was another word for "grace." □

Can You Be Trusted?

Loyalty and trust are absent from many personal relationships today. What about your own?

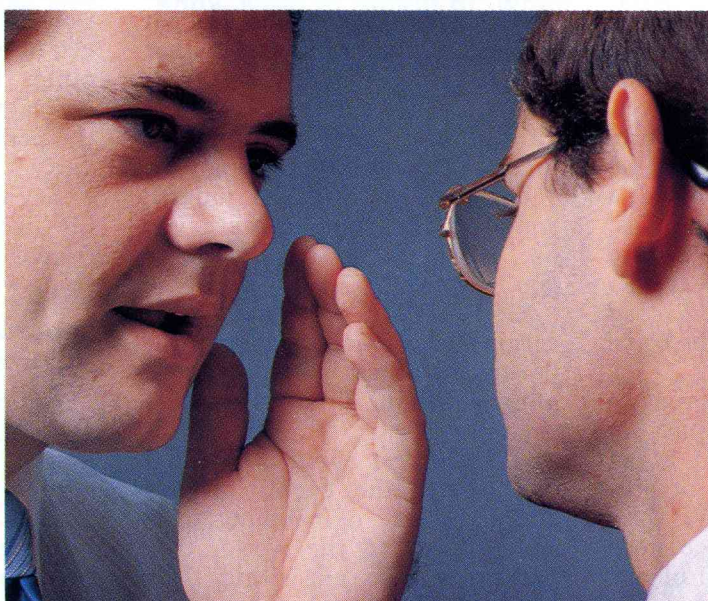
By Richard J. Rice

A long-standing friendship between two men was shattered when one betrayed a secret the other confided in him. Information that was considered strictly personal was divulged to other people.

The betrayed man was stunned and heartbroken — he was shocked. A friend he thought he could trust turned out instead to be a devious traitor!

How highly do you value a confidence? How deep does your loyalty run? Can you be trusted — relied upon to keep private information to yourself? Do you conscientiously guard the personal secrets others confide in you? When friends and associates bare their innermost feelings and seek your advice, do you resolve to keep it quiet?

Let's reverse the situation. How many of your friends can you trust with your deepest secrets? Can you be honest and open with them about your personal hang-ups, problems and



frustrations, and know they will not betray you? Or do you fear they would react with shock and abhorrence and pass the information on to others?

Even among our closest associates, it seems hard sometimes to find a friend we can really trust. We hear gossip and rumors almost every day. Loyalties are betrayed with reckless abandon.

This condition prophesied

This deplorable condition in our society has come to be an accepted way of life. We seem to have lost the integrity that true friendship demands.

How odious this must be to

almighty God, whose character reflects the highest level of trust!

The Bible forewarned that this condition would prevail at the close of this age. Jesus stated, "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another" (Matthew 24:10).

The apostle Paul more specifically emphasized that traitors and untrustworthy people would abound: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For

men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors" (II Timothy 3:1-4).

Have you and I become guilty of these sordid evils by violating the sacred trusts that others place in us?

Why trust is rare

Why are trusting friendships so scarce in the world today? A principal reason may be the "loose-tongue syndrome," or the callous disregard for the reputa-

Photo by Warren Watson

tion of others. It seems that we give little thought to the damage we inflict on people when we gossip and besmirch their good names.

For example, have you noticed how often a conversation that begins on an uplifting note soon deteriorates into destructive slander? Blunt opinions are carelessly expressed, sharp remarks and suspicions are freely voiced. This is highly displeasing to God and openly defies His Word.

James wrote: "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge" (James 4:11).

Of seven specific things God says He hates, three have to do with gossip and slander: "These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a *lying tongue*, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a *false witness who speaks lies*, and *one who sows discord among brethren*" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Another reason we are prone to break confidences is that we probably were not taught at an early age the importance of protecting our friendships. We were probably exposed to the occasional hypocrisy and cynicism of our parents, who prattled about the mistakes and foibles of their friends, neighbors and even relatives. Thus, we unconsciously absorbed the gossip habit into our thinking processes.

How very important it is that we teach our children to be faithful to the trusts placed in their care — to view them as a cherished obligation.

A word of caution: Please realize that we're referring to the moral obligation our children have of protecting the privacy of others, and not to serious or immoral acts that need to be reported.

One of the most destructive sins is exposing past mistakes

people have since repented of, or revealing weaknesses they are striving to overcome. Probably nothing is more humiliating to a person who is genuinely repentant than to have his past life brought up and discussed by others who will not leave his sins buried under the blood of Jesus Christ.

God's admonition to forgive

This is why Paul admonished the Corinthians to forgive and comfort the man who was put out of the Church for an immoral act but was reinstated after repenting (II Corinthians 2:7-8).

Unforgiving individuals are ruthless and cruel, and will surely be judged by Jesus Christ for their merciless treatment. Mark 11:26 says, "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." Moreover, Jesus warned: "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:1-2).

God's Word is explicit concerning what our attitude should be toward others who are struggling with sin. True love covers sin (Proverbs 17:9). That is, it thinks the best about others and gives them the benefit of the doubt. Instead of babbling their sinful deeds to the world, true friends will do all within their power to rescue a stumbling neighbor from his plight.

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

For sure, true friends will not add to the shame and disgrace of neighbors by spreading vicious rumors.

Are you given to gossip? Do you revel in advertising sin that others commit? Do you betray the trust of someone who, ensnared by an evil habit, cries out to you for help?

If you do, then God, in His Word, brands you a traitor who

may be in greater peril than the one you are accusing: "The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (Proverbs 18:8, Authorized Version). And, "A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends" (Proverbs 16:28).

A different kind of talebearing

Related to the sin of talebearing is a practice equally as harmful: telling people the juicy tidbits of gossip we hear others say about them.

Obviously, such indiscriminate mouthings do not serve the cause of peace nor build bridges of goodwill. Instead, they sow the seeds of discord and create division. God commands us to speak evil of no one (Titus 3:2). In principle, this means it's just as destructive to pass on gossip to the person affected as to a second party.

Try to make the theme of your life one of true and dependable friendship, and you will rise in favor with God and man.

Importance of trustworthiness

An excellent example of just how highly valued trustworthiness is can be seen through the screening procedures of the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation.

When a person is being considered as a prospective agent, everything about his life is examined — his background, hometown, habits, known friends and acquaintances, after-work activities and more. Every detail is taken into account.

And, though a candidate may be found to have good character and reputation, if he cannot maintain a trust — if he habitually divulges confidential information — that person will never be appointed an agent.

On a grander scale, God is also looking for men and women who allow His Spirit to develop in them even higher standards and attitudes. Respect and fidelity are

(Continued on page 22)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

I've heard many people talk about sin, but they leave me wondering what sin is — what it is a person must give up as a Christian.

What is this thing we must all repent of? Some teach that card-playing, gambling, going to movies and dancing are sins. Some say sin is going contrary to your conscience. Others say sin is whatever harms you or others.

But there is no reason to wonder about it. God plainly tells us what sin is. Here is the Bible definition of sin — the only definition that counts: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, Authorized Version).

But what law? The apostle James explains: "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:8-11).

The law that tells us what sin is has points — and if we break one of those several points, we are guilty of all. Two of the points James mentioned say do not commit adultery and do not kill.

Now do you know of a law in the Bible that has points and that says don't commit adultery and don't kill? Of course! The Ten Commandments! The Ten Commandments define what sin is. They tell us what we should and should not do.

Therefore when we repent of sin, we repent of breaking God's law — we repent of transgressing or breaking the Ten Commandments! The first four command-

ments tell us how to love God, and the last six show us how to love our neighbor. That's why James called it a "royal law" that is summed up in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

When we break one of the Ten Commandments, we commit sin. And Jesus Christ said that unless we all repent of our sin, we are doomed to perish (Luke 13:3, 5). Perhaps it is time you asked yourself if you have really repented in God's sight of what God defines as sin.

I want to change and give my life to God, but I don't know what to repent of. When I look at my past, it seems to me I've been a lot better than some people I know. What should I repent of to be a Christian?

You think you haven't fallen short somewhere along the line? Look at your past life. Look at the mistakes you have made — the failures. Don't compare yourself with your neighbors. Compare your life with God's law. Let's briefly take a look at the Ten Commandments.

Have you ever had some other god before the true God? Have you been more concerned with what your family or other people thought than what God says in His Word? Be honest, now!

