

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

AUGUST, 2002

HOLY LAW

Stunning GRACE

**28th ANNUAL
CENTRAL LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

November 18 - 21, 2002

Glenmora Church of Christ

Theme: "Jesus Christ, Our All-Sufficient Savior"

MONDAY NIGHT November 18th

7:30 Jesus' Remedy for Troubled Hearts Antoine Valdetero

TUESDAY November 19th

10:00 FAITH is not an option Dale Foster

11:00 JESUS IS GOD--ETERNALLY Paul Kitzmiller

1:15 Transformed Lives: Man Born Blind Stan Helton

7:30 Jesus' Answer for Seeking Hearts Jack Harris

WEDNESDAY November 20th

10:00 THE NEW BIRTH is not an option Bennie Hill

11:00 JESUS IS GOD--ESSENTIALLY Paul Kitzmiller

1:15 Tranformed Lives: Woman at the Well Nathan Burks

7:30 Jesus' Standard for Serving Hearts Julius Hovan

THURSDAY November 21st

10:00 FRUITBEARING is not an option Sonny Childs

11:00 JESUS IS GOD--EQUALLY Paul Kitzmiller

1:15 Transformed Lives: Peter
--from sand to ROCK Robert Johnson

7:30 Jesus' Legacy for Believing Hearts Paul Estes

Sonny Childs will be speaking each evening to the youth ages
10 and up.

Hospitality Chairman: Dennis LeDoux - (318) 748-4243
Glenmora Church of Christ P. O. Box 314 Glenmora, La. 71433

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

Dennis L. Allen, Missions

Bennie Hill, News & Notes

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The 10th COMMANDMENT

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Deut. 5:21, NIV

"You must not burn with desire for another man's wife, nor envy him for his home, land, servants, oxen, donkeys, nor anything else he owns." Liv.Bib.

This last command provides the key to fully applying commands #6-9. All of those deal with outward actions but #10 deals with inner attitude, the origin of such acts. If coveting were eliminated, stealing would be wiped out. If hatred were exterminated, murder would practically disappear. If lust were eradicated, would adultery be a problem? **To bear good fruits we must care for the roots.** Jesus put this beyond all doubt in the Sermon on the Mount, but the Jews should have understood it already. The tenth command made it clear, 1500 years earlier. God is concerned about our conduct, but more so about our heart.

No human government can enforce a law against coveting, because we can't read one another's minds. But God judges not only our deeds but our inner character too -- our hearts, desires, motives and thoughts. That's a solemn fact.

Coveting is Common

In the 1500s, Spanish conquistadors conquered South America. Upon reaching Peru they sent a message to the Indian ruler there, **"Give us gold, for we Spaniards have a disease that can only be cured by gold."** That was truer than they knew. The disease has never yet been eradicated. It still runs rampant worldwide.

The Bible gives over twelve examples of coveting. It is noteworthy that the very start of three important eras was marked by cases of such greed. As human history began, Eve coveted in Eden. As Israel began its conquest of the Promised Land, Achan lusted for possessions at Jericho. And as the Church got started, Ananias and Sapphira's craving for both money and a reputation for generosity led to lying.

What is Coveting?

In the Old Covenant scriptures, the Hebrew word translated covetousness means *desire for unjust gain*. To covet is not merely to desire something you don't have, but something you have no right to have, because it belongs to someone else. The main Greek word for this in

the New Covenant scriptures means to *seek more*. It's the attitude which always wants more and seeks it with greedy grasping, with deep craving.

CAUSES of Coveting: WHY do we do it?

What are its roots? Three stand out: pride, materialism, and unbelief.

1. Pride makes us greedy, as C. S. Lewis explains so clearly:

Each person's pride is in competition with everyone else's pride. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. We say people are proud of being rich or clever or good-looking, but they are not. They are proud of being *richer* or *cleverer* or *better-looking* than others. It is the comparison that makes you proud -- the pleasure of being above the rest. --*Mere Christianity*

Yes, proud if we are above the rest, but envious and covetous if we are below them. I believe it was Joy Davidman, C. S. Lewis' wife, who wrote that the vast majority of mankind would consider themselves poor and deprived even if their stomachs were full of chicken -- if their neighbors' stomachs were full of turkey!

An old Greek fable tells of a man who was so extremely envious and proud that Zeus himself sought to cure him. So he made him this offer: "I will give you as much as you want of anything that you want -- on one condition. Whatever I give you, I will give double to your neighbor." The offer allured him to his depths. He could ask for a fabulous mansion, the most fertile fields, golden chariots, the fastest horses, the strongest armor, or most beautiful women -- whatever he wanted. But his neighbor would get twice as much as he got, and that thought was more than he could bear. After much deliberation he made his choice. "Zeus, I ask you to make me ... blind in one eye." Selfish ambition and pride make you insanely discontent.

