

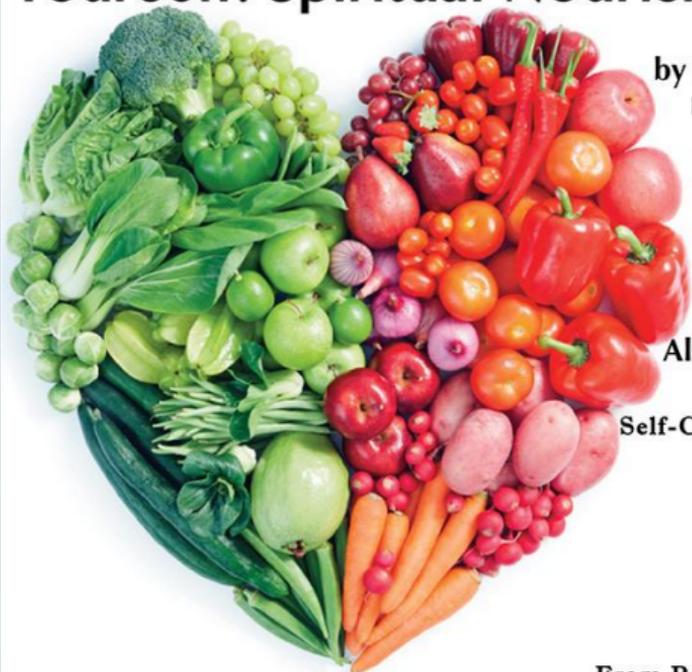
Disciple Magazine

Equipping believers for deeper life

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The Best Thing You Can Do for Yourself: Spiritual Nourishment

by Joe McKeever
Page 1



Also in this Issue:

Page 2
Self-Condensation vs.
Self-Denial
by Shea Oakley

Page 3
Casual Worship
by Justin Lonas

Page 9
From Prison to Platform
by Bernard R. DeRemer

Table of Contents:

The Best Thing You Can Do for Yourself

Self-Condernation vs. Self-Denial

Casual Worship

Exegetically Speaking

Living out the Living Word

Points to Ponder

The Story behind the Song

Church Builders

Counselor's Corner

Book Reviews

News Update

Sermon Helps

Puzzles and 'Toons

The Best Thing You Can Do for Yourself

By Joe McKeever

In the midst of instructing the elders of Ephesus regarding their ministries, the Apostle Paul said, “*Be on guard for yourself*” (Acts 20:28). One way you could take that might mean something like, “Take care of yourself.”

Of course, that—and this is something of a no-brainer—can mean a hundred things, everything from caring for one’s health to caring for his family, from guarding his thoughts to guarding his time, from being safe to being sound. My own observation is that one of the best gifts a ministry-person (that’s you!) can do for yourself is this: “When you sense an appetite for something healthy, feed it.”

Appetites come in all sizes and varieties, of course, some of them healthy and some suicidal. Some are cravings and some gentle urges, but most of us know what a good appetite is.

When we sense an inner pull to stop and read a good book, to turn in Scripture to a particular epistle, or to go for a long walk and talk to the Lord, those are great desires. We may be longing for fellowship with a certain friend or craving more quietness in our personal lives. We would do well to listen to our spirit.

A healthy person has a healthy appetite. A faithful child of the Lord will find himself/herself longing for more and more of Him. “(God) *satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things*” (Psalm 107:9).

Here's what I have learned about feeding a positive, healthy appetite:

1) It is fleeting. If I say, “First I want to watch this program, then I'll read the

book,” what usually happens is that I never get to the book. The moment came and went, never to return.

I had been at my church five years and felt in a rut with my preaching. All the conferences I attended seemed to feature the same speakers. Sensing the need for freshness in my ministry, I began to look outside my denomination. I went to the leaders of the church and asked for a six-week sabbatical. That summer, I attended a weeklong conference at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and a month-long seminar being held on a college campus in another state which featured a different evangelical leader each week.

That was thirty years ago, and I remember it like it was this month. Over four decades of ministry, I did two more sabbaticals, but none was more edifying than the first.

2) It is fragile. Nothing destroys an appetite like junk food. Potato chips and soft drinks have turned more people away from veggies in our day than anything else. Likewise, when we sense a desire for a time with Scripture or in sermon study or writing something in our journal, it's never a good idea to fill our mind with a television program, a ball game, or web surfing.

3) It is of the Father. Personally, the times when I'm most likely to sense the need to get up and look something up, write something down, or check on a fact is when I have stretched out on the bed and gotten quiet. Perhaps it's because this is the first time I've been quiet today, and the Lord has been speaking all along but I've not been listening.

Many ministers have learned to keep a pad by their bedside table in order to jot down those "things to do" or "insights to remember" that arrive unexpectedly in the

middle of the night. Doubtless, they learned this lesson the hard way. The terrific thought that woke them up was so clear and so good, they knew they would still remember it in the morning. Alas, daylight came, and for the life of them, they could not recall what it was that brought them out of the sound sleep.

I awakened once at 2 a.m. with an article on my mind. It was something of a parable about ministry and it came with such clarity, I got out of bed and wrote it down. The next day, I fine-tuned it and sent it off to an editor. That magazine printed it on the inside of their back page and sent me a check. Over the next few years, from time to time, I would receive other checks—all of them small, of course—from other magazines that had picked it up and run it. That one article has appeared in publications on several continents.

Such gentle nudges are from the Lord; they are proofs of His love, signs of His blessings, and confirmations of His presence. Mary sang, “*He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed*” (Luke 1:53).

4) It is a foretaste. In Heaven, the Father will sit us down at His banquet table and feed our heavenly bodies and souls as we have only imagined in this life. In the meantime, He gives us these hors d’oeuvres—these little morsels—to remind us of the smorgasbord to come. How many times did Jesus teach lessons about the Kingdom of Heaven by telling how a great king gave a banquet? Plenty!

Watching the Roman centurion express his faith, Jesus exclaimed, “*I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in*

the kingdom of heaven...” (Matthew 8:10-11). He had Heaven’s banquet on the brain, we might say. “*Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb*” (Revelation 19:9). I’ve been invited. You, too?

Sometimes when I know a great meal is waiting for me later in the day, I skip lunchtime in order to make the most of the feast. What a shame it would be to arrive at the banquet with no appetite!

In the meantime, let us keep our appetites in working order. Let us “*quench not the Spirit*” (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We do ourselves a favor when we give in to those blessed urges that come our way—to write that letter, make that call, read that passage, take that walk, make that gift, pray for this person, visit him, encourage her, etc.

When a hungry and thirsty Jesus ministered to the Samaritan woman, He found that His own spirit was strengthened.

By yielding to the urge to speak with her, He had been fed. He told the puzzled disciples, *“I have meat to eat you know nothing about”* (John 4:32).

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Table of Contents

Self-Condernation vs. Self-Denial

By Shea Oakley

There is a fundamental difference between self-condemnation and self-denial. One is of God and one isn't. Some believers tend to equate these actions with each other. It is a sure recipe for a defeated life. This is because when we exchange one for the other, we live in spiritual self-deception.