Have you given honor to images or pictures, even supposing they were of Jesus Christ?

Have you taken God's holy, righteous name in vain?

Have you broken God's holy Sabbath day — misused the time God made holy?

Have you at any time in your life shown disrespect to your father or mother — argued with them, shown contempt toward them? What about it?

Have you ever hated someone else, or felt jealous and envious? If so, then notice what the apostle John has to say: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you

know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).

Have you been unfaithful to your mate? Here's what Jesus said: "I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Plain words — have you been guilty?

What about stealing? Have you stolen from your employer? "Put it over" on someone in a business deal? Have you stolen time by not giving your boss a full day's work for a day's pay? Have you stolen from God — robbed God — by failing to pay Him what you owe in tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-10)?

Have you ever told a lie — even a "white lie"? Satan is the father of liars (John 8:44). Have you lied to your parents, to a police officer, to your employer, to a customer or to a friend, perhaps when you felt on the spot and tried to get off the hook?

And what about coveting? Have you desired something that did not belong to you — perhaps something you could not afford? Do you covet some other job, a new car, a new home, a Hollywood glamour star for a mate or something else?

If you are honest with yourself, then you must admit that you have probably broken all of these laws during your life! And if you have broken even *one* of them, you have sinned. You must repent of sin in order to be a Christian. Pray to God that He will help you to see yourself as He sees you, and then examine His commandments again, using them as a looking glass to see yourself. And remember I John 1:8-9, concerning repentance:

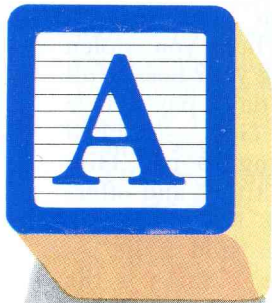
"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." □

Educating With

"What should we do?" parents often ask. "Besides caring and providing for our children, what else do they need?"

Here are solid answers.

By Joan C. Bogdanchik



A child's future success depends on his or her early education. Parents are responsible for educating their children for life.

More than ever before, parents themselves need educating today to know how to rear children properly — helpful steps and suggestions that can promote positive physical, intellectual and emotional growth in youngsters.

With this issue of *The Good News*, a series of articles on early education begins.

The overall principle is this: True education begins with one word — *love*. So important is love and its ramifications that little learning of real value and worth takes place without it.

Love is basic. It should be because of love that children are conceived. It is by familial love that children grow and mature properly.

In an atmosphere of warmth and security, the infant thrives. He is secure in his mother's arms and his father's embrace. Their presence is his world — they provide for his every need. They remedy his discomforts and his longings. They calm his fears. Safety is being with them. They

are to him his creators and protectors — his loving authority.

It is in a loving family environment that children learn best, through trust, sharing and unity. This is especially true in the area of communication.

Learning about communication

The child learns to trust his parents explicitly. Every word they say is truth to him. He has no reason to question — nor can he, yet. Their voices provide comfort. He is enthralled by them. He catches the sound of their words.

Did you catch that? Yes, your words are observed and noted by your infant. He doesn't understand the meaning of most words yet, but he is learning fast.

And he's learning the inflections you put on certain words. He notes, and his body responds to, the rhythm of their syllabication. Are the words spoken in joy, happiness, wonder, disappointment, sorrow or anger? Whichever, he observes them all and they become part of him.

His keen ears are picking up the beauty of the language with its rhythm and emotions. You are teaching him the mode with which he will think and express his ideas.

A wide gamut of words

How is your language? Is it spoken correctly? If not, neither will



your infant's be, unless you make a conscious effort to correct yourself.

Children should be exposed to a wide gamut of words.

How? First, simply by talking to them while with them. Just talk — normally, naturally, frequently.

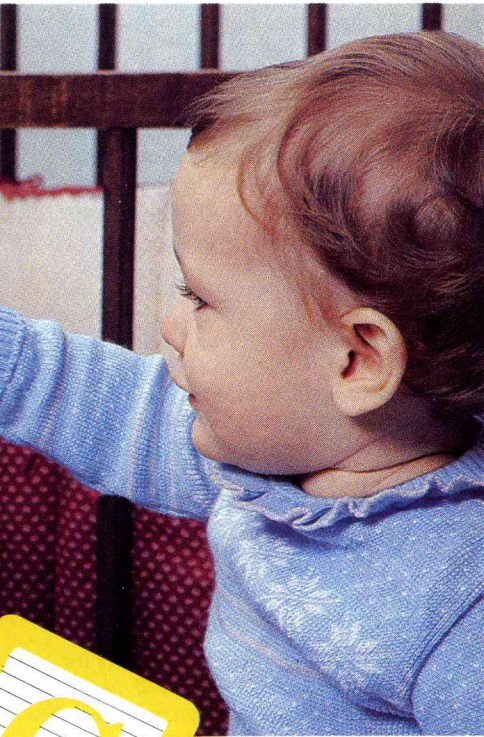
Tell your child often how much you love him. Hug him frequently and let him know what a fine baby he is. As you go about your tasks, explain what you're doing. Remember, he's watching. Use a well-modulated voice.

Maintain a warm, friendly relationship, though you must retain your authority in a loving, guiding, advising fashion. Talk *with*, not *down to*, your child. Keep the contact going throughout the day.

Talk about everything. Don't restrict your communication to correction only. Being mainly



Love



corrective is a sure way to damage the relationship with your child.

But don't think you should never correct him. Correct and correct firmly when correction is necessary, and it will be. But you should have so much else going with him that correction becomes an acceptable part of the whole picture. He will learn early that correction is a natural, necessary part of life, not a discouraging, humiliating disaster to be feared and avoided.

It's vital to watch your child's attitude. All else rests on it. He must be developing an attitude of obedience and responsiveness. If he is not, you could face hard years ahead, as his lack of responsiveness turns to further rebelliousness that can increase as he increases in size.

Teach your child to listen

Teach to listen? Isn't listening more or less automatic? Aren't

sounds and noises all around us? Yes, sounds surround us. They are all over. There are outdoor sounds and indoor sounds. We hear them and get quite accustomed to them. Hearing may become more or less passive.

But *listening*, as opposed to merely *hearing*, is a skill. Listening is an active process requiring conscious attention. It is essential to learning and becoming educated. Be sure that your child is developing this skill.

In order to learn he must hear and attend to what he is hearing. He must recognize and interpret what is taking place. Then he responds.

Encourage your child to be sound conscious. Don't make it a habit to repeat directions, though you should realize there are sometimes valid reasons to do so. Often, you must simplify the terms after the original instruction is given. Having him respond on first instruction, rather than having to tell him several times to do something, gives him a gigantic advantage.

See sounds?

Help your child "see" sounds. Have him notice your lips as you make them.

Make the sound for the letter *b*. What fun you and your child can have pushing air out of your mouths as you say the sounds of *p*, *t*, *c*, *k*. Let him place his hand near your lips while you do so.

As he grows, play games with sounds. Point out items in your home that start with various sounds. Whisper directions to your child and have him carry them out. This can be a lot of fun. Have your child close his eyes, then ask him what he hears. Have him identify various sounds such as a door opening, putting a lid on a pan, a musical instrument, scraping a surface, opening a window, tapping your foot, clapping your hands, wrinkling paper, bouncing a ball.

Following instructions

Oral instructions can be increased according to your child's age. Start with one-, then

two-, building up to three-, four- or five-stepped instructions. Have your child carry them out in order: Go halfway across the room, turn right, sit in the red chair, tap your foot, fold your hands. When playing this outdoors, hopping and jumping add to the fun.

Vary this game with useful home responsibilities: Crawl across the room, pick up two bits of paper and a thread, slowly and carefully walk backward to the wastebasket, put them in with your right hand, walk back normally. You can think of many activities to fit your family's needs here.

Have your child explain how he gets from the kitchen to his bedroom, from your front yard to your backyard, from home to school.

You do four or five different things, then have your child recall the things you did in the order you did them.

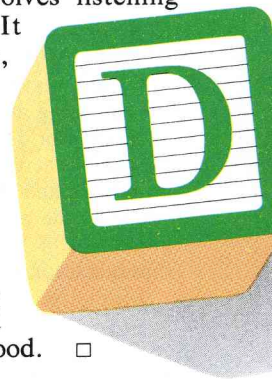
But do make these fun games, not rituals. Be sure to limit the time for intense listening according to the child's age. Use loving judgment.