2. **Materialism -- thinking that Possessions will Satisfy.** A bumper sticker said, "He who dies with the most toys wins." Designer clothes, the slickest new car, the most razzle-dazzle computer, the latest and most costly fad in cell-phones -- so often these are merely improved means to unimproved ends. And millions are sure they can't really live without them. A proverb writer put it this way:

There, there, little luxury, Don't you cry.

You'll be a necessity By and by.

We've all seen kids who beg and beg and maybe howl till they get some special gift they've just *gotta* have. Often the very next day they're bored with it, and looking for some other status symbol or source of excitement. But many adults are no better. When will we ever learn?

Our Lord said, "*Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.*" Or, "*... for real life and real living are not related to how rich we are.*" (Luke 12:15, NIV/Liv.Bib.) May God write that on our hearts.

This does not mean that we should reject pleasure and possessions as evil in themselves, and consider pain and poverty to be good *per se*. The Christian view does not resemble that of Hinduism and Buddhism: Eradicate all desire. Blessed is he who wants nothing, for he shall be satisfied. Instead, we should be grateful for the wholesome enjoyments our Maker has put into life: music, the beauties of nature, art, good literature and drama, food, friendship, true love, committed sex, humor. It was Paul who wrote that "God ... richly provides us with everything *for our enjoyment*" (1 Tim. 6:17; also Acts 14:17).

Yet Paul fully agreed with Christ's warning too. He echoed it several times in that same letter (1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19). He knew that *wealth, possessions and enjoyments so easily become snares and idols*. Someone may ask, "Then should we seek a promotion at work, or a raise in pay?" I think he would reply, "A promotion? Maybe not, maybe so. Be sure to weigh many things: For instance, how will it affect the time you'll have available for your family and your service to Christ? A raise? Maybe so, maybe not. What strings will be attached?...." Don't just react by instinct, like an animal. Consider your options well, or Madison Avenue will gobble up your devotion to the Savior.

So the Christian ideal is, **Thank God for His good gifts. But don't (a) desire them for wrong reasons, (b) use them in wrong ways, or (c) set your heart entirely on them, as ends in themselves.** My mom once asked me, "What if I don't want my neighbor's possession, but I want one just like it for myself? Is that coveting?" My answer would be, No -- *if* you pass those three tests just mentioned (a-c).

It's been said that *we should love people and use things, but often we love things and use people*. Hmmm, there's food for thought.

3. The other main cause of coveting, besides pride and materialism, is **Unbelief**. When we fail to trust our Father, it leads to worry,

fear and feelings of insecurity. So we start scrambling for more and more things, as a refuge! How quickly I start to feel vulnerable; how slow I often am to lean on God as my refuge, strength and ever-present help in trouble. Many of us seem slow of heart to believe our Savior's words, "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow...." (Matt.6:31-34). Lord, increase our faith.

CURES for Coveting: HOW to overcome it?

1. Cultivate a Thankful Heart. Instead of concentrating on what we don't have -- and complaining, we should concentrate on what we do have -- and give joyful thanks. The old song by Johnson Oatman is so true, isn't it?

When you look at others with their lands and gold,
Think that God has promised you His wealth untold;
Count your many blessings money cannot buy --
Your reward in heaven, nor your home on high.

2. Cultivate a Trusting Heart. "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Heb.13:5). As we trust the Lord and His promises to provide our needs and care for us, then we don't need to worry and greedily grab for more and more due to insecurity.

That is, one main cure for coveting is *contentment* based on trust in our Father's care. Paul experienced that cure, but it didn't happen all at once. Rather than being zapped with a quick fix overnight, he had to learn it. "*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength*" (Phil 4:11-13). May we learn it too.

3. Cultivate a Humble Heart that doesn't feel it has to compete with others, that doesn't get upset if others have more. The comic strip *Fox Trot* shows 12-year-old Jason getting gum from a vending machine. He strikes a triumphant pose and shouts excitedly, "Yowza! I got TWO gumballs! The machine screwed up! I beat the system! I got 2 gumballs--2 fabulous, wonderful, succulent gumballs! Yes, yes, yes!"

His friend remarks, "I think it was supposed to give you three." Deflated, Jason stares at them and grunts, "Huh? . . . 2 measly gumballs" -- as near the machine another voice shouts excitedly: "Yowza! I got FOUR gumballs!"

4. Cultivate a Loving, Generous Heart. We saw that the antidote to grasping greed and restlessness is contentment and satisfaction. But beyond that, the cure for craving to get and get is generously to give and give and give, to learn the joy of sacrificing our wants to meet others' needs.