Self-condemnation occurs when Christians judge themselves according to false, damaged consciences instead of leaving the prerogative of final judgment to God and God alone. More importantly, as far as that divine judgment is concerned, one verse in the Bible demolishes any justification we might think we have for consigning ourselves to our own Hells or believing we are consigned to the real one. Romans 8:1 tells us “*There is, therefore, now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” If we have received Jesus as Lord and Savior we have passed from existing in a sinful state of true condemnation into the redeemed life of a blood-bought and forgiven child of God. When we despise ourselves as Christians we are also despising the new clean hearts that God has given us through our faith in His Son. This should never be.

Now this is not to say that there are not aspects of our not yet fully sanctified being that we should hate. The “old man”, the sinful flesh, which is dying but still all too present in our being, is to be loathed, and rightfully so. But hating the flesh is different than hating who we now are in Christ. It is indeed true that legitimate self-love has to be carefully defined. The secular self-esteem movement tells us that all human beings should exalt themselves as being “good” apart from the need for forgiveness, transformation, and ownership by God. This is a satanic deception that keeps the lost from knowing their condition and Christians need to expose it for what it is.

That said, it is very important that we do not, in our rightful condemnation of secular concepts of self-esteem, forget that our Lord Himself ordained appropriate self-love. When He told us to love our neighbor, He framed it in the context of loving that

neighbor as we love **ourselves**. It is not wrong to love and care for yourself. You are now a son or daughter of God, and you have great worth in the eyes of the one who sees you through the lens of Jesus Christ.

Appropriate positive self-regard is not a sin in a Christian. We are to love God first, yes, as well as our neighbors, but we are to love ourselves too.

A counselor friend of mine believes that self-love must precede self-denial. What he means is that the kind of sacrifices for others that we are encouraged to make, as children of God, require that we have something healthy in ourselves to give up. People who despise and condemn themselves destroy their very ability to love others from a pure heart abundant with compassion. If we have no compassion for ourselves, how are we to have compassion for others? We may well do good things for

others, but only out of the fear that if we do not we will be more condemned!

Self-condemning believers often assume their sense of condemnation is coming from God, rather than from themselves. This is a sure recipe for a deep sense of hypocrisy, followed sometime thereafter by burnout or what has come to be known in recent years as “compassion fatigue”. We quickly run out of love to give to persons in need when we have not appropriated a God-given love in our hearts for ourselves.

The key to joyful self-sacrifice is that it must come from a heart that is overflowing with the love of Christ. Inappropriate self-loathing of not only our dying flesh, but also our blood-bought, God-loved selves, will quite effectively quench that overflow. It is vital we come to know the blessing of Godly self-denial over the self-inflicted curse of self-condemnation.

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Table of Contents

Casual Worship

By Justin Lonas

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The cultural landscape of the Southern United States being what it is, I pass several churches each morning on my way to the office.

One in particular has a large sign out front trumpeting the latest, greatest ministries and programs they offer. For the past several weeks, however, the sign has advertised something they call “Casual Worship”, presumably a low-key service with more upbeat music and relaxed dress standards designed to attract young adults and other unchurched individuals.

Good for them in trying to reach out to people who've left churches for all the wrong reasons but haven't been let go of by God. Their choice of words (and perhaps their methodology), however leaves much to be desired—true worship is anything but casual.

We were created to worship God and bask in the awe of his power and

righteousness. Our fall into sin marred our relationship and made it impossible for us to live out our created purpose—as rebellious sinners, God in His holiness could no longer abide our presence. From that point on, our worship shifted from unashamed adoration to a meek response to His grace. Allen P. Ross, in *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*, says that the essence of post-fallen worship consists of fear and adoration, confession and commitment, and ritual acts and religious observance.

Because of the fall, God requires that sinful men approach him with the greatest reverence for his holiness. Before Christ, this took the form of the Levitic priesthood, the tabernacle and temple, and the rituals of sacrifice and cleansing. Our Lord isn't some spiteful, whimsical deity who delights in forcing us to go through a maze to find Him, but a gracious God whose sheer being

means that coming near Him on anyone's terms but His means death. Non-casual worship is God's gift—He still wants to fellowship with us; we're the ones who made it very difficult by rebelling against Him.

Christ's sacrifice removed the necessity of ritual for our right standing before God, but it doesn't give us the right to saunter into His presence on our terms. God is no less holy today than He was in the Old Testament, and while, through Christ, He no longer explicitly dictates about what we wear or eat in His presence, He is as concerned as ever with the attitude of our hearts. He wants our worship offering to be that of Abel (pure, undefiled, and sacrificial) instead of Cain (proud fruit of our own effort, from our bounty).

God can't abide someone who abuses the privilege, coming to Him as if He was of no more worth than any other of our friends and acquaintances. Worship of God

should be the most intentional thing we do, consuming our thoughts and actions and shaping every area of our lives. As Ross states, “The worshipper is never to be a passive auditor of the words and the ritual of worship. Neither is worship to be a dry routine nor a formless ecstasy. It is designed for the consecration of all our faculties to God.”

Whether we mean to do it or not, too much of our worship is extremely casual—routine for the sake of routine is casual; ignoring God 6 out of 7 days because we’re not “at church” is casual; leaving our church services without receiving the conviction of the Holy Spirit is casual.

When we treat worship as a subjective, passive experience that only exists for our personal benefit—something that can be “casual”, “formal”, “traditional”, or “contemporary”—we are utterly distorting God’s design. He has called us to be

“witnessing worshippers”, proclaiming His glory to a watching world. All our acts of worship should point to Him alone and say nothing about us other than that we are His own.

That same church sign says that the “casual worship” is held in the “activity center”. If we don’t desire to meet God on His terms, I’m afraid that that is all our churches can hope to be—hubs of activity “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Our God is not a casual God—everything He does has layers of meaning and purpose calibrated perfectly to His will. How dare we put Him in any sort of box? From now on, when I drive past that sign, I’ve asked God to make it a reminder to me to remember who He is and to avoid “casual worship” at all costs. The life of the Church depends on it.

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for AMG International in Chattanooga,
Tennessee.
Table of Contents

Exegetically Speaking

by Spiros Zodhiates

Jesus' Burial

Matthew 27:55-66

*From Exegetical Commentary on Matthew,
2006, AMG Publishers.*

[55] Several women had been with Jesus Christ from the beginning of His earthly public ministry in Galilee, “*helping*” (*diakonoúsai*, the present participle of *diakonéō* [1247], to serve) to meet His physical needs. Matthew does not give

details of how many women were present to suffer through the sight of the crucifixion.

In this verse we are told only that the women followed Jesus all the way from Galilee, ministering to Him (Luke 8:2, 3). This terrible, excruciating scene they “*from (apó [575], from) afar off (makróthen [3113]) were...beholding (theōroúsai, the present participle of theōréō [2334], to look with awe)*” (a.t.).

We deliberately inserted the word order from the Greek text because it is possible that *makróthen* does not modify “beholding.” The phrase, in the order of the Greek text, reads, “*There were there women many from afar off beholding.*” As you can see, it is possible that “*from afar off*” attaches to “*were there*” instead of “*beholding*” from a distance. Most commentators prefer “*beholding from afar*”; however, we have to reconcile Mary Magdalene and other women being

makróthen, from afar off, according to Matthew (v. 56) with their being *pará* ([3844], near, proximate) the cross according to John (John 19:25). The completed picture is that Mary Magdalene and some of the other women originally came “*from afar off*” (Matthew) but now were near the cross and beside John at the death of Jesus.