Generously praise, hug and kiss for outstanding listening. Give your child much listening for enjoyment. He needs informal listening in play, too, and incidental hearing.

Following directions is a learning process. It involves listening and responding. It begins simply, then, if carefully nurtured, develops into a worthwhile lifelong habit.

The next article in this *Good News* series on early education will delve into the delightful literature of childhood. □

Joan C. Bogdanchik has taught at the elementary level in both public and private schools. She taught at Imperial Schools in Bricket Wood, England, from 1970 to 1976 and is a member of the faculty at Imperial Schools in Pasadena, Calif.



LETTERS

Looks forward to *Good News*

I recently received a letter introducing me to the *Good News* magazine. I would appreciate it if you would include me on your mailing list. My dad has received this magazine for years. I myself have truly enjoyed the many interesting articles and have appreciated the value of its contents. I am fully aware of the need to reveal the good news of the world tomorrow, as it is vital in these troubled times.

I look forward to reading all about God's Kingdom and how it will be on this earth one fine day. Thanks so much for the great opportunity to be a part of this worldwide project in sending the good word to all as a witness so that they will realize the troubles we are in.

Once again, thanks to Herbert W. Armstrong and all of those who make this magazine and the *Plain Truth* magazine a part of my life.

Donna J. Preston
Nicholasville, Ky.

Answer to prayers

I started subscribing to *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News* about seven or eight months ago and they are the answer to my prayers. I have been in and out of several different denominations in my 35 years of life but for some reason I wasn't truly satisfied. After fasting and prayer I was awakened to the fact that I wasn't receiving the true teachings of Jesus Christ. Your magazines have helped me in more ways than I can count.

Jay W. Cook
Muncie, Ind.

Student writes

I am a university student here and I am becoming more concerned and aware of recent world events and those that are happening here at home. Keep up the good work and may you continue to convey to us the good news God is trying to give to us. I know God is helping you throughout and God bless you all.

Rusiate Mataika
Suva, Fiji

Eyes opened

Since reading your publications, my eyes have been opened to the origin and purpose of life on this earth. I thank God and you as His helpers for the great amount of knowledge I have received and hopefully will continue to receive.

Please continue in your endeavors to

diffuse the good news to the entire world until God's Kingdom comes, because many people have been blinded and live in daily ignorance.

Nikolaus Eisenhauer
Aurich, West Germany

I would like to deeply thank you for promptly sending me subscriptions to your magazines, which I feel are very valuable, and ask you to continue to send them to me.

It is good to know where mankind is today and why it is where it is, and where it is headed if it continues down the same road — to know that after all this chaos and confusion, the wonderful world tomorrow and God's Kingdom wait in perfect order for all of us.

How would we have come to know this if it weren't for your magazines and books?

Reader
Buick, Canada

I wish to thank you sincerely for the continued subscriptions to *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. They mean more to me than I can possibly say. I have learned more from you about the teaching and meaning of the Bible than I have ever known before, despite a lifetime of reading (I am age 83) and trying to understand.

Dora Johns
Auckland, New Zealand

Burning desire

I was introduced to your magazines about a year ago, through a dear friend who has been in the Church for many years, and would like to tell you briefly what a difference they have made in my life. Every article is educational and uplifting, and it is obvious the authors are inspired by God. I always end up feeling, after I have read them, that I have a burning desire to do the things the writers encourage us to do — and, in fact, I have started to do them!

I had a very limited knowledge of the Bible. Now I have read God's Word from cover to cover. I could not understand it at first, but my friend encouraged me to pray about it, and I read it in two and a half months and found it thrilling.

I am now going through the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course and in between have read numerous booklets, on various subjects, that I found especially interesting — this in addition to your magazines.

I have just read a *Good News* article

on fasting. I intend to fast for the first time one day next week as I want to know God's will for me so that I may truly serve Him.

I am waiting for your minister to call on me so that I can discuss baptism and prepare for it.

I thank God for all of the above and Mr. Armstrong and his staff who so faithfully preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and His soon-coming Kingdom.

Valerie Rosevear
Pinetown, South Africa

Heartfelt thanks

I have been privileged to receive your magazines for a few years. For someone who is nonreligious and unfamiliar with the Bible, he or she can't help but be thrilled with your magazines if he or she wants to live a Christian life and someday be a part of God's eternal glory.

I would like to give you my heartfelt thanks for the magazines, which are always edifying and give me the incentive to overcome my weaknesses.

Johannes Kuhn
Zurich, Switzerland

I would like to express deep thanks for *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. These magazines present the true message of God's Kingdom and show mankind the way to salvation out of a world entangled in Satan's captivity. I look forward to every issue, which I study along with my Bible.

Ernestine Winner
Landshut, West Germany

Doesn't take it for granted now

I'd like to thank the staff of *The Good News* for the discerning and inspiring articles every month. It's almost as if you know what problems are on my mind, and send me just what I need to keep going. The back cover even helps me look forward to the upcoming issues.

I've been going to the Church since I was 9, and I guess after a while I took it for granted. Sometimes it takes a lot to dig us out of our ruts. But during the last year and a half, I haven't missed an issue. Sometimes I even have them finished within a week and wish they'd come faster and have more articles.

I'm sure there are others who have taken this for granted. All I can say is, please don't, because someday you'll really want it and it won't be there. It will be too late to get oil for the lamp.

Darrel W. Goff
Eugene, Ore.

God's Law of Love— Basis of True Christianity

A boulder balanced at the edge of a cliff will fall if given a push. We know it won't go floating off into space, because the physical law of gravity always operates the same way when an object is allowed to fall.

There are other laws *just as sure* as gravity that, if adhered to, will result in a happy, interesting and fulfilling life.

Jesus Christ came to earth to teach us how to apply God's law of love so we could live happy and abundant lives (John 10:10). He also revealed how we may become born-again members of God's universe-ruling Family!

It is vitally important that we understand the true intent and purpose of God's law. Let's allow the Bible to show us how it is the very basis of true Christianity.

1. How does the Bible define the nature and character of God? I John 4:16. How did Jesus Christ sum up the law of God? Matthew 22:35-40.

God's character can be summed up in the word *love*. God's love is outflowing concern for others. It is the way of giving, serving, helping, sharing.

God's law is the way of God's love. The law defines God's way of life. It is the way the two members of the God Family have always lived. Thus God the Father and God the Son live now in total harmony. The Father is the head of the divine Family of God, and Jesus Christ does exactly what the Father tells Him to do (John 8:29, 10:30).

These two divine beings lived the way of love even before they created angels and before they created matter. God's way of love has always resulted in joy, peace, happiness and great accomplishment.

God's law of love also regulated the conduct of all the angels toward one another and toward their Creator. That is, until Lucifer, the powerful and beautiful archangel God had placed over one third of the angels to guide their activities on earth, rebelled against God! For more information about this rebellion and the origin of Satan the devil, write for our free booklet *Did God Create a Devil?*

2. What is the Bible definition of sin? I John

3:4. Does the Bible clearly tell us that Lucifer and his angels sinned? Ezekiel 28:14-16, II Peter 2:4.

Sin is the violation of God's law of love. It is the opposite of peace, cooperation and harmony — the opposite of service and concern for others.

God reveals in His Word that Lucifer became the first sinner. Vanity, lust and greed welled up within him. He became dissatisfied with rulership over just this one planet — he reasoned that God had been unfair — he wanted to rule the whole universe. So he organized his angels into an army and ascended to heaven in an attempt to usurp all of God's authority.

Lucifer and his angels failed, and were cast back to earth (Isaiah 14:12-14, Luke 10:18, Jude 6). Lucifer, now God's adversary, was renamed Satan, and his angels called demons. Still actively attempting to thwart God's plan, Satan and his demons have deceived the world about the need to follow God's law of love (Revelation 12:9).

3. Are all 10 points of God's great law conveniently listed for us in the Bible? Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21. How can we know that there are exactly 10? Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13.

4. Did the patriarch Abraham — the father of the faithful (Romans 4:11, 16) — know of God's law and think it was important to keep it? Genesis 26:5. What attitude did King David — whom God called a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22) — have toward obeying God's law? Read all of Psalm 119 and especially notice verses 97-100 and 105.

Both Abraham and David were commandment keepers. They had great respect for God's law. That is one major reason why they will hold responsible positions in the future government of God on earth.

5. Did Jesus Christ come to do away with God's law? Matthew 5:17-19. Did He keep the Ten Commandments? John 15:10. Did He teach others to keep them? Matthew 19:16-19.