**Conclusion: The Importance of Command #10
to Every Christian and to the Church as a Whole**

History provides a striking example of the urgency of this matter. Extreme poverty was widespread in England during the 1700s. Masses of people were living from hand to mouth. Yet by God's grace and the preaching of George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley and other zealous evangelists, a great spiritual awakening occurred. As it progressed, tens of thousands were converted and numerous new congregations sprang up.

But with the passing of time, John Wesley thought he saw something ominous. So he sounded forth a strong warning. Here is his trumpet-call (I have simplified and updated his vocabulary for the sake of clarity):

I fear that wherever riches have increased, the level of Christianity has decreased to the same degree. Therefore I do not see how it is possible for any revival of true Christianity to last long. For true, spiritual Christians will of course be hardworking -- not lazy -- and also thrifty -- not wasteful or extravagant.

There are many people who formerly were lazy, but now since their conversion they have become industrious and therefore *earn more than before*. Also, while formerly they wasted money on *vices* -- drunkenness, gambling, immorality -- or else on extravagant and needless *luxuries*, now that they are living for Christ they are economical and *save more than before*.

Now when people earn more and save more, it naturally will make them rich. But then as riches increase, so will pride, anger and love for this ungodly world.

Is there no way to prevent this -- the continual decline of pure Christianity? We should not forbid people to be diligent and

thrifty. We must exhort all Christians then to gain all they can and to save all they can -- that is, to grow rich! In what way then, I ask again, can we keep our money from dragging us down to the deepest hell? There is one way, and no other. If those who *gain* all they can and *save* all they can, will also *Give Away* all they can, then the more they gain the more they will grow in grace and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.

Wow -- no wonder they experienced revival under such preaching! Yet his ideas should not seem unusual. They are Biblical, are they not? If they were heeded, think of the resources that would be available for world-evangelism. Dedicated go-ers, sacrificial donors, spiritual prayer-warriors. Lord, revive us again! Help us live by your wonderful commands, outwardly and inwardly, with all our hearts.

Crave Contentment

by Bill Hybels

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Exodus 20:17 (NASB)

Coveting has wide-range effects on those who covet and on their relationships with God and other people.

What's Your Weak Spot?

Every year my dad bought a new car, put 40,000 miles on it without changing the oil or having it serviced, and then traded it back to the Ford dealer for a new one.

Every year the Ford dealer would say, "Well, Harold, can I talk you into some options this year?"

"Just a heater," Dad would say.

"Well, what about color?" the dealer would ask.

"Cheap," Dad would answer. "Any color that's cheap. I like cheap colors."

Even Dad's wardrobe reflected his indifference to the material world. For one ten-year stretch, he wore nothing but black slacks and

white shirts. And he bought his shoes by the case—all the same style and the same color. When people joked about it, he'd say, "It's one less decision I have to make. I reach into the closet and take the end shirt and the end pair of pants. No muss. No fuss. That's the way I like it." He was so disciplined, so disinterested in frills, so hard to excite... except when it came to Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

After he first got the thrill of the road on a big bike, within two years we had six of them in the garage—two big ones for Dad, one each for my brother and me, and models for my sisters!

One time a close friend of Dad's asked him if he could borrow his Harley to take on a short trip. Dad had a reputation for being generous with what he owned, so this man - a competent biker - didn't anticipate any problems. However, an uncomfortable silence met his request.

Finally Dad said, "You can sleep in my house, you can drive my car, you can sail my boat, you can fly my plane - but please, please, don't ask to use my Harley!"

Passion to Possess

I think most of us are a little like my dad. We have one little weak spot. Whether it's a motorcycle, a home, a boat, clothes, books, stamps, jewelry, furniture, art, music, horses, etc., most of us have a weakness that occasionally gives way to runaway desires. I don't think I've ever met anyone who doesn't have to struggle now and then to control the passion to possess something.

The tenth commandment warns us about this passion to possess. It tells us to be very careful about inordinate desires that encourage us to covet.

Coveting is an all-encompassing compulsion to possess something. It's not merely the act of admiring something. We certainly can appreciate an object for its beauty, workmanship, or function - and express that appreciation freely - without coveting it. But there's a big difference between saying, "I like that," and saying, "I have to own it." When we covet something, we decide we're not going to rest until we get it. What is it for you?

I Want It All

Never in the history of civilization have people been as "pushed to possess" as we are. Marketing research is a billion-dollar-a-year business. Thousands of people in this country spend 40 hours a week designing ways to trigger our buying mechanisms. They use music, slogans, sights, sounds, and colors to inflame our passion to possess.

Often they attempt to stimulate fear, nostalgia, pride, sexual arousal, jealousy or some other intense emotion. Their ultimate goal, though, is to impair our self-control just long enough for us to decide that we simply "must have" their product. They're trying to make us covet.