[56] We cannot identify all of the women. However, Matthew informs us that “*among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James*” (a.t.). Mark 15:40 adds, “*James the less and of Joses, and Salome.*” Because Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s servant, and Susanna “*ministered unto him of their substance*” (Luke 8:3), and Mark records that the group, “*among whom*” were the two Marys and Salome (Mark 15:40), consisted of those who “*used to...minister to Him*” (Mark

15:41), some have conjectured that Joanna and Susanna also were present.

Possibly “*among them*” also were the widow of Nain whose son Jesus raised from the dead (Luke 7:11–17), the sinful woman who anointed Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:36–50), and Mary and Martha of Bethany, the sisters of Lazarus (John 11:1). This event would certainly draw them out. Although they no doubt were fearful, they also desired to support their Master in any way they could.

John 19:25 mentions “*His [Jesus’] mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*” It is possible that both Joseph’s wife and sister-in-law had the name “Mary,” but the Greek has a slight variation in the name of Jesus’ mother, sometimes referring to her as Miriam or Mariam (Matt. 1:20).

[57] Joseph of Arimathaea, Matthew stresses, “*also himself (autós [846], the personal pronoun inserted for emphasis)*

was Jesus' disciple." The verb is *emathēteusen*, the aorist tense of *mathēteúō* (3100), to disciple. This active voice given by the Textus Receptus means the initiative was personal and voluntary—Joseph “discipled” or “learned” under Jesus. We wonder how this member of the Sanhedrin found it possible to personally disciple under Jesus. Both his wealth and activities in the Sanhedrin could take a great deal of time. Moreover, the Sanhedrin was clearly opposed to Jesus' teachings. Joseph had the courage to learn from Jesus in spite of this group's protest.

The critical texts (UBS and Nestle's Text) defer to manuscripts that have the passive voice *emathēteúthē*, “*he was discipled,*” meaning he was discipled by Jesus. John 19:38 informs us that Joseph was “*a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews.*” Like Nicodemus who also

appeared at the cross (John 19:39), he eventually confessed the Lord openly.

[58] According to the Law, if someone were “*hung on a tree*” for a crime, the body was not to remain there overnight (Deut. 21:22, 23). Accordingly, Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus at the very time the Jews thought they had achieved their greatest victory—Jesus’ death. God used Joseph to fulfill prophecy because he believed Jesus’ prophecy that He would rise from the dead in three days. So he volunteered his newly carved tomb for the Lord’s burial. Disciples who are the genuine product of the Holy Spirit are generous and do not count the cost. They deem any sacrifice worthwhile for Him who gave His life for them.

[59] Joseph wrapped Jesus’ body in a clean linen cloth out of respect. Nothing dirty or defiled touched even the dead body of our dear Lord. Here, an interesting

question arises. Where would Jesus have been buried had Joseph not given Him his own tomb? Jesus was not from Jerusalem. At that time, dead bodies could not be transported back home because the Law required immediate interment. But Jesus had no personal assets for local burial expenses. We have to conclude that the Father Himself planned the burial of His Son, raising up a rich believer for this purpose.

Joseph found companionship in Nicodemus who helped take down the body (John 19:39–42). Where were Christ's eleven disciples? How strange that this honorable task was performed by those outside of Christ's "*little flock*" (Luke 12:32). The disciples did not attend to the body of Jesus after His burial except Joseph and Nicodemus. And the women brought sweet spices early in the morning to anoint His body on the day of resurrection. Where were

the disciples then? Perhaps they were still cowering in fear or were in deep depression over the turn of events. The Holy Spirit sometimes raises up others to temporarily replace weakened brethren in order to complete the work of ministry.

[60] These events fulfilled many prophecies recorded in Isaiah 53. Now a further prophecy was fulfilled when the Lord “*made his grave with the wicked (the two robbers), and with the rich in his death (Joseph of Arimathaea); because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth*” (Isa. 53:9).

Something must be said about the burial customs of Jews. In the words of George Milligan (*A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 241-242):

“Immediately after death the body was washed (Acts 9:37) and wrapped in linen clothes in the folds of which spices and ointments were

placed (John 19:39-40). The face was bound about with a napkin, and the hands and feet with grave bands (John 11:44; 20:7). Meanwhile the house of the deceased had been given over to the hired mourners (Matt. 9:23; cf. 2 Chr. 35:25; Jer. 9:17) who lamented for the dead in some strains as are preserved in Jeremiah 22:18, and skillfully improvised verses in praise of his virtues. The actual interment took place as quickly as possible, mainly on sanitary grounds; very frequently, indeed, on the same day as the death (Acts 5:6, 10; 8:2), though it might be delayed for special reasons (Acts 9:37ff.).

“The place of burial in New Testament times was always outside the city (Luke 7:12; John 11:30; Matt. 27:52, 53), and frequently consisted

of a natural cave, or an opening made in imitation of one. These rock-sepulchres were often of considerable size, and sometimes permitted the interment of as many as thirteen bodies. Eight, however, was the usual number, three on each side of the entrance and two opposite. The doorway to the tomb was an aperture about 2 feet broad and 4 feet high, and was closed by a door, or by a great stone that was rolled against it (Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46; John 11:38-39).”

In the same reference, Milligan adds that in addition to family sepulchres (Gen. 23:20; Judg. 8:32; 2 Sam. 2:32), there were private tombs such as the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea (Matt. 27:60). According to Herkless, special provisions were made for the interment of strangers (Matt. 27:7-8; cf. Jer. 26:23):

“Jewish law required that the body of a person who had been executed should not remain all night upon the tree, but should “*in any wise*” be buried (Deut. 21:22, 23). This law would not bind the Roman authorities, and the custom in the empire was to leave the body to decay upon the cross. But at the crucifixion of Jesus and of the two malefactors, the Jews, anxious that the bodies should not remain upon the cross during the Sabbath, besought Pilate that the legs of the crucified might be broken and death hastened, and that then the bodies might be taken away (John 19:31).

“According to Roman law, the relatives could claim the body of a person executed. But which of the relatives of Jesus had a sepulchre in Jerusalem where His body might be

placed? Joseph, wishing Jesus' burial to be according to the most pious custom of his race, went to Pilate and asked for the body. The petition required boldness (Mark 15:43), since Joseph, with no kinship in the flesh with Jesus, would be forced to make a confession of discipleship which the Jews would note. Pilate, too, neither loved nor was loved by Israel, and his anger might be kindled at the coming of a Jew, and the member of the Sanhedrin to be assailed with insults. Pilate, however, making sure that Jesus was dead, gave the body. Joseph, taking down the body of Jesus from the cross (and other hands must have aided his), wrapped it in linen which he himself had bought (Mark 15:46 [see John 19:39–42])” (J. Herkless, *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, 901-902).

After Joseph buried the body of Jesus, he departed, having done his best for His Lord.

[61, 62] The two Marys remained near, “*sitting opposite (apénanti [561]) the sepulchre*” (a.t.). The Jews referred to Friday as *paraskeuē* ([3904], preparation), the day on which to prepare for the Sabbath. Mark 15:42 literally calls Friday “*the pre-Sabbath*” (*prosábbaton* [4315]).

Only Matthew reports that the chief priests and Pharisees requested Pilate to post a guard at Jesus’ tomb. Their fear lay not so much in the belief that Jesus would rise from the dead but that the disciples would steal the body and say that He had risen. Such a report would mean nothing to the Sadducees, since they rejected the theory of bodily resurrection, but it might deceive Pharisees like Nicodemus and laypeople sympathetic with Pharisaic doctrine. Because they had no jurisdiction

beyond the temple or outside the city where Jesus was buried, the priests and Pharisees had to ask Pilate, the only one who could order armed soldiers for that area.