The verses in Matthew 19 clearly show that Jesus specifically referred to the Ten Com-

mandments, though He did not mention every one of them.

6. Does the Bible show that the Church Jesus built would be teaching obedience to and actually be keeping the Ten Commandments and other instructions of Jesus? Matthew 28:19-20, Revelation 12:17, 14:12. (Revelation 12 personifies God's Church as a woman.)

God's Church today echoes the words of David and follows God's law of love as the Christian standard to live by.

7. Is the law of God holy, just and good? Romans 7:12. Is peace of mind a result of keeping God's commandments? Psalm 119:165. Does God bless those who choose to obey Him? Deuteronomy 11:26-28, 30:9-10, Psalm 1:1-3.

The person who keeps God's law has a clear conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

God's law was given to make man happy and to lead him into the peaceful, full, abundant life — and, above all, to lead him into eternal life. But because of disobedience to our Creator's holy, righteous law, the world is filled with strife, poverty, ignorance and suffering today — results opposite of God's law of love.

8. How did Jesus summarize the law of God? Matthew 22:37-39.

Since the basis of God's character is love (I John 4:16), God's law expresses the character of God. Jesus showed that the Ten Commandments are in reality a guide to teach us how to love. The first four commandments show us how to love God, while the last six show us how to love our neighbors — all fellow human beings.

9. If we receive and exercise God's Spirit, will the love of God that it imparts enable us to "fulfill" — to obey — God's law? Romans 5:5, 13:8-10, especially verse 10.

Love is not left to interpretation by the individual Christian. The divine love of God, imparted by His Holy Spirit, is expressed within the bounds of God's law — the Ten Commandments. The commandments guide Spirit-begotten Christians in expressing God's love.

Therefore, the love of God is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him, and then in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward fellow humans.

10. Could there be any truth whatsoever in the widespread belief that having love makes void the need to literally obey God's law? I John 5:2-3, John 14:15, 15:9-10, II John 6.

The apostle John placed a great deal of emphasis on God's love. But not once did he or any other writer of Holy Scripture, including the apostle Paul — all of whom were inspired by

God (II Timothy 3:16) — say that God's love did away with, superseded or destroyed the law of God. John, who was a close friend, disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, made it plain that one who truly has the love of God will be obeying the commandments of God.

11. Is it possible to earn one's salvation by obeying God? Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9. Yet can anyone enter God's glorious, universe-ruling Kingdom — the very Family of God — as a lawbreaker? Romans 6:23, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Revelation 21:8, Matthew 7:21, 19:16-17.

Eternal life is clearly a gift from God, not something you can earn by keeping the law of God. No one can earn immortality in 10,000 lifetimes of keeping the Ten Commandments.

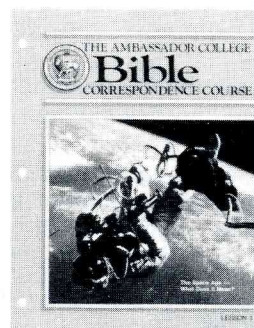
But neither can anyone enter into eternal life as a sinner (I John 3:4, Romans 6:23). No rebel will ever be born into God's Family. God will not grant immortality to anyone who insists on living Satan's way!

Following God's law of love — His way of life — enables one to become more like God, until finally born into God's spirit Family at the resurrection, possessing the fullness of God's holy, righteous, loving character (I John 3:9). (More about spiritual character development in a future Ministudy.)

Our Savior plainly stated that Christians are to strive to keep the Ten Commandments with His help through the Holy Spirit, trusting in Him to apply His sacrifice in our behalf when we fall short and as we repent (I John 1:7-9).

The time is coming soon when the whole world will understand and appreciate what an incredible blessing the law of God really is. In the coming world tomorrow, people will learn to follow God's law of love (Isaiah 2:2-3). A glorious world of peace and harmony will be the result!

(If you do not already have our booklet *The Ten Commandments*, be sure to request your free copy today. See the inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you, or the toll-free numbers to call.) □



ENROLL IN FREE BIBLE COURSE

The short study you've just completed is a sample of the study method used in each monthly lesson of the eye-opening Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. You can enroll in this free course by writing to the *Good News* office nearest you. See inside front cover for addresses.

PERSONAL

(Continued from page 1)

realize their own imperfections — their proneness to error. They assume, in their egotism, that whatever they believe is TRUE. And they are UNWILLING to humble themselves and confess their wrongs.

I can tell you how *I* started, 59 years ago, out of the darkness and into the light. And it is the basically sound and SURE way for you, or any other, to start.

First, I had to know whether there is a real BASIS for truth. Is there an INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY? In other words, does GOD exist? Is the all-wise, all-knowing, all-perfect GOD a *reality*? And if so, has He communicated basic TRUTH to mankind?

A world-famous Protestant leader writes (or has written for him and in his name) a syndicated newspaper column. It gives His answers to Bible questions.

A question published in this syndicated newspaper column asked whether the Bible gives any PROOF of the existence of God. The *man's* answer may be summed up in one word: NO. He answered that we must assume God's existence — and then have FAITH. That is, have faith in this human assumption!

But the Bible commands, "PROVE ALL THINGS." That includes the existence of God! In the Bible, God says, "PROVE me now, herewith." The Bible says the scoffers "are without excuse," because the PROOF of God's reality is clearly seen, even in nature. God Himself, in the Bible, offers the PROOF of fulfilled prophecies. He offers, though few experience this proof, the PROOF of answered prayer.

I found irrefutable PROOF of God's existence in the *facts* of science, the FACTS of matter, in reason and in the Bible.

And second, I sought PROOF of whether or not the Bible is the authoritative REVELATION from God to mankind — and I found it positively PROVED by many irrefutable proofs. So I had a firm

BASIS for faith. I had an infallible AUTHORITY!

Still, this was not alone sufficient. I had the SOURCE of truth. But, up to that time, I had never been able to UNDERSTAND the Bible. Neither do most scientists, educators or theologians understand it.

A great mind and a superior intellect, alone, are incapable of UNDERSTANDING this spiritual revelation from almighty God!

This is explained in the second chapter of I Corinthians. These truths of God are a MYSTERY — a hidden SECRET — that none of the leaders, rulers or great men of the world know (I Corinthians 2:7-8).

But God has *revealed* these spiritual truths to converted, Spirit-begotten Christians *by His Spirit* (verse 10). For what man can know the things of a man — that is, physical and material knowledge — but the *spirit* of man, which is *in* him (verse 11)?

Can you understand that? Pure physical BRAIN, composed of matter, cannot comprehend the things of this material universe known by scholars, scientists, educators. The dumb animals have physical BRAINS. But they do not comprehend HUMAN knowledge — the physical knowledge known to human MINDS.

But, as Job learned (Job 32:8), there is a spirit *IN* man. This spirit is not the MAN — man is DUST or matter (Genesis 3:19) — NOT spirit. But this human spirit, united with physical BRAIN, forms human MIND. Yet this human MIND is carnal. It can know the things of a MAN — that is, mortal or PHYSICAL things.

What man, then, could *know* or possess this material KNOWLEDGE, except by the *spirit* of MAN that is *IN* the man — united to and functioning with material BRAIN? The addition of this HUMAN spirit turns animal brain into human MIND.

Now go further in I Corinthians 2:11: "Even so no one knows the things of GOD EXCEPT THE *SPIRIT OF GOD*."

It is only by the receiving of

God's HOLY SPIRIT, to unite with the human mind, that a man may comprehend SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Only by the receiving and indwelling of the Holy Spirit are the real TRUTHS of the BIBLE comprehended by the human mind.

The great MINDS of this world cannot comprehend biblical and spiritual TRUTHS without God's Holy Spirit, any more than a dog, horse, ape or elephant can comprehend physical, scientific knowledge without the spirit that is *in* MAN — and is NOT in the dumb brutes!

That is precisely WHY, up until 59 years ago, I could not understand the Bible. That is why nearly all of the truly GREAT minds of world leaders cannot understand this TRUTH! It is not a matter of degree of intellect.

So, in order to really *perceive* the deceptions that have BLINDED this world, once we have *recognized* our own fallibility and proneness to error — once we have become WILLING to admit it when proved wrong, and to accept TRUTH — the next step is to receive God's gift of His Holy Spirit. And the CONDITIONS to this are: 1) REPENTANCE, and 2) FAITH in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Repentance is toward GOD. Sin is against GOD. We may harm or injure people — but we SIN against GOD. Sin is the transgression of GOD'S LAW. Sin is rebellion against GOD. It has cut us off from God.