Advertisers are not, however, the only ones guilty of this ploy. Managers sometimes dangle attractive inducements in front of producers or salespeople in an effort to increase their output. "Just think," they say, "about that Caribbean cruise. Or that golfing vacation in Pebble Beach. Or that huge bonus." Some sales organizations even encourage people to hang color pictures of their dream possessions on their refrigerator, bulletin board, or bathroom mirror. Hopefully, these constant reminders will motivate them to sell more products.

Obviously, not all incentive programs are bad. But when their underlying motivation is to produce a fixation that causes an employee to sacrifice greater values for the sake of profits, those incentives are wrong. Any program, ploy, or advertisement that knowingly creates the climate for covetousness is a tool Satan can use to distract us from spiritual concerns. Paul says, "If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2, NASB). The Living Bible says that if we really know the Lord we should "have as little desire for this world as a dead person does" (Col.3:3, TLB). A familiar chorus tells us that if we "turn our eyes upon Jesus," the things of this world "will grow strangely dim."

Those concepts make sense to me. It seems reasonable to expect that those of us who truly know Christ as Lord and have our attention focused on Him should have a somewhat detached attitude toward material things. We should realize that though they're a necessary part of our earthly existence, they're not an ultimate value.

Why should we, who have been born again to spiritual life, allow ourselves to be controlled by runaway desires? Why should we fix our minds on things that will rust, rot, and depreciate? We are men and women created in the image of God; we've been called to be agents of reconciliation. We're created to accomplish eternal goals. When we fix our minds on transitory commodities and temporal goals, however, we live beneath our privilege.

--From *Engraved On Your Heart: Living the Ten Commandments Day by Day*, by Bill Hybels, Victor Publishing, used by permission of Cook Communications Ministries.

perSPECTive -- how you LOOK at things

One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people can be.

They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

"It was great, Dad." "Did you see how poor people can be?" the father asked.

"Oh Yeah" said the son.

"So what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father proudly.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night.

"Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight.

"We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them."

With this the boy's father was speechless.

Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Too many times we forget what we have and concentrate on what we don't have.

What is one person's worthless object is another's prize possession.

It is all based on one's perspective. Makes you wonder what would happen if we gave thanks for all the bounty we have instead of worrying about wanting more. Take joy in what you have and see the treasure in it. --author unknown

Holy LAW, Amazing GRACE

Looking Back at the 10 Commands

Alex V. Wilson

Which of these three attitudes do you take toward God's commands? "I *don't* have to obey God." "I *do* have to obey God." "I *get* to obey God."

The first attitude is that of a rebel: "I'll do whatever I want." The second is the legalist: "I've got to obey God to get to heaven, but oh -- what a weariness it is!" The third is the true believer in the Lord: "I'm eager to obey my Savior and Lord -- what a privilege to have such a wise and loving Guide who has saved me by His grace."

Obviously, you don't *love* God if you don't love His *authority*; and also, you don't *trust* God if you don't trust His *authority*.

A. Thank the Lord for His LAW

The Bible reveals many blessings that result from God's law. Some people feel that James tended to be legalistic while Paul in contrast stressed our freedom from law. But listen to what Paul wrote in various letters: "The law is good." "The law is spiritual." "The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good." "We uphold the law." "Keeping God's commands is what counts." (1 Tim 1:8; Rom. 7:16; 7:14; 7:12; 3:31; 1 Cor. 7:19.) Doesn't sound like he was negative toward the law.

God's law plays a necessary part in His plan of salvation. It served, and still serves; to carry out various wise designs of the Most High. His word tells us a number of purposes God had in giving us His laws.

1. The Law Reveals God's Will to Us -- what we should do and be. Even laws given during the Old Covenant era can teach us valuable lessons on how to live. Some Old Covenant commands are not binding on us now, but we can benefit from studying their **underlying principles**. Examples include the Jewish feast-days like Passover and the Day of Atonement; animal sacrifices such as sin-offerings; laws concerning what we eat and wear, and the treatment of slaves; and rules about the Sabbath.

Though we need not observe the letter of such laws from an earlier era, we can learn much from the spirit and purposes behind them. Leviticus 19 is an excellent illustration of this point. It contains over

forty precepts. Most of them cover personal relationships of some kinds. The chapter amplifies the Ten Commands in specific practical ways, such as we have tried to do in this series of articles. Studying this chapter will profit you, though parts will probably puzzle you too. a) Many of its moral regulations are obviously wise and right at all times and places: Love your neighbor as yourself. (Which our Lord says is part of the greatest command.) Do not defraud your neighbor. Do not put a stumbling block in front of the blind. Do not gather the gleanings of your harvest -- leave them for the poor. Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute.

b) Others are related to religious beliefs or practices. Some of these are timeless: Do not turn to idols. Others are now irrelevant so far as the letter is concerned, though it may be right to carefully spiritualize them: Have reverence for my sanctuary (God's present temple on earth is our body). c) Some are bound by the culture and customs of that era, and may perplex us regarding their original meaning or purpose : Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. [The *NIV Study Bible* explains, "Lacerations and disfigurement were common among pagans as signs of mourning and to secure the attention of their deity (see 1 Kings 18:28)."]