[63] So they said to Pilate, “*Sir, we remember that that deceiver (plános [4108], impostor) said, while he was yet alive, ‘After three days I will rise (egeíromai, the present middle of egeírō [1453], to raise) again’.*” The middle voice again stresses Jesus’ initiative and ability to raise Himself from the dead. The present tense accentuates the certainty of it, as if it were a principle: “I raise Myself.”

[64] They anticipated a conspiracy. To negate the possibility, they requested Pilate to command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure (*asphalithēnai*, the aorist passive infinitive of *asphalízō* [805], to secure) until the third day. Since Jesus’ prophecy was so specific, it did not matter

what happened after the third day. Joseph had rolled the stone against the door, but the chief priests and Pharisees were not satisfied. They wanted a seal and a guard against the threat that the disciples would steal the body Friday or Saturday evening and then on Sunday proclaim that Jesus rose from the dead.

[65] If Pilate had not considered the threat reasonable, he would not have responded as he did: “*Ye have (échetē [2192], either an imperative or an indicative—the same morphologically, i.e., “have at your disposal”) a watch (koustōdían [2892]): Go (hupágete, the present imperative of hupágō [5217], to go; derived from hupó [5259], under, a preposition that denotes stealth) your way, make it as sure (asphalísasthe, the aorist middle deponent imperative of asphalízō [805], to secure oneself against enemies, cf. Acts 16:24) as ye can.*”

The middle voice of *asphalízomai* implies, “Secure it yourselves.” Make it as safe as you think necessary; in other words, given your evident familiarity with conspiracy, do whatever you have to do. One wonders here what Pilate thought of this paranoid messianism. But, in deference to Jews, others, like Theudas (Acts 5:36), had jeopardized the leadership role of the chief priests and Pharisees as well as the little security the oppressed nation of Israel had.

[66] “*So they went, and made the sepulchre sure (ēsphalísanto, the aorist middle deponent indicative of asphalízō).*” The middle voice emphasizes their personal objectives—“*for themselves*”—over and against any concern they might have for Pilate’s motives. In all probability, he did not take the threat seriously. After all, Jesus was not a typical general or king.

After all this preparation, neither soldiers nor cement could match the power of angels.

Spiros Zodhiates (1922-2009) served as president of AMG International for over 40 years, was the founding editor of *Pulpit Helps Magazine* (*Disciple's* predecessor), and authored dozens of exegetical books.

Table of Contents

Living out the Living Word

by Justin Lonas

Slaves and Masters: Gospel Witness at Work

1 Timothy 6:1-2

The first two verses of chapter 6 in Paul's first letter to Timothy follow his pattern in chapter 5 of addressing specific

issues to various groups within the body. In chapter 5, he instructs Timothy on how to rebuke fellow believers in love, tells him to exhort families to provide for their own, outlines rules on caring for widows, and reiterates guidelines for caring for and (if need be) removing elders. As chapter six begins, he focuses on the relationship between slaves and masters.

Paul opens by stating the basic principle of honor and godly submission, closely following his own words from a prior letter to the same church (Eph. 6:5). *“All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor”* (6:1a). Though much has been written to show that slavery in the Roman world was a much different institution than the horrors of race-based slavery experienced in the Western Hemisphere prior to the late 1800s, it was hardly an honor to be a slave. Roman-era slaves were still the bottom of

the social ladder and endured many hardships. Commanding Christian slaves to honor and willingly serve their masters (whether or not they also believed) was not a trivial matter.

In a related, passage, Peter instructs servants to submissively serve their masters, even “*those who are unreasonable*” (1 Pet. 2:18). In both Peter’s and Paul’s view, the primary concern in this command is that the name of Christ be held high: “*so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against*” (6:1b). To our modern sensibilities, it seems odd that the apostles would’ve advocated such patient servitude rather than urging an end to slavery or some sort of civil disobedience, but their focus was clearly on the eternal. They understood that it is better that believers should suffer injustice here and now than that they should jeopardize their

witness in such a way that leads to many unbelievers spending eternity in Hell.

Paul then goes even further than Peter to give special instructions to slaves whose masters are also Christians: “*Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved*” (6:2a). Think about what he is saying—that the existing slave-master relationship shouldn’t fundamentally change just because both parties are now members of the Body of Christ. Paul does say that there should have been a noticeable difference in the relationship, however, as slaves grew more obedient and diligent in their service. As he put it in Ephesians 6:6-7, Christian slaves were to act “*as slaves of Christ, doing the will of god from the heart...as unto the Lord, and not to men.*”

Though he doesn't mention it here, we know from elsewhere in Paul's writings that a relationship with Christ would've changed how masters related to their servants as well. In that same passage in Ephesians 6, he writes. "*And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in Heaven, and there is no partiality with Him*" (Eph. 6:9). Perhaps the best example of this is his plea to the wealthy Philemon to welcome the converted runaway slave Onesimus back into his household and forgive him. "*For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord*" (Philem. 15-16).

Thankfully, though human trafficking is still a scourge today in many parts of the

world, the acceptance of any form of slavery has been purged from those parts of the world with a longstanding Christian heritage. That being the case, what now should disciples of Christ do with these words from Paul? Since the vast majority of the work done by slaves in first century society is, in today's Western World, performed by free men and women employed of their own free will, do the same principles apply?

I think the words of this passage, and those of the corresponding verses in Ephesians, 1 Peter, and elsewhere in the New Testament still pack a powerful punch, especially if we read "employees" when we see "*slaves*" or "*servants*" and "bosses" when we see "*masters*". If the imperatives to serve "*as unto the Lord*" and to regard those in authority as "*worthy of all honor*" applied to slaves, how much more should they apply when we have tremendous input into where we work, who we work for, and how we use

our time (comforts unimaginable to a slave)? Whenever we are tempted to grumble against those who oversee our work, we would do well to remember this.

Additionally, those of us blessed to work in churches and Christian organizations or for supervisors who also know the Lord should take Paul's words to heart. If we use our shared faith as a tool to evade assignments or get ahead aside from merit, what does that say to our unbelieving coworkers about our Lord? But if the bonds of Christ lead us to work harder, with excellence, and with greater integrity, then we bring honor to our employers and to the Lord.

As we have seen over and over in this book, Paul's first concern is for the reputation of Christ, His Gospel, and His Church. That is as crucial today as ever—Satan and the world always delight in exposing the hypocrisy and failures of

believers, but they are confounded over and over by our faithful obedience. Let us “*give the enemy no occasion for reproach*” (5:14). Paul told Timothy, as he did so many times, to “*teach and preach these principles*” (6:2b), for these words are as true today as when first written.

Justin Lonas is editor of *Disciple Magazine* for AMG International in Chattanooga, Tennessee.
Table of Contents

Points to Ponder

by David L. Olford

Entering into God's Promised Rest

Text: “*Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to*

the same example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11).

Thought: The present day believer in Christ needs to be motivated by the bad example of God's people in the wilderness. Yes, they were delivered from bondage and brought out of Egypt. They were brought into the wilderness and cared for, but that was not God's ultimate purpose for them. God's purpose for them was that they enter "*His rest*" in the promised land (3:17-19). But due to their lack of faith and disobedience a whole generation died in the wilderness and never entered into the promised rest of God.