To repent means to be so HUMBLED, so broken up about the *colossal* crime of rebelling against the HOLY GOD — so abhorrent of our own rebellious, deceitful, vain, selfish SELVES — that in real contrition we turn to God for mercy and CHANGE of mind and attitude, now desiring to CHANGE OUR WAYS — to be obedient to GOD'S LAW.

Very few know what repentance really is. Then, through FAITH in Jesus Christ as Savior, we may be reconciled to God, and His PROMISE is that we shall then receive HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

The SELF has to die! It means

unconditional surrender to God and HIS REVEALED WAY! I know that with me, it was a painful process. The SELF does not want to give up in surrender. I knew it meant ridicule and persecution from relatives, friends, former business associates. It meant a CHANGED LIFE. It meant a start toward a NEW AND DIFFERENT GOAL.

But God had humbled me. He brought me to repentance and faith. And He opened my mind to HIS TRUTH by the gift of His Holy Spirit.

But I had to be willing, continuously, to confess being wrong, and to embrace truths constantly NEW to me.

That process has been going on, now, for 59 years.

As I studied a portion of the Bible, I could now understand it. But I had to *walk in the "light"* as God opened my mind to see. Regardless of the cost in the esteem of men, or in countering opposition and persecution, I had

ridicule, PROCLAIMED THE TRUTH?

These lauded, lofty "greats" of this world *could* become undeceived and have their eyes opened to God's truth — *IF THEY WOULD BE HUMBLLED, REPENT AND SURRENDER UNCONDITIONALLY TO ALMIGHTY GOD AND HIS LAW!*

But if you would know what GOD says of these "great and eminent" religious leaders of the great denominations, read God's PROPHECIES, in the Bible, describing these very leaders of OUR OWN 20TH CENTURY, in Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34; Ezekiel 22, especially verses 23-31, referring to British and United States peoples and their religious leaders *NOW*, at the time leading directly to "God's WRATH" — the time of the last PLAGUES, just prior to, and at, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

Yes, we *CAN KNOW*, if willing to know, whether we are right or wrong. It is not a matter of

Regardless of the cost, I had constantly to BE WILLING to follow GOD and not man. It is a matter of being LED by GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT into *His* ways that are so CONTRARY to those of this world, not of personal human powers.

constantly to BE WILLING to follow GOD and not man.

It is a matter of WILLINGNESS — not of superior and lofty minds. It is a matter of being LED by GOD'S SPIRIT into *His* ways that are so CONTRARY to this world's established customs and beliefs, not of personal human powers.

WHAT CHURCH do you know that has ever publicly confessed that its teaching and practice has been WRONG, and has CORRECTED IT, to conform to the Bible? What great, lauded and mighty churchman or religious leader has ever made such a public confession, turned from his nonbiblical ways and, despite persecution and

superior intellect, but of SUBMISSION TO GOD.

But the conclusion of the whole question is this: I did not start this work of my own accord at all. It is the very last thing I would have wanted, in my days of carnality, to do.

IT IS GOD'S DOING!

By circumstances, God forced me to submission. The living JESUS CHRIST so manipulated events and the force of circumstance that He literally PLUNGED me into His work. It is not my work — it is THE VERY WORK OF GOD.

And *THIS* can be easily proved, to those willing to know the TRUTH! □

God Not Real?

(Continued from page 3)

seeing him virtually every day, talking with him, seeing him in his office and in his home, *you'd get to know him!*

I know him well. I have known him ever since he came to the front door of my home in Pasadena nearly 37 years ago. Three days later he entered Ambassador College as a student. In four years he graduated. He continued his studies, doing graduate work, earning his master's degree. I see him fairly often. I spend a good deal of time talking with Mr. McNair about college problems, about student and manpower problems, about personal interests. I have gotten to *know him!*

But, if you have not even seen his picture, you *don't* know him!

You haven't seen God's picture either. But He gives you a certain description of what He looks like, in the Bible. Yet not as to His exact features.

The person of God revealed

I can tell you that *I* know God — and that I also know the living Jesus Christ — for I represent Him as His servant. I read about Him — not as other people MIS-describe Him — but as He describes Himself in HIS BIBLE!

But, I said a while ago that 59 years ago I "just couldn't understand the Bible." NO ONE CAN, *really*, until they have gained contact with God (the Father) through Jesus Christ, and have received His Holy Spirit, begetting them as His begotten children. That requires the same kind of REPENTANCE Job was put through — a genuine abhorring of the self, an unconditional SURRENDER to OBEY Him and His law and a real faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

When I was brought to that kind of repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ, in early 1927, and was baptized, He gave me the most precious GIFT in all the universe — His Holy Spirit.

His Spirit *opened my mind to*

SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION. I could UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE — a bit at a time, of course. In it, the living Jesus Christ began talking to me. I began to talk to Him — often, daily, in a sense constantly, in spirit. When I studied the Bible, it was like listening to the most wonderful Friend I had ever known! It was WONDERFUL! It was INTERESTING — INSPIRING — REVEALING! So I studied the Bible often *on my knees*.

You see, as I *read* the Bible, God was talking to *me*. But as I prayed, I was talking to *HIM*! And by studying His Word *on my knees*, I was able to carry on a two-way conversation with Him — mixing prayer with listening to Him through reading His words.

It was invigorating, rejuvenating beyond words to describe. He was TEACHING ME. I was gaining NEW KNOWLEDGE — spiritual knowledge — knowledge to LIVE BY — knowledge to put into action — instruction to be *acted on* — commands to OBEY by *doing!*

As He told me about Himself — as He talked to me, instructed me — and as I talked to Him — *I got to know Him!* He BECAME REAL!

He was no longer WAY OFF! He was very NEAR — in spirit, in the very same room. I have never seen God or Jesus Christ PHYSICALLY — with my physical eye — but I see them often, spiritually, in my mind. Not precise definite features, of course — but I see in my mind's eye eyes flashing out like a flame of fire — His face shining as brightly as the sun in full strength — His head and hair white as the cleanest, whitest snow. And all around where He is sitting is gleaming, glistening, beautiful SPLENDOR and brightness, with lightning flashing forth.

Perhaps I don't see this as distinctly as I expect to after I enter His Kingdom as an inheritor, BORN of His Spirit in SPIRIT COMPOSITION — no longer a mortal human composed of flesh and blood.

It is, of course, as the apostle Paul was inspired to say: We see

at best, now, as through a darkened glass, but then, in the resurrection, in His Kingdom, face to face (I Corinthians 13:12).

WHY is God "so far off — so unreal"? It is because people are *so far off* from HIM — *so close* to the physical, material things and interests of this evil world! Because their minds are on physical pursuits all the time. Because *they have no time for God!*

You get to KNOW those you are *close to* — in *constant contact with* — in conversation with!

But, with most, *their sins* have CUT THEM OFF from contact with God.

Is it, then, impossible for them to GAIN CONTACT?

Not at all! But *IT IS NOT EASY!*

WHY?

Because you have to REPENT — and that is NOT EASY. To just say the words "I abhor myself" does not mean you really *do*. To really CONFESS that you have been WRONG — that you are NOT

to GIVE THEM UP — for they probably will throw you over — IF you surrender to God, let Him turn your life right side up, live a totally *changed* life according to His teaching!

Are you too big a coward to do it? You have to be WILLING to GIVE UP — everything! — for HIM. Do you want HIM that much? Do you want the happiness of a REAL Christian LIFE that much? Do you want ETERNAL LIFE in His Kingdom that much? Few do! That's why God is not REAL to most.

Of course they are not really HAPPY. But they are unwilling to live THE WAY that *causes* happiness. They would rather keep on TRYING to gain it some other way. They NEVER WILL, however. All humanity has been trying that for 6,000 years! NONE ever yet succeeded. Do you think YOU can? You CAN'T!

God CAN be real to you — but are you willing?

There are the THREE DIMEN-

There are TWO directions you can go in life.
Most people go the direction of SELF — vanity!
The other direction is the way of God's LOVE.
That's the ONLY dimension that SATISFIES —
that opens your mind to SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

good — that there is nothing good IN YOU — that you not only have DONE wrong and sinned but that you ARE wrong and sinful — that is not easy. The SELF has to DIE — and your human nature will fight that *to the death*.