Speaking of the Mosaic statutes, the *Fausset Bible Dictionary* comments,

While minute details are of temporary and local application, their fundamental principle is eternal: the promotion of God's glory and man's good. It is because of this principle pervading more or less all the ordinances, civil and ceremonial alike, that it is not always easy to draw a line between them. Even the moral law is not severed from but intimately bound up with both. The moral precepts are eternally obligatory, because based on God's own unchangeable character, which is reflected in the enlightened conscience; their positive enactment is only to clear away the mist which sin has spread over even the conscience. [That's helpful, but for an even better explanation see David Reagan's article back in April, "Does the Law of Moses Apply to Christians?"]

But if such Old Testament ordinances are beneficial to study and apply, even more relevant are the directives addressed to us Christians in the New Covenant scriptures. Our Lord's commands plus those of the epistles reveal God's will for our character and conduct.

2. The Law Reveals God's Nature to Us. If He requires us to be holy, just, merciful and loving, we know without a doubt that He himself is the same. In my grandmother's Bible I found this statement written in the margin: *"By all that He requires of me, I see what He himself must be."* Yes. Study God's law to know the Lawgiver.

3. God's Law Reveals our Sins and Guilt -- it condemns us. "No one will be declared righteous in His sight by observing the law; rather, **through the law we become conscious of sin.**" Thus wrote a man who had tried very ardently to obey the law. (Rom. 3:20.)

4. God's Law Reveals our Weakness and Evil Heart, our need for renovation and energizing. We saw earlier that the Law reveals God's nature. But it also reveals *our* nature. We not only do evil acts, but we have evil hearts. His Law exposes that fact, which we'd rather forget.

Why are these commands mostly "Do not's"? In one form or another eight of the ten say, "You shall *not*..." That seems awfully negative. Some "modern" preachers disparage them, calling them "a decalogue of don'ts." But there's a reason for it, if you think things through. **All these prohibitions strongly imply that left to ourselves we will do these things.** These evil practices are our natural inclinations, which need to be restrained.

What a reflection on the perversity of human nature. Our Maker realized we needed more than gentle advice and kindly reminders: "Remember to be loving and pure. Don't forget to be generous and truthful. It's best to be content with what you have." Such positive suggestions are not enough to curb the human race's self-centered urges and choices.

Our naturally selfish and base inclinations are why every human being needs more than forgiveness. Without exception everyone also needs to "escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." To enter God's kingdom there are certain requirements (not electives). Jesus said to a man who was above average in his morals, "You must be born again, from above ... You must be born of water & the Spirit." There must be a new creation. All need a new nature -- yes, God's divine nature -- implanted within. (2 Pet.1:4; John.3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph.4:22-24.)

Again, listen to Paul, in Rom 7:6b-11.

We have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. [*That is, We are so sin-inclined that law not only reveals but arouses sin within us. --avw*] For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

Harold Brokke explains: "The law is like a map that gives our moral directions. A map is good for direction but gives no one any power to travel that direction. It would be useless to tear a map into small pieces and put them in the gas tank. The law provides **direction but no dynamic**. It tells us the truth, but cannot make us truthful." (*The Law is Holy*.)

We need moral power from Above.

Good News, Bad News

We have seen that God's Law reveals **good things**: what God's nature is like; what God's will for us is. But it also reveals **bad news**: We are guilty, vile and helpless by ourselves.

Even that bad news is important for us to know and face up to. It's like being told, "I'm sorry to tell you, but it's malignant. However, if you entrust yourself to me, you still have hope. I can take care of it for you." We must face the malignancy or we'll never be willing to undergo the surgery.

B. Thank God for His GRACE

1. His Grace provides the Forgiveness we need. Paul emphasizes this over and over. For we are "justified by his grace as a gift." "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." "God has saved us - not because of anything we have done but because of his own grace." "God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy ...so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." (Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8-9; 2 Tim 1:8-9; Tit.3:5,7.)

Here is a true story that illustrates God's grace. In the 1950s, during the Korean War, the son of a Christian minister was killed by two

local Communist youths. Shortly afterward, democratic forces retook the area and the killers were captured. But the bereaved father, instead of urging that they be punished, interceded to have them spared. They were turned over to his care, and he even adopted them as his own sons -- to replace the one they had killed! That seems incredible, it leaves us breathless -- but the grace of God is even more astonishing than that.

2. His Grace provides ASSURANCE in our Relationship with Him. "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"If, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!" "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Rom.5:1, 10; 8:1.)