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of this rest as a rest that now remains for God's people today (4:9-10). Bible students and scholars differ on the meaning of this "*rest*" in Hebrews. Some view it as a present potential rest of living faithfully in Christ according to God's purpose and promise, a rest that will be fulfilled ultimately in heaven,

but can be experienced now. Others view this rest completely as a future promised rest in heaven or eternity. Whatever the case, the first view certainly does not exclude the second, and neither view challenges the doctrine of the perseverance of God's people in Christ as presented in Hebrews itself. What is most important for us is that our text indicates that God's people must be diligent to enter this rest of God in contrast to God's people in the wilderness who were not diligent to enter Canaan, and indeed did not "*enter in.*"

How can we avoid "*coming short of [God's rest],*" which is the challenge of the writer in this amazing epistle (4:1, 11)?

I. Diligence: Believe and Obey the Word of God (Hebrews 4:1-13)

The basic problem with the wilderness generation is that they failed to embrace with faith the message they heard

(4:2). Similarly they failed to obey the good news that was preached to them (4:6). Their hardness of heart, which resulted in disobedience, kept them from entering into God's rest for them (4:11). This text reminds us that faith and obedience go hand-in-hand. True faith will result in obedience. We must be people of faith and obedience in response to the Word we have received.

We must view the Word of God as it is described in our text: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (4:12). Since we have an all-knowing God to whom we are accountable (4:13), we must let the Word of God do its work in our lives to keep us from having hardened hearts. The Word will direct us to live lives of faith and obedience.

II. Allegiance: Hold Fast our Confession Concerning Jesus the Son of God (4:14-15)

The writer calls for faithfulness and allegiance throughout his epistle, and this faithfulness and allegiance are to the unique Son of God who is exalted throughout the book. The writer will develop the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest extensively in the coming chapters.

In this context, because Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest He is able to understand and “*meet us*” at our point of weakness (4:15). The implication is that he will enable us to hold fast our confession, and to enter into the “*rest*” that God has for us. We have a Sympathizer, we have a Helper, we have One who is without sin, but is able to help us who do yield to temptation, because He has faced the same temptations and won.

III. Provision: Obtain Mercy and Find Grace (4:16)

Because we have a Great High Priest, we should rejoice at the wonderful words of invitation that are offered next by the inspired writer. We are invited to come to the very throne room of God. But, not only are we to come, we are to come “*boldly.*” This access is through our Great High Priest and what he has done for us, and it is access to a “*throne of grace.*” Yes, we are accountable to the all-knowing creator God, but His throne here is described as a place of grace. Praise God!

Why do we come? To “*obtain mercy and to find grace to help.*” When do we come? “*...In time of need.*” The assumption is that due to our weakness and due to the temptations that we face, we need mercy and grace. Although the distinction is not definite, it can be said that mercy covers our failures and sins and grace enables us to

move on in faith and obedience. In so doing, we will not fall short of God's purpose and promise for us as believers in the Son of God.

Thrust: Along with the strong call for diligence and allegiance to live faithfully is the provision of mercy and grace to enable us to live faithfully and to enter into the promised rest of God. In terms of application, this is true both for experiencing the rest of faith in Christ now, and it leads to receiving our eternal inheritance in Christ forever! Praise His Name!

David L. Olford teaches expository preaching at Union University's Stephen Olford Center in Memphis, Tennessee.

Table of Contents

The Story behind the Song

by Lindsay Terry

From the Church Kitchen to the World Song: “Days of Elijah”

“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the ‘Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky’ with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with ‘a great trumpet’ and ‘they will gather together’ His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other” (Matt. 24:30-31).

“I cannot sit down and write automatically. God hasn’t given me that gift,” explained Robin Mark. “I write only when I feel I have something to say.” As you continue to read, you will see how the Lord has in the past few years been moving

Robin Mark into the forefront of the ministry of worship and praise.

Robin lives in Belfast, Ireland, with his wife, Jacqueline, and their three children, Catherine, David, and James. A successful businessman and lecturer at Queen's University, Robin has another gifting in life—that of worship leader and songwriter.

He said, "I didn't become interested in writing songs until I began to play in a Christian contemporary band. It was evangelistic in makeup, and we did outreach in and around Belfast." Invitations now come to Robin to minister through music in Europe, America, Canada, Australia, and the Far East.

Robin led me to a story on his Web site. "The song came from watching a television review of the year at the end of 1994. These were the years of the Rwandan civil war tragedies that claimed the lives of nearly one million people. It was the year of

the first ceasefire in Ireland. As I watched the review, I found myself despairing about the state of the world and began asking God if he was really in control and what sort of days were we living in.

“I felt in my spirit that he replied to my prayer by saying that indeed he was very much in control and that the days we were living in were special times. He was requiring Christians to be filled with integrity and to stand up for him just as Elijah did, particularly with the prophets of Baal. These are Elijah days.

“Those thoughts were in my mind when I came to church early one Sunday in 1995. We have two morning services, and the pastor spoke during the first service on the ‘*valley of dry bones*’ from Ezekiel. I took a prompt from this and in the thirty minutes between the services wrote down the words and chords to ‘Days of Elijah’ in the kitchen of our church building. As we were about to

close the second service, I presented the song to the church, and we sang it together as our worship.

“Maybe one day I will hear the call to go into full-time ministry. Maybe the business will decline. Maybe I’ll need to find work elsewhere. All I know is, his ways and thoughts are higher than ours. He knows the plans he has for each of us, and the paths we are to take. Listen for the call, and no matter how strange it may seem, go where he leads you to go, work 9 to 5, and worship 24/7.

“I now have been graced to take on the role of director of worship at Christian Fellowship Church, my home church. My songs have gone from Belfast to all over the world. God’s call was a good one!”

“Days of Elijah” was launched on a meteoric flight around the world with the publishing of a CD, *Revival in Belfast*, recorded by Robin Mark and the Christian

Fellowship Church in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

It is refreshing to hear from someone who is not afraid to follow the call of the Lord and to trust in him completely. God says to each of us, “*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight*” (Prov. 3:5-6).

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Lindsay Terry has been a song historian for more than 40 years, and has written widely on the background of great hymns and worship songs including the books *I Could Sing of Your Love Forever* (2008), from which this piece is excerpted, and *The Sacrifice of Praise* (2002).

Table of Contents

Church Builders

by Bernard R. DeRemer

Chuck Colson: From Prison to Platform

Charles W. “Chuck” Colson (1931-2012), President Richard M. Nixon’s famed “Hatchet man” turned evangelical speaker and author, was born in Boston to Inez and Wendell Colson. He became heavily involved in American politics from a very early age. While still in high school, he volunteered for the re-election campaign of the governor of Massachusetts, and later worked in various government posts and on other campaigns.

Colson earned his B. A. from Brown University in 1953, after which he served two years in the U.S. Marine Corps, rising to the rank of Captain. After his discharge from the Marines, he worked for two years with

the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. From 1956 to 1961, he served as administrative assistant to Massachusetts Senator Leverett Saltonstall. During this time, he continued his education, earning his J. D. from the George Washington University Law School in 1959.

Colson went into private law practice in 1961, and after working on President Nixon's 1968 campaign, he was appointed Special Counsel to the President in 1969. In this role, he worked closely with the President on a wide range of official and political projects, and earned a reputation for his ruthless pursuit of the administration's goals. During the 1972 re-election campaign, Colson and others were involved in unscrupulous activities surrounding what would soon become known as the Watergate scandal.