To make an UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God and HIS LAW — His authority over you — His commandments — His teaching — HIS WAY of living that is so UTTERLY CONTRARY to the way your friends and associates are living — that is NOT EASY.

SELF within you will shout out: "But what would my friends — all my associates — those I have been close to — what would THEY think?" You'll have to be willing

SIONS. Most people have consciousness of only the first TWO! They seek pleasures, happiness, in the AROUND — things, people — this world!

There are some temporary thrills, delights, pleasures. Sure! But they NEVER LAST! And you pay too big a price for them. They're a bad bargain.

You may look to the within — but it's like looking down into a well that's gone DRY. There's nothing there to quench that inner thirst.

You CAN contact the ABOVE! IF you're willing to pay the PRICE, that is.

It isn't easy. But it's the ONLY dimension that SATISFIES — that

fills that inner void — that feeds that gnawing soul of HUNGER — that expands your horizons — that opens your MIND to the glories of SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION — of understanding SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE — of really UNDERSTANDING the Bible, in a way that produces happiness brimful and running over!

It's WORTH the price YOU pay a million times over. Jesus Christ paid the REAL price — the BIG price. The price you pay, in GIVING UP in surrender to Him, is as nothing by comparison.

It's the GREATEST BARGAIN in the world — but the world does not offer it, or ANY bargain. GOD DOES!

There are TWO directions you can go in life. Most people go the direction of SELF — vanity! It's the way of self-centeredness. Everything is coming INWARD. Toward SELF. Getting! Taking! Acquiring! And you keep shrinking smaller and smaller.

The other direction is the way of God's LOVE. Love fulfills His law. LOVE is *outgoing concern*! It is, first of all, GOD-centeredness. It is LOVE to God, in worship, adoration, faith, obedience. It is, second, LOVE to fellowman — loving others AS yourself. That's a lot of love.

That is the WAY of the ABOVE. That way constantly EXPANDS your horizons. That way you GROW — and GROW — and GROW! You DEVELOP! You develop GOD'S CHARACTER! You GROW in love — in happiness — in abundant well-being! LIFE becomes abundant and JOYFUL!

Willing to pay the price? It's not giving up so much MONEY — it's giving up things you've had your heart set on that are BAD for you. It's coming to a new sense of VALUES — values that MAKE SENSE!

I know! I *have* known 59 years. Life has had its problems, persecutions, disappointments — but it's been RICH, FULL, REWARDING, ABUNDANT!

Everyone CAN have it — if they want it deeply enough.

Even YOU! God BECOMES REAL! □

Trusted?

(Continued from page 12)

among the highest qualities of character God treasures.

Notice the description of the kind of person who will stand before God and be blessed: "Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved" (Psalm 15:1-5).

Are you striving to become this kind of person?

We all need to deeply examine our attitudes. Are we guilty of the very things we distrust in others? Is it possible that the suspicions we often insinuate stem in part from our own guilt feelings, or our own tendencies to participate in rumor spreading?

Let's search our own hearts. Do we put others down simply to minimize our own shortcomings and lift ourselves above them?

Of course, we should not ignore or condone wrongdoing. That is, we should not try to protect people who are guilty of illegal acts. Even more important, we should not conceal the actions of a brother who is sowing discord among God's people and trying to divide the flock.

In the case of a friend who is weak and sinning, the Bible instructs us to go to him privately, in a spirit of meekness, and try to help him (Matthew 18:15-17). We should not want to make him a public spectacle of ridicule so as to destroy his dignity.

Be a faithful friend

True, faithful friends are priceless. The Bible commends the

brother who "loves at all times" and the "friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 17:17, 18:24).

The Bible points to the friendship between David and Jonathan as a sterling example of unfailing loyalty, of what true friends should be like. II Samuel 1:26 states that the love that they had for each other was stronger than a man's love for a woman. The friendship was so unshakable that they would have given their lives for each other. Can you imagine either of them turning "Judas" on the other — betraying a secret or a confidence or spreading vicious gossip?

What can be said of us in the way we treat our friends? Can we also be trusted to carefully guard a confidence, to faithfully uphold someone's honor?

The greatest example of true friendship and devotion in the entire universe is God Himself. The Bible tells us that all our faults and secret sins are open to His view (Hebrews 4:13). He knows us through and through.

Yet God, who is love, plainly reveals that He does not talk about our sins when we repent (Ezekiel 18:22). He forgets them in His mercy (Hebrews 8:12) and casts them far from His presence: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

In stark contrast, Satan, our great adversary, constantly gossips and accuses us before God day and night (Revelation 12:10). He is a renowned liar and depraved slanderer (John 8:44) whose primary aim is to destroy our character.

It behooves each of us to make sure we are emulating God and letting God create His faithful character in us (Ephesians 4:23-32). If we are not on guard, we'll find ourselves often serving Satan and doing immeasurable harm to other people.

As we serve God and draw close to Him, let us strive to honor our neighbors and develop friendships based on loyalty and trust! □

Confessions of a Busy Father

Who are the most important people in your life? "Why, my family, of course," you'd probably answer. "I would die for them!"

That was my answer, too, but then I discovered that I was not dying for them, but



killing them slowly through neglect.

Through an event I'll never forget, God helped me learn that a father should never be too busy for his family.

The agony

It was the usual Tuesday morning with phone calls to make and appointments to keep. Then my wife reminded me that today was my daughter's big track meet, the final one of the season. "Oh, no!"

I said, "I've been so busy, I forgot all about it. I have business today — I can't go."

I reluctantly walked downstairs to break the news to my daughter. By the look in my eye she knew what I was going to say. Her eyes began to water. I apologized for forgetting, and encouraged her to do her best. I told her I would pray for her.

The trouble was, I was the one who needed prayer. I was the one who needed encouragement to do the right thing — to really love my family.

She said she understood, but her disappointment and hurt were obvious. She packed her books and headed for school. I also headed for "school" — God's school of spiritual lessons.

First, self-justifying thoughts began racing through my mind: Surely she knows I love her! I've been there at other times. She knows I am a minister and must serve God's people. She will do just fine without me.

But then my own voice from past sermons echoed: "Put your family first! If the family is to survive, fathers must make the family their No. 1 priority! Dad is the most important person in a teenage girl's life."

I was overwhelmed. In tears, I fell down on my knees and repented to God. I also thanked Him for refocusing my priorities toward my family. I got up and rearranged my appointments and, with great joy, looked forward to being with my daughter.

The ecstasy

When I arrived at the track meet, I spotted my daughter

standing across the field. She seemed a little down — she probably wondered why other people were more important to me.

My mind flashed back to the times when I comforted her as a baby — how I would rock her in my arms. I thought about the times I comforted her as a toddler when she fell and bumped her head. I thought about now, when I would comfort her as a blossoming woman by being by her side.

I called her name. Surprised, she looked up, her eyes met mine and our agony was turned into ecstasy.

Now she knew I truly loved her. Now she was sure the family was indeed my No. 1 priority.

She did not win any gold medals that day, but she won first place in the heart of her dad, and that's better than gold.

By the way, God's work was done that day. How, you ask? The great God commissions fathers to turn their hearts to their children (Malachi 4:6). Fathers, do God's work! Give your heart, your time and your life to your children.

More than one other girl on my daughter's track team said: "Wow! Your dad must really love you. My dad was too busy to take time off to see me run."

In spite of my initial blindness, God used that day to convey to students and teachers a foretaste of the deep bond of love all parents and children will share in tomorrow's world.

Who are the most important people in your life? If it's your family, don't be too busy to love them. Give them your life — give them your time. □

Test Your Emotional Maturity

How well do you react when you are confronted with difficult problems and trying personal circumstances?

By David Albert



(1) High Energy
Good Circumstances



(2) High Energy
Bad Circumstances



(3) Low Energy
Good Circumstances



(4) Low Energy
Bad Circumstances

Photos by G.A. Belluche Jr.

Emotional immaturity is a hidden enemy in many homes!

It robs personal relationships of harmony and joy, and is a root cause of conflicts, selfishness and anxieties.

Why is emotional immaturity such a great problem for so many? Because Satan the devil, the unseen "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), constantly broadcasts his way of life of vanity, jealousy, greed and fear to all of us, not in words or pictures, but in moods and attitudes — negative, destructive attitudes such as discouragement, anger, hostility and competition.

Wrong attitudes can and do turn people away from God's truth and can prevent people from entering God's Kingdom! See Revelation 21:8, which shows that the "cowardly" or fearful will be excluded from God's Kingdom and Family.