Folks, does this grab us or bore us? May we never lose our sense of wonder. Here is what a man wrote a friend of mine: "I wish there were some way to share with legalistic Christians the tremendous joy and lifted burden that comes when one truly lays down his own works and accepts the gift of God. It's just hard to believe the *exhilaration* that comes when one can really understand that Christ loved me so much that He died to earn for me what I had no *capacity* to earn for myself. I know beyond doubt that I'm saved - right now - as secure as can be. That is the peace that passes understanding."

And a woman wrote Leroy Garrett, "For many years I tried to prove to God that I was worthy of his love by doing all the right things, and it left me empty and doubtful that I was really a Christian. Thank God, at last I got free of legalism and found my way to Christ. I've never been so excited about the Christian life. It's wonderful to be free in Christ!"

3. God's Grace provides Moral POWER, from the Holy Spirit. Paul explains, "*What the law was powerless to do* in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, *God did* by sending his own Son... in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. (Rom 8:3-4)." A pithy poem puts it this way:

To walk and work the Law demands, But gives me neither feet nor hands.

Far better news the Gospel brings: It bids me fly - and gives me wings!

4. His Grace Motivates our Work and Worship.

Law-centeredness makes us self-conscious, resulting in either pride (when we do well) or despair (when we do poorly). Grace makes us Christ-conscious: "A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord!"

Think again of those two letters we just quoted: "...Tremendous joy and lifted burden exhilaration peace that passes understanding." Before I was "empty and doubtful" but now "I've never been so excited about the Christian life. It's wonderful!" Do you think God's grace will make those folks passive pew-sitters, lazy loafers, sleepy spectators when it comes to serving the Lord? Not on your life!

We should examine ourselves, giving ourselves a spiritual check-up. "Am I trusting my wonderful Savior? Is my love for Him growing or declining? Have I gotten careless in obeying His commands? Am I grieving His Spirit?" But all this should be done in the light of God's grace and Christ's cross-work for me.

May we take God's Commands to us seriously, and trust God's Grace thankfully.

Back in the late 1940s the president of the Philippines made a special offer to Communist rebels who were trying to overthrow his government. "I will give you full amnesty -- complete pardon and *even a free plot of land to farm -- if you lay down your arms and turn yourself in by a certain date. After that deadline, I will unleash the full power of our armed forces against you and wipe you out.*" He called this his "*Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove*" policy.

At this present time God offers rebels His Velvet Glove -- many wonderful blessings to all who come to Jesus the Lord. But the day is coming, perhaps very soon, when He will say, "*Enough!* I have given you repeated opportunities. You have spurned chance after chance to receive my free grace. You have refused my mercy. Now you leave me no choice but the Iron Fist!"

Thought-Provokers:

Avoid Legalism but also the New Morality

Dr. Arthur Holmes made these discerning observations: "The Bible contains two kinds of rules. [1]Some [like Commands #5-10, for instance] are unchanging, universal moral obligations stated in general terms. [2]Others, as in Exodus 21-23, *apply* these moral obligations to changeable particular situations." Here are some examples of the latter, which are stated in the chapters immediately following the Ten Commands: "Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death. Anyone who kidnaps another ... must be put to death." "If a man steals...a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he must pay back four sheep for the sheep" (compare Luke 19:8). "If a fire breaks out and... burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution." (Ex.21:15,16; 22:1,6.)

Dr. Holmes continued, "The first kind we may call 'moral laws,' the second 'prudential rules' which are based on the moral laws and seek to apply them to specific local and perhaps temporary situations. The legalist elevates all rules to the level of moral laws, while the new morality reduces them all to prudential rules." That is, the legalist tends to say that *all* Biblical commands are absolute. They don't grasp that some of them are limited to the time and culture where they were given -- though their underlying principles may still be valid. On the other hand, the new morality is inclined to say that *all* Biblical commands are relative and have many exceptions. --Arthur Holmes in *God Speaks to an X-rated Society* [avw's emphasis]

* * *

"If we are to apply [the ten commandments] to our *society*, we must learn to use moral persuasion as it was used in Old Testament days through prophetic preaching, through legislation and other means. Therefore, we need morally informed, morally responsible people at strategic points in society. We need them in international affairs, in national and local government, in criminology, in law enforcement and the military, in medicine and medical ethics, in the mass media, and in education. We need Christian preachers with the courage and the wisdom of the Old Testament prophets who will apply the law of God to the life of our land. The commandment, then, becomes God's call to bring love and justice to bear in the conflicts and violence of a broken world, in eloquent testimony to the redeeming love and the justice of God Himself." --Arthur Holmes

* * *

“All the scriptures of God are divided into two parts--commands and promises. We must preach the law so that men will come to a knowledge of their sins. But we must not stop with that, for that would be only to kill and not to make alive. Therefore we must also preach the word of grace, by which faith is strengthened.