Colson resigned from his White House post in early 1973, returning to private legal practice. As the scandal

continued to unravel, however, evidence of Colson's involvement led to his indictment for obstruction of justice in March 1974. While he was facing arrest and imprisonment, a friend and mentor gave Colson a copy of C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, which led him to give his life to Christ and join a Washington prayer group to be discipled.

After His conversion, Colson's desire to live out his newfound faith with integrity led him to plead guilty to the charges against Him. He was sentenced to 1 to 3 years in prison, fined \$5,000, and disbarred. Colson ended up serving 7 months in federal prison in Alabama before being released in January 1975.

This experience in prison transformed his life and gave him a new direction, leading him to leave politics and devote his energies to Christian ministry.

In his definitive Christian worldview book, *Kingdoms in Conflict*, Colson wrote, “[God’s] rule is even more powerfully evident in the ordinary individual lives, in the breaking of cycles of violence and evil...in the actions of those little platoons who live...in the midst of the kingdoms of this world....” His many other books include *Born Again* (an account of his conversion testimony), *Loving God, Who Speaks for God?*, and *How Now Shall We Live?*

Colson’s great accomplishment was founding Prison Fellowship, the largest global outreach to prisoners, former prisoners, and their families. “His ministry joined justice with compassion and inspired Christians around the world to serve the ones society dismisses as beyond all hope.”

As a longtime advocate for the welfare and rehabilitation of those behind bars, Colson brought prison reform before Congress through the work of Justice

Fellowship. Humble and gracious, he became “one of the most eloquent and inspirational voices of our time.” Colson was widely known in the American Church for his ministry activities, his apologetic writings, his daily radio program *BreakPoint* (which still airs on hundreds of stations around the world), and his faithful advocacy for biblical values in culture and politics.

In recognition of his work for the cause of Christ, Colson received numerous awards and honors, including in 1993 the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. He donated the \$1 million award to Prison Fellowship.

On March 31, 2012, after speaking at a Christian worldview conference in Virginia, Colson fell ill and underwent surgery for a brain hemorrhage. He passed into the presence of the Lord three weeks later. In his final message, he spoke of the power of individuals to bring about change in the

culture for Christ: “[I believe] that societies are changed by movements at the grass roots...over the backyard fence and the barbecue grill; I don’t believe they are changed from the top down.”

“...*Well done, thou good and faithful servant...*” (Matt. 25:21).

Bernard R. DeRemer chronicled the lives of dozens of heroes of the faith in more than a decade of writing for Pulpit Helps Magazine.

He continues to serve in this capacity as a volunteer contributor to Disciple. He lives in West Liberty, Ohio.

Sources: Prison Fellowship, Merrifield, Va.;
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Colson.

Table of Contents

Counselor's Corner

by James Rudy Gray

What's Love Got to Do with It?

Originally Published in Pulpit Helps, May 2008.

Tina Turner's line in that popular song captures part of the dilemma with relationships today, "What's love got to do with it?" The song goes on to say that love is just a second-hand emotion. Therein resides the problem. Is love an emotion? Or do feelings come from real love?

My definition of the Greek word *agápē* (translated "love" in our English Bibles) is that it is an attitude that seeks to do what is right and best and does it in a way that is sacrificial and unconditional. Love is committed to do what is right for

another person. Emotions will follow that kind of practice. “Liking” is the more emotional word. We can love our enemies as the Bible commands but we may not like them. In a good and godly relationship, we should have both.

Several years ago I spoke with a professing Christian man who had committed adultery, and his wife was both angry and hurt over the discovery. I asked him how this happened. He replied, “I love her.” My reply was rather strong. I said simply, “You do not love her.”

After some moments of going back and forth between my statement that he did not love her and his insistence that he did, I finally said to him that love does the right thing. Since this was decidedly the wrong thing, it could not be love. It could be infatuation. It could be lust. It could be a bundle of all kinds of feelings. However, it could not really be love.

The idea of “falling in love” has captured our imaginations in this culture for generations. Personally, I have never fallen into anything that was good. The whole notion of falling carries with it the idea of disaster. Still, I think I understand what people mean when they say they are “in love.” In most cases it means they are infatuated with another person. They have strong romantic or emotional feelings toward another person. All relationships between a man and a woman begin with infatuation. If the relationship does not develop more maturity and move into a condition of real love, the relationship is headed for trouble eventually.

Among some people today the whole idea of love is that we are swept away emotionally and romantically by some sort of overpowering force we cannot resist. The conclusion to that kind of thinking leads people to surmise that adultery cannot be

that bad because, after all, they are “in love.” The kind of thinking that sees love as an irresistible romantic or emotional feeling invariably leads to a justification for behavior and relationships that are not just unhealthy but sinful. Further, if we had no real control over this romantic or emotional force, we could not be blamed for what we cannot help. That kind of thinking is dangerous.

Another interesting phenomenon that evolves from this type of thinking is people “falling out of love.” Most counselors have many times heard the statement: “I just don’t love him (or her) anymore.” Love is more about commitment than anything else. Feelings are great. God gave us the capacity to have feelings. But we cannot trust our feelings. Feelings can fluctuate and change.

We must be sure our thoughts are grounded in truth—God’s truth. It seems that by making the confession that we do not

love someone anymore or we now love someone else, we are yielding ourselves to the protection of a force that leaves us victims but not accountable. But love is responsible. Christians are accountable. Human behavior has consequences, for good for evil.

Love is a powerful force, but it does not arise from our hormonal storehouse or from our emotional state. It comes from God. We cannot really love another person or God Himself until we first know Christ. He is love. The fruit of His Spirit is love. We love because He first loved us.

Today, too many relationships break apart because an emotional or romantic substitute we call love has replaced real love. Couples need to hear and understand that love is the key to healthy relationships. But, love is not so much a feeling as a commitment.

Things often go wrong in a world that is still under the curse of sin. Sin still affects everybody and everything. But sinful acts cannot be called love. Real love will certainly fuel a healthy and godly relationship. Marriages can go the distance with that kind of love.

James Rudy Gray is certified as a professional counselor by the National Board for Certified Counselors, and is a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He serves as the editor of *The Baptist Courier*, the official newspaper of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Table of Contents

Book Review—10/22/12

The Life of God in the Soul of the Church: The Root and Fruit of Spiritual Fellowship, Thabiti M. Anyabwile, 2012, Christian Focus, Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland, ISBN 9781845509231, 242 pages, \$14.99, softcover.

Far too often, we take the Church for granted. This can play out as a complacent comfort that relies on the routines and activities of the local church for social structure, an attitude of vague, “spiritual-but not religious” frustration with the ordinariness and stagnation of certain local churches, or any number of expressions along that continuum.

In *The Life of God in the Soul of the Church*, Thabiti Anyabwile calls believers to recapture the wonder of the gathered Body

of Christ and recognize and cherish it for what it is—the living expression of God Himself on earth. Building on the foundation of Henry Scougal's classic work *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, Anyabwile expounds the New Testament passages concerning Christ's family to give readers a framework to understand the purpose and practice of the local church.