How can we grow in emotional maturity and function as God would have us function?

Why we lose emotional battles

While traveling in the United Kingdom recently, my family and I, as travelers often do, experienced a wide range of constantly changing circumstances and moods. I came to recognize a particular combination of circumstances that is especially difficult to handle, and that often results in our losing the battle with Satan, our unseen spiritual foe.

These circumstances can be described in a four-celled chart (see illustration).

The scheme here is easy to follow. You've no doubt seen it in operation many times in your own family, especially during stressful periods such as travel or family crises. Let's look at the key features of each circumstance.

Quadrant 1: High energy and good circumstances. This is the good situation, the easy one to handle. No problem here. Picture a beautiful day after a good

night's rest, tranquil surroundings, ample contact with God through Bible study and prayer and a favorite activity with close friends. Most of us do not encounter big attitude problems in Quadrant 1. Satan has a hard time getting to us here.

Quadrant 2: High energy and bad circumstances. It's challenging, but we can usually handle this situation. We're in fine spirits but have some difficulty — maybe a flat tire on the way to work. Still no problem — change the tire and off we go. Problems don't loom large when we're feeling up to handling them.

Quadrant 3: Low energy and good circumstances. We may be tired from a day's travel or activities, but we're glad to be wherever we're at, perhaps home having dinner with the family. All will be well after a good night's rest. Even Solomon knew that "the sun also rises" (Ecclesiastes 1:5), something we must keep in mind when our spirits are low.

Quadrant 4: Low energy and bad circumstances. This is the danger zone! When we're at a low energy level mentally and physically and bad circumstances arise, something goes wrong. The same flat tire at 11 p.m. after a long day's drive and a short night's sleep spells trouble. A sick child, a hassle with the boss, getting stuck in traffic, a bad meal or a misunderstanding with a mate becomes a far more difficult matter to deal with when the situation is complicated by fatigue.

Now you have the makings for a real trial or even a spiritual disaster, if Satan has his way. How can you negotiate your way through this danger zone? Here are some tips:

1) *Recognize when you're in Quadrant 4.* Knowing what you're up against is a precaution itself. Forewarned is forearmed.

2) *Guard against letting your attitude slip.* Satan will be trying your spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:13). Don't give in. Pray for strength and a good attitude.

3) *Contain the problem —*

don't let it escalate. In the danger zone of Quadrant 4, little problems can become big problems, like a spark causing a forest fire. Don't start blaming others, using profanity, criticizing people and leaping to broad, sweeping, fatalistic, negative conclusions. Don't get paranoid or assume the worst — you'll blow up into a catastrophe what may be only a minor inconvenience. Contain the problem. Concentrate on the immediate issues at hand. Carefully and prayerfully work through them.

In such cases, the God-given wisdom of James is good to bear in mind: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19).

Keep a cool head. Remember, this, too, will pass. What you *don't* say or do may prove even more important in the long run than what you *do* say or do.

4) *Be alert for Satan's "fiery darts" (Ephesians 6:16).* It's in Quadrant 4 that Satan finds the best openings for his fiery darts of negative emotions, gloom and despair. Keep your guard up. Be strong. Fight back with prayer and recourse to God's Word to steady you.

Sometimes I simply pray, "Father, steady me," and, thankfully, He does. You need to keep steady in such circumstances.

Uncontrolled emotions, which are evidence of spiritual and emotional immaturity, will prove disastrous here.

Master the problems

It would be nice, of course, if all our challenges would come when we're rested and ready for them in every way, but life simply isn't that way. Often we have to face sore trials under difficult personal circumstances. Those times are the real test of your emotional maturity.

Determine to master the problems and challenges of the danger zone, Quadrant 4, where problems and attitudes collide. Doing so will make you a more mature Christian! □

COVETING

Roadblock to Contentment

An ancient king's bad example illustrates the danger in desiring more than we should have.

By H. Freeman Terry

Are you content? Most people in this world aren't!

When you consider your present situation — your home, your job, your personal possessions — do you feel a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction?

Consider some accomplishments that many people feel would produce contentment bordering on bliss. Would you be content to be one of the wealthiest people in the world? Perhaps you would like to be a high-level executive. Maybe you dream of never having to work, just spending all your time in leisure and relaxation. Perhaps your dream is to be a famous politician, with your picture splashed throughout newspapers and magazines. Maybe you'd like to be a television or movie star.

Many have spent their lives striving for such elusive goals, toiling away for personal treasures, trying to create their own heaven on earth. Others fight and claw their way up the corporate ladder, scrambling for a greater share of wealth and influence. All are supremely confident that the fulfillment of their goals will reward them with contentment. But would it?

Not necessarily. All too often, those few who do reach the pinnacle of

what this world considers success still do not find real satisfaction.

We could all benefit from the story of a man who reached the height of success in the world of his time. He was a widely respected national leader who enjoyed vast military power and personal wealth. Yet, sad to say, he never learned to be satisfied with enough. He fell victim to greedy aspirations that eventually cost him everything he had!

The story of King Uzziah

II Chronicles 26 tells the life story of Uzziah, king of Judah. This man literally "had it all," thanks to the benevolence of God.

Verse 3 tells us that, beginning

at age 16, Uzziah reigned 52 years as king in Jerusalem, a lengthy time in office. At a young age, Uzziah assumed a throne occupied by a long line of kings beginning with David.

Sad to say, most of those who inherited David's throne presided over moral and religious decline in Judah. Few seriously inclined their ears and hearts to God. What made Uzziah different?

We read the answer in verse 5: "He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper."

Uzziah developed a zeal to understand and obey God and as one result he was blessed with a broad base of political support in Judah. He was a popular monarch.

With God's help, Uzziah asserted himself as an ardent military leader. With a standing army of more than 300,000 men, Uzziah succeeded in reversing the humiliating defeats Judah had suffered during previous administrations (verses 6, 8, 11-15). His prowess in the Middle East was unquestionable.

Aside from his considerable national stature, Uzziah also possessed considerable wealth (verse 10). Even by today's standards, Uzziah had just about everything



Illustration by Ken Tunell

a person could hope for. You might assume, therefore, that because of this affluence Uzziah was a fulfilled, satisfied person.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. Somehow, it just wasn't enough. The fact is that a person can allow power and wealth to do strange things to him. The more he has, the more he wants. The cancer of covetousness has a way of feeding upon itself.

Few things were denied Uzziah during his long reign. Yet there was one field of responsibility that lay outside his reach. In his latter years, it began to eat on his pride. After all, God had given him everything else. Why, Uzziah thought, should he be denied this one area of power?

The pitfall of coveting

The functions of officiating at God's Temple in Jerusalem were the sole responsibility of the tribe of Levites. Among the Levites, only the descendants of Aaron were allowed to serve as priests. Uzziah, being a Jew, was therefore denied any priestly role. During the Holy Days, it was the high priest, not the king, who officiated before the people. The king was forced to take a backseat to the Levites in ecclesiastical matters, something he came to find repugnant.

Ultimately, Uzziah let his pride and covetousness get the better of him: "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God by entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense" (verse 16).

Uzziah attempted to seize the responsibility of burning incense to God, a function delegated only to the sons of Aaron. The priests presiding at the Temple that day refused to compromise their responsibility, and ordered Uzziah to leave the Temple immediately: "And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, 'It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have tres-

passed! You shall have no honor from the Lord God'" (verse 18).

Uzziah was dumbfounded. Didn't those priests know that he was Judah's great king, known far and wide? Had they forgotten his vast power and prestige?

Uzziah's shock quickly wore off and turned into explosive anger. He let fly a furious outburst, possibly even threatening the priests' lives. God responded immediately: "Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the incense altar" (verse 19).

God's rebuke of Uzziah was swift and decisive. The king was forced to beat a hasty retreat out of the Temple and public life as well. As a leper he was forced to vacate his palace and to live out his days in quarantine. His duties as king were assigned to his son Jotham.

A warning for us

Uzziah's story is one of riches to rags in a single day. In his lifetime God had withheld little from him. However, God would not transgress His own laws and provide Uzziah with responsibilities ordained for others. Uzziah's unfortunate experience continues down to our time as a warning against covetousness.

Jesus said our heavenly Father knows what we need even before we ask (Matthew 6:8). But while God most certainly is concerned with our physical welfare, He is far more concerned with our spiritual well-being. Throughout the centuries God has witnessed countless people who let their physical possessions and power rule over them to the point of self-destruction.