“Preachers ought so to explain God’s law and promise that a man might learn from them the source of repentance and faith. For *repentance proceeds from the law of God but faith from the promise of God. The promises of God give what the commands of God ask, and fulfill what the law demands, so that all things may be from God alone.*” -- Martin Luther in *The Freedom of the Christian Man*

* * *

Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified....
By God’s word at last my sin I learned,
Then I trembled at the law I’d spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned
To Calvary. --William Newell

* * *

“Grace cannot even begin with us until the law has reduced us to speechless guilt (Rom. 3:19). So long as there is the slightest question of utter guilt, utter helplessness, there is no place for grace. If a man feels he is not quite as good as he ought to be, but yet quite too good for hell, [then he needs to hear not so much] the grace of God, but ... the illuminating and convicting and death-dealing work of His law.”
--C. I. Scofield

*A principle of vast importance,
based on God’s Grace:*

Be FILLED with the Holy Spirit *Right NOW, Flawed Christian!*

(Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 1:7,9)

“The Spirit’s fullness is not the reward of our faithfulness, but God’s gift for our defeat. He was not given to the disciples in Acts 28 as the reward of their wonderful service, but in Acts 2 when they had proved themselves to be cowards, meeting behind barred doors.”

Roy Hession wrote that in a small but helpful book, *Be Filled Now*. And it's true.

So *don't* say, "Lord, fill me because I've been good lately." *Instead* say, "Lord, fill me so I can be good, by your enabling strength. I am selfish, weak and needy -- but that's why Jesus died for me. In His name I ask for your fullness -- for You to live through me so I might live for You."

And after He upholds you and gives you holiness and love as you walk with Him, *then* say, "Thank You, Lord, that you have been upholding me and using me for your glory. But help me remember that if I take my eyes off You and start to rely on my own strength and goodness, I'll fall flat on my face. For I can do your will and live your way only as You enable me. In myself I am always weak and needy. Thank You for your unfailing love; help me trust You more . . . and more."

Listen to Roy Hession's testimony:

On one occasion there had been real defeat in my walk as a Christian and I was much oppressed with a sense of failure. In a notebook I ... saw two words which I had scribbled some time before, "Be filled." They seemed to come as a direct word from God to me.

"But Lord," I said, "I am such a failure."

"I know," He replied, "but be filled."

"But not so soon after defeat," I said, "I must surely improve first."

"You need do nothing of the sort first," He said, "Be filled and be filled now."

"But how can I when I feel so oppressed with my sin?"

"The Blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," He replied patiently. "Be filled and be filled now!"

Be filled, be filled, be filled was all that came back to me in reply to every doubtful thought. This was the last message I would have expected from God that day. To go from the lowest to the highest so immediately seemed impossible. But when I saw the power of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse completely, I could only bow my head and say "Amen, Lord" to both His command and promise, and receive the cleansing and

the filling. A day of rich blessing followed and others got something of the overflow.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not merely for super-saints who by their consecration and devotedness may be deemed to have qualified, but for sinners and failures who have learned to repent and who see the perfect, present cleansing available to them in the Blood of Jesus. --*Be Filled Now* (published by Christian Literature Crusade)

Here is the scriptural basis for the above experience: Eph. 5:18 says, "*Be filled with the Spirit,*" (or "Let the Spirit fill you"--New English Bible). 1 John 1:7, 9 says, "If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and *the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin....* 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous *to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* --N.A.S.U.

"Be Filled With the Spirit"

Frank M. Mullins, Sr.

Much of the work of God today is done in the flesh, and is but "wood, hay, and stubble" for the fire of His proving what sort it is (1 Cor. 3:13). Repeating what an outgoing missionary said, "The Holy Spirit could leave the church of today and 95% of the work would continue without even noticing it." This is tragic but true. But it is nothing new.

The apostle Paul dealing with this very issue was moved by the Holy Spirit to write: Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be ye filled with the Spirit." To paraphrase: Do not be under the influence of fleshly incitements attempting to do the will of God (Eph. 5:17) and in the works He created for us to do, for the work of God can be accomplished only by Spirit-filled Christians.

At least nine times in the book of Acts it is said the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit...some more than one...but in no two instances when they were filled did the same thing occur. Note the following passages in Acts where it is stated they were filled and the result that followed their filling:

Acts 2:4--They spake with other tongues (languages--vs. 6, 11)

Acts 4:8--Peter, being filled for the second time (Compare: Acts 2:1, 4; 4:8) preached a simple gospel message before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 4:31--The church received boldness to declare the word of God in the face of persecution.

Acts 6:3--The seven chosen to wait on tables when trouble arose in the church in Jerusalem must be men filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:5--Stephen, one of the seven, was full of the Spirit and of faith. Great faith will characterize every Spirit-filled Christian.