The book is laid out in two parts. The first discusses the nature and goal of the church as the outworking of Christ's presence in the world. In expositing passages from 1 John and 1 Corinthians, Anyabwile makes the case that the spiritual life of believers only finds its full expression when they are part of a local body. The second portion of the book outlines several expressions of the shared spiritual life of believers: loving one another, spiritual gifts for mutual edification, partnership, correction of sin and restoration, suffering together and

comforting one another, forgiveness, corporate worship, giving, mutual acceptance, and a reiteration of the importance of love in all these areas.

Anyabwile tells readers up front that the material for this book was prepared and delivered as a sermon series to his congregation at First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman, and was edited very little for this printed version. This style both hinders and helps the book—repetition of points for emphasis and episodic (rather than sequentially building) chapters may frustrate some, while a prophetic urgency and emphasis on application typical of good sermons brings life to the very practical discussions of church life. The numerous examples from his own church that Anyabwile uses help bring his points to life and bring home both their importance and accessibility.

The parachurch organization IX Marks endorses this book as part of their teaching tools, and it does fit well with their focus on the maintenance of healthy and active churches. Readers will not likely find groundbreaking insights here (which is not the purpose of the book), but will be refreshed and encouraged to take seriously the call to be a part of the Body of Christ, local and global, and serve each other to the glory of God. Like a sermon, its purpose is both to teach and to spur to action.

Justin Lonas

Target: All

Type: Church Life

Take: Recommended

Table of Contents

News Update—10/22/12

New York Appeals Court Nixes Defense of Marriage Act

A divided federal appeals court in Manhattan struck down the Defense of Marriage Act October 18 as unconstitutional, joining an appeals court in Boston in rejecting the law that defines marriage as between one man and one woman, *WORLD Magazine* reports.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued its 2-to-1 ruling just weeks after hearing arguments September 27 on a lower court judge's ruling that DOMA was unconstitutional. The majority opinion, written by judge Dennis Jacobs, rejected a section of the law that defined "marriage" as only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife and

“spouse” as only a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.

The Supreme Court is expected to take up the case in the next year.

Religion Today Summaries

Trial of Pakistani Christian Girl Accused of Blasphemy Postponed

The juvenile court hearing of Rimsha Masih, a 14-year-old Christian girl arrested for blasphemy in mid-August and released on bail three weeks later, has been postponed until November 14, *Asia News* reports.

The ruling came after Rimsha's lawyer filed a petition stating that the blasphemy charges were false and baseless, demanding the case be dismissed and Rimsha be released since there was no offense. The lawyer added that the local imam who deliberately desecrated the Quran to frame Rimsha fabricated the story

in order to force out minority Christians from their homes and seize their assets, and that if anyone committed blasphemy, it was him, according to the testimony of three witnesses who, however, later retracted.

The imam remains free on bail, and his lawyers are trying to delay proceedings. Prosecutors have indicated they are not planning to try him on blasphemy charges, which, critics point out, is an example of how the blasphemy law is used arbitrarily against minorities and adversaries. Meanwhile, persecution targeting Pakistani Christians continues, with attacks on churches in Karachi and Faisalabad on October 14.

Religion Today Summaries

Obama Promotes Planned Parenthood Funding in Debate

Planned Parenthood was among President Obama's buzzwords during the second presidential debate Oct. 16 as he

mentioned the nation's largest abortion provider five times, using it to distinguish himself from Republican candidate Mitt Romney, *Baptist Press* reports.

In discussions about tax cuts, workplace inequalities, differences between Romney and George W. Bush, and earning votes for reelection, Obama underscored Romney's pledge to cut federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood, in the last statistics available, received \$487.4 million in government funds in 2009-10 and performed 329,445 abortions in 2010. In this election season, Obama launched a television ad campaign that made his pro-choice views a major theme; no previous Democratic nominee has ever made abortion a major general election theme in TV ads.

Religion Today Summaries

School District Pays \$70K for Banning ‘Christ’ From Valedictorian’s Speech

A Montana school district has been ordered to pay \$70,000 in attorneys’ fees for banning a valedictorian from speaking at her graduation in 2008 because her speech contained religious references, CBN News reports.

Former Butte High student Renee Griffith’s speech included the sentence “I don’t let fear keep me from sharing Christ and His joy with those around me,” and she was told by the Butte School District that she had to remove the references to God and Christ because religious references were not allowed in graduation speeches.

A lower court had ruled in favor of the school district, but the Montana Supreme Court overturned that ruling 6-1, saying Griffith’s free speech rights were violated.

Religion Today Summaries

Iran: Seven Christians Detained Following Raid on Prayer Meeting

Seven Christians from the Church of Iran denomination were detained Oct. 12 following a raid by members of the security services on a house in the city of Shiraz in Iran's Fars Province, Christian Solidarity Worldwide reports.

The Christians are currently being held in Plaque 100, the Intelligence Ministry's notorious detention center. They were detained around 6 p.m. after security forces raided a house where a prayer meeting was underway. According to sources, older people who had attended the prayer gathering were threatened but not taken into custody.

The detentions are part of a marked upsurge in a campaign of harassment of Christians of all denominations, with reports of a significant increase of arrests during recent weeks.

Hobby Lobby's Request to Halt Contraception Mandate Gets Hearing Date

A judge has scheduled a hearing for Christian crafts retailer Hobby Lobby's request for preliminary injunction on the Health and Human Services mandate that would require the company to provide emergency contraceptive coverage or face steep fines, the *Christian Post* reports.

The hearing will take place at 10 a.m. on Oct. 24 in Oklahoma City. Hobby Lobby's owner and founder, David Green, says the mandate violates their religious beliefs because it forces the business to provide insurance covering abortion-inducing drugs, such as the "morning-after" pill.

When Hobby Lobby filed suit against the federal government in September, it became the first evangelical employer to

challenge the mandate. Thirty-one lawsuits have been filed to date against the mandate, which takes effect on Jan. 1, 2013.

Religion Today Summaries
Table of Contents

Sermon Helps

from www.sermonhall.com

Sermon Outlines

Caleb's Cry

Joshua 14:6-12

I. Caleb's Character

A. Designated.

1. A spy [scout] (Num. 13:2).
2. From the Tribe of Judah
(Num. 13:6)
3. Destined to be a mountain climber (Num. 13:17).

B. Determined to possess the land (Num. 13:30-33).

C. Dependable.

1. “Wholly followed the Lord” (Num. 14:24; Josh. 6:8, 14).

2. Preserved when other spies perished (Num. 14:38).

II. Caleb’s Claim (Josh. 14:9)

A. The dividing of the land begins (Josh. 14:6).

B. God’s promise to Caleb.

C. Hebron: communion; fellowship (according to Ian Wilson).

III. Caleb’s Cry (Josh. 14:12): “*Now therefore give me this mountain*”

A. Difficulty should not deter.

B. I will go and possess that which is mine.

C. I will continue in a place of fellowship (Hebron) forever with the Lord.

IV. Caleb’s Challenge

- A. Age (Josh. 14:10).
- B. Anakim (Josh. 14:12).
- C. Adversary's Advantage (fortified uphill region).
- D. Application: personal mountains.

V. Caleb's Conquest

- A. After 45 years of waiting (Josh. 15:14).
- B. Provided for the next generation.

Anonymous

The Math of the Cross

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

- I. The Cross Subtracts One From Hell
 - A. Needfully (John 3:36).
 - B. Instantly (John 5:24).
 - C. Completely (1 John 1:7).
 - D. Eternally (Rom.6:23).
- II. The Cross Adds One to Heaven

- A. To the family of heaven (Gal. 3:26).
- B. To the records of heaven (Luke 10:20).
- C. To the protection of heaven (Ps. 34:7).
- D. To the provisions of heaven (Phil. 4:19).
- E. To the dwelling of heaven (John 14:2).