What motivated Uzziah to demand a position he knew he should not have? The apostle James put a finger on the spark that led to Uzziah's rebellion: "You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet

you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:2-3).

It was not Uzziah's wealth that led him astray. Those physical blessings came from a God who gives only good gifts (James 1:17). The fault lay not with the blessings, but rather with the one blessed.

Uzziah broke the Tenth Commandment, which says we shall not covet anything that is not rightfully ours (Exodus 20:17).

We must take care to worship the Creator, rather than the creation (Romans 1:25). Have you read the scripture that says, "First seek your own welfare, and then the Kingdom of God will be added to you"? There is no such scripture! Matthew 6:33 says exactly the opposite. If we will first seek God's Kingdom, He will see to it that we receive abundant blessings, both spiritual and physical.

It is not that God does not want us to improve our physical state, if it is reasonably within our power to do so. Rather, it is a matter of perspective. We must avoid being obsessed with our physical desires, lest we become possessed by them.

The greatest accomplishment

The greatest accomplishment God's people can experience is the attainment of eternal life, along with the power to help the rest of humanity achieve eternal life. Rather than being consumed by a drive to gain physical wealth, fame or position, all of which are fleeting, let's invest in the eternity God has prepared for us.

As the apostle Paul said in Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have." The things of this world are not our ultimate goal. The things of God are.

As we read in I Corinthians 2:9, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." □

PROVE ALL THINGS

What the Bible Says About Baptism

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,” Jesus commanded His disciples, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

This plain, direct command of Jesus Christ certainly sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Yet surprisingly, today, more than 1,900 years later, the varying opinions about the proper methods, reasons, symbols, age for and words said at baptism are legion.

But the incredible need to properly understand this topic is greater in our sinful age than ever before! For every single one of us has, in the clearest terms, been commanded to be baptized upon meeting the qualifications. As Acts 2:38 directs, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you” (Authorized Version).

How can we be properly baptized unless we understand this important doctrine of Jesus Christ? Happily, in spite of the utter confusion surrounding this subject in religious circles, the biblical truth about baptism is plain and clear.

The basic doctrine

Water baptism is the ceremony by which a mature person is immersed quickly under water, upon proper repentance and belief, accompanied by the proper words, in a symbolic burial of the sinful man and raising of the new, as a show of faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus

Christ. Those who undergo a proper baptism are promised forgiveness of sins and receipt of God's Holy Spirit.

The usual teachings of this world

Certainly, many religionists would disagree with the simple definition above, even though each part can be proven from the Bible.

Some think, for example, that children and even infants of only a few days old should be baptized. Others do not believe in immersion of the baptizee, but rather consider sprinkling or pouring of water over the person to be sufficient to baptize properly. A few have even misunderstood one biblical verse to conclude that they may, and even should, be “baptized for the dead” (meaning to them that they may be baptized in place of and for the benefit of a deceased person).

Finally, some misunderstand John the Baptist's words that Jesus Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11), thinking this means that Christians will speak in an excited jibberish that they mistakenly call

“tongues.” Clearly, the confusion needs to be wiped away.

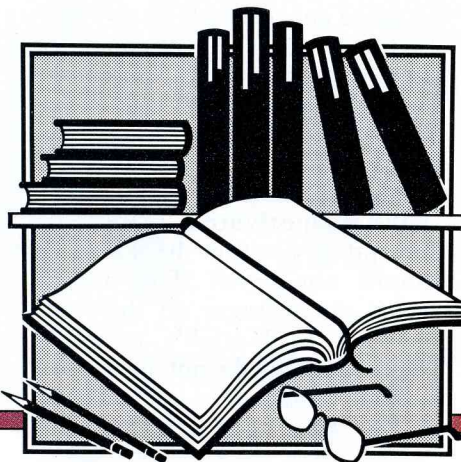
The Bible teaching

We should review the clear command that we be baptized, which states in part: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38, AV). Further, we should compare that verse with Romans 8:9, which states dogmatically, “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

The conclusion is astounding: If we are not baptized we do not receive the Holy Spirit. Yet if we do not receive the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to Jesus Christ! Proper baptism is essential.

The word *baptize* comes from the Greek word *baptizo*, which means “immerse” or “plunge into.” Since the word *baptize* means “to immerse,” to say that sprinkling or pouring means to baptize is a contradiction of terms. Sprinkling or pouring is not immersing, and therefore is not baptizing.

Besides, those who would say it is proper to sprinkle or pour ignore the plain examples of the Bible. Jesus Himself was baptized in the Jordan River and had to have been immersed, for He “came up . . . from” the water (Matthew 3:13-17). Likewise, John baptized in Aenon because there was “much water” there (John 3:23). He wouldn't have needed “much water” for mere sprinkling or pouring. Again, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch traveled to where they could find



enough water to go "down into" (Acts 8:36-39).

But what does the immersion of a person under water symbolize? Romans 6:3-4, 6 explains: "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life . . . knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."

Baptism is a symbolic burial of the old, sinful self. A new person intent on obeying God in every way comes out of the water. Baptism is therefore an outward statement, by our actions, of the inward determination to obey God and leave our sinful past.

But it is even more than this, for, as Paul explains in these verses, our baptism is also a subtle picturing of our faith in the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By acting out His death in our baptism, we show our acceptance of His death's meaning in our life. The results of baptism in our spiritual lives are the forgiveness of our sins and the subsequent receipt of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The actual process of forgiveness through Jesus' blood is called justification. And, although proper baptism is prerequisite to receipt of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is actually received in an associated but separate ceremony called the laying on of hands, performed immediately after baptism.

Forgiveness of sin and receipt of the Spirit do not come to us automatically. No, there are qualifications one must meet before baptism. The first of these is repentance (Acts 2:38). Repentance is abhorrence of past sin

and the sinful self, and the decision to obey God in the future.

The second qualification is belief — faith (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 8:34-37, Mark 16:15-16). The faith required by a person at baptism is our own human faith, rather than the faith of Jesus Christ in us, which we receive after baptism, by His Spirit in us (Galatians 2:16). This faith is toward Christ (Acts 20:21), and is a belief in who and what Christ is, in His message (the Gospel) and in His sacrifice and forgiveness through it.

Now we can begin to see why an infant or even teenager should not be baptized. Children are simply too young to understand the deep symbolism, or to assume the responsibilities of such a decision. And certainly, the living attitudes of mind required for proper baptism preclude anyone being baptized on behalf of a deceased person.

Finally, proper baptism requires the proper words be said. Confusion has arisen about whether we should be baptized in the name of Jesus or in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We should indeed be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). But this phrase merely means that the person who does the baptizing (usually the minister) is doing the baptism not on his own authority, but by the authority of Jesus Christ.

In addition, we should be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). The Greek word for "in" here would better convey the sense if translated "into." We are baptized *into* the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, meaning we are being initiated into the Family of God. We are baptized, not into a denomination of men, but through receipt of the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which composes the Church (I Corinthians 12:13).

A few words must be said

about John the Baptist's statement in Matthew 3:11 that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit. This merely refers to the actual receipt of the Holy Spirit after baptism (in the laying-on-of-hands ceremony). The sometimes-held belief that baptism with the Spirit is the overpowering gyrations and jibberish that some people call "tongues" is mistaken. Write for our free booklet *The Tongues Question* for more information.

Key verses

Here are a few main scriptures that help explain baptism:

Hebrews 6:1-2 shows baptism is a basic doctrine of God's Church. Acts 2:38 shows baptism is commanded, that it should be in Jesus' name, that repentance is required, that it is for the forgiveness of sins and that receipt of the Holy Spirit will follow (after laying on of hands). Acts 8:37 shows that belief is required for baptism. Romans 6:1-6 shows the dual meaning of baptism as the burial of the old self and the analogy of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Matthew 3:13-17 shows that baptism is by complete immersion in water, since Jesus Himself, after baptism in the Jordan River, "came up . . . from the water." Matthew 28:19 shows that the Church should baptize, and that baptism is into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our booklet *All About Water Baptism* offers a thorough study of this topic, including many facts and scriptures that could not be covered in this short article. You may have a free copy by writing to our address nearest you.

Yes, baptism is a most important subject. And, although through the last 1,900 years many religions have professed to baptize properly and have not, baptism is accurately understood today by God's true Church, and done exactly as Jesus Christ commanded. □

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