III. The Cross Divides One From the World

- A. Because of renovation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- B. Because of habitation (Col. 3:3).
- C. Because of preparation “at Calvary!”
- D. Because of inspiration (1 John 4:4).

IV. The Cross Multiplies One's Treasures

- A. By relationship (Rom. 8:16-17).
- B. By reward. (Rev. 22:12).
- C. By reservation (I Pet.1:4).

Illustrations

The Unbreakable Chain

The story is told of a famous blacksmith of medieval times who, having been taken prisoner and immured in a dungeon, began to examine the chain that bound him with a view to discovering some flaw that might make it easier to break it.

His hope was in vain, for he found from some marks upon it that it was his own workmanship. It had been his boast that none could break a chain that he had forged, and now he was weighed down and trapped by his own hand.

Thus it is with the sinner. His own hands have forged the chain that binds him, a chain that no human hand can break. Only the power of Christ can set us free.

Anonymous

Revival Stew

Revival is like putting last night's stew on the stove. Your leftover stew was tasty yesterday but has been in the refrigerator since. Now it's cold, thick, and chunky and feels too heavy to eat.

But the flame from the burner begins to chase away the chill. Then the stew begins to lose its lethargy and starts to warm and thin. Soon, with some stirring, it becomes a warm, fluid, consistent source of nourishment and strength, as it was intended to be.

Churches are like that. Our faith is like that. Once in awhile God needs to put us on the stove of chastisement and stir us up, so we will be as we are intended to be. Stephen Olford defined revival as "the sovereign act of God, in which He restores His own backsliding people to repentance, faith, and obedience." Revival is restoration!

J. A. Gillmartin

Bulletin Inserts On Evangelism/Witnessing

Witnessing is not just something a Christian says, but what a Christian is!

Richard Halverson

Reach out to a world in need with the Word it needs.

Hoarded religion pays no interest—and the principal is in danger.

God has more trouble getting Christians to go than sinners to come.

These three anonymous

Keep your fears to yourself; share your courage with others.

If it had not been for a missionary somewhere, sometime ago, where would you be today?

These two via the *Old Union Reminder*

I can't find a verse of Scripture that commands a lost person to go to church (but) I know a lot of Scripture that commands believers to go into a lost world.

Howard Hendricks

This is the concept of “beginning with the end in mind”—that every new Christian understands the goal of the church is to reproduce itself elsewhere.

From *Advance*

No matter who you are or where you are, God has a purpose for you...and that purpose is to be a witness for Him.

Andy Chap
Table of Contents

Puzzles and 'Toons

Church 'Toons by Joe McKeever

"DENOMINATIONS MEANS THEY'RE ALL BIRDS OF A FEATHER."



"HONEY, LETS LIVE ON
WHAT WE MAKE, NOT
WHAT OUR NEIGHBOR
MAKES."



Answers to last issue's puzzles:

Father Abraham's Answers from p. 23

1. "The spirit of the Lord" (Is. 11:2).
2. "The spirit of wisdom and understanding" (Is. 11:2).
3. "The spirit of counsel and might" (Is. 11:2).
4. "The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Is. 11:2).
5. Lucifer (Is. 14:12).
6. Damascus (Is. 17:1ff.).
7. Shebna the treasurer (Is. 22:15ff).
8. Strong drink (Is. 28:9).
9. Ariel (Is. 29:1).
10. Bozrah (Is. 34:6).

Answers for Acrostic Number 60

OBADIAH 1:4 - "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."

- A. THEFIXER
- B. HILO
- C. QTSTRETCHED
- D. BETHHOGLAH
- E. ANTHOLOGY
- E. DEMOSTHENES
- G. INTHELASTDAYS
- H. AGATE
- I. HINT
- J. THEWEALTH
- K. WROUGHT
- L. LUSH
- M. TUNGSTEN

Father Abraham and Hidden Wisdom

By Mark Oshman

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On following Pages

Father Abraham's Question Box

The Prophecy of Isaiah, Part 3: Sennacherib's Invasion and Hezekiah's Sickness

1. In which year of King Hezekiah's reign did Sennacherib's invasion occur?
2. Who commanded Sennacherib's army?
3. Upon what nation did the Assyrian commander accuse Israel of trusting to deliver them?
4. Which king came forth to wage war against Sennacherib while the latter fought against Judah?
5. How many of Sennacherib's soldiers did the Angel of the Lord kill in one night?
6. Who killed Sennacherib?
7. When Hezekiah was sick, how many years did God add to his life?
8. What sign did God give Hezekiah to assure him that He would do this?
9. What instructions did Isaiah give in connection with Hezekiah's healing?
10. Who sent Hezekiah letters and a present to congratulate him on his recovery?

See answers on page 27.

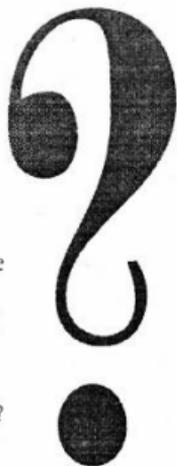


Table of Contents

Hidden Wisdom: Bible Acrostic #6 I

by Mark A. Oshman

Solve the acrostic by using the clues to guess the words and by transferring the letter above each number to its appropriate place in the diagram. The result will be a Scripture verse of admonition, comfort, or instruction. Further, the initial letters of the answers will contain the name of the book from which the verse was taken. Happy solving!

1J	2F	3L		4K	5E	6L		7A	8H	9C	10E	11M	12F	13G	14I	15O	
16I	17H	18E	19G		20C	21J	22E	23O	24I	25H	26B	27L	28K		29B	30G	31A
		32I	33I	34F	35I	36K			37H	38B	39L		40A	41J	42F	43H	
44O	45G	46N		47K	48B	49D	50A	51J	52M	53I		54E	55H		56I	57C	58G
59F	60K		61E	62I		63D	64B	65H	66A	67J		68L	69C	70H	71M	72J	73G
	74B	75F	76E	77M	78I		79A	80K		81L	82H	83D	84A	85N		86I	87K
	88N	89M	90E	91B		92C	93J	94K	95F		96E	97D	98L	99K	100M	101N	102F

A. "We _____ at noonday"

B. Main character in Hans Christian Anderson tale

C. A map, for one

D. Zeus, in ancient Rome

E. A city in Dan's territory

F. Disposition

G. A city in Moab

H. A Christian who lived in Rome

I. A subterranean, edible fungus

J. A son of Saul (hyph.)

K. Venus, in ancient Greece

L. "How shall we escape if we _____ so great salvation?"

M. A son of Shobal (1Chr. 1)

N. Outlet for air

O. And so forth (abrev.)

7 40 66 50 79 31 84

91 64 48 74 29 38 26

20 69 57 9 92

63 49 83 97

76 10 54 96 90 18 5 61 22

42 95 12 75 59 2 34 102

30 13 45 58 73 19

17 65 55 33 8 70 82 43 25 37

78 14 32 62 56 24 53

51 67 93 1 21 72 41 35 86 16

94 47 60 36 87 28 99 4 80

39 6 81 98 27 68 3

52 77 100 11 89 71

101 46 85 88

15 44 23