Acts 7:55--Stephen, being filled with the Spirit, "looked steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing" there. Heaven will open and Jesus become real to every Spirit-filled Christian.

Acts 9:17--When Ananias baptized Paul he told Paul he would be filled with the Spirit and become a witness for Christ. So will every Spirit-filled Christian.

Acts 13:9--Paul, filled with the Spirit, was able to discern the evil in Elymus, the sorcerer. The Spirit-filled Christian can discern, but the carnal Christian cannot. (Compare: 1 Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:13-14.)

Acts 13:52--The disciples were "filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." The Spirit-filled Christians are happy Christians.

Note carefully the varied experiences of these New Testament born-again believers when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost Peter spoke in "other tongues," but before the Sanhedrin he spoke plainly in the language of his people and pointed them to Jesus as the only Savior (Acts 4:12). When the persecution arose in Jerusalem, the church met for prayer for boldness and being filled with the Spirit they witnessed boldly under persecution. How sorely this is needed today!

When trouble arose in the church "the apostles continued steadfastly in prayer and the ministry of the word," while other Spirit-filled men looked after the physical needs of the Grecian widows. How tragic it is today that the preacher is called upon to be "a jack of all trades" until he has no time for prayer and ministry of the Word if he yields to the demands of the church. Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, ministered in the lowliest task. Then he saw the glory of God in heaven and Jesus at God's right hand, and died victoriously echoing

the very Spirit of Christ on the cross, forgiving those who put him to death.

Paul must be filled with the Spirit before he was to witness to the Gentiles. Paul could discern evil in Elymnus, while today so many Christians are saying, "I don't see any harm in this thing or that"--the very things that destroy spiritual life and power. They but witness against themselves they are without experience and yet carnal (Heb. 5:13-41) The New Testament Christians found fulness of joy in their salvation and service unto God when they were filled with the Spirit, regardless of circumstances, as Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi singing the praises of God in the midnight hour of shame and humiliation and even physical suffering. Their joy was based on an inward source and not on outward conditions in which they found themselves.

What Does It Mean To "Be Filled With The Spirit?"

It means just the opposite of being "filled with wine," or that which incites the flesh. It means the flesh is crucified, the heart is surrendered to the will of God (Acts 5:32). It is not like pouring water in a glass until it is full. The Holy Spirit is a Person. One does not have just a part of this Holy Person dwelling in them and then they get more and more. The Greek word for "filled," here is "plarou," meaning "to be fully possessed by," "be completely under the influence of" (harper). Chafer defines it this way: "not a receiving more of, but a more complete possession by"... "A more complete release to His control and will" (*Systematic Theology*). "BE YE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT". It means sufficiency to do what God wants done under any circumstances.

VOICES From The FIELDS

TRAGIC ACCIDENT - URGENT PRAYER REQUEST

Sat. Aug. 3: An email from JOY GARRETT in Zimbabwe says ROBERT had a terrible accident. He was traveling home from helping the Bulawayo church put up a new building. It was 7 PM and dark. There was oncoming traffic and so he had to dim his lights. A farm tractor pulling a black trailer had broken down.

"He never saw it -- it had no lights, no reflectors of any kind and no license plate. He ran into the trailer. His car then swerved into the oncoming traffic and hit a car coming that way. The wife and child in it died, and the man was injured. Bob was unconscious for a while,

then came to and managed to get out the door. If any passenger had been in the car he would have died. I did not go with him.

“He went to the hospital for the night. He had an x-ray of his chest and right ankle which were negative, so no bones broken, but he is terribly bruised - especially his upper left arm and left ankle and chest. He is stiffer and sorer now than when he came home yesterday. His chest won't allow him to turn over or get up. He walked yesterday which hurt his ankle very much, but can't manage to get up today. He has abrasions on his head, his teeth on one side are loose, one is cracked down to the root, and a small piece of his tongue is cut and dangling and he has a black eye. “Hospital was enough to show he gets more care at home. We need your prayers.... --Joy.”

Of course pray for the injured man in the other car too, & all the bereaved family. Also that the Lord will prevent their being unfair legal and financial maneuvers by that family or the government or anyone else. --Alex Wilson

UPDATE from Robert's daughter, JoAnn Broaddus:

Aug. 8: I managed to get hold of Mom and Dad this morning. God has been very gracious and is answering all those prayers. Pray for Dad's ribs and ankle and allergies. He needs to get some broken teeth taken care of when he is well enough and to get a replacement for their car. His tongue is healing nicely and he is getting up--praise the Lord. Thanks for your prayers and concerns. Pray also for Zimbabwe--the people there are truly suffering as the government keeps aid from getting to hungry people.

Robert & Joy Garrett Rockwood Bible Camp June, 2002

It has been a record-breaking time for all our camps this year. We had previously reported 158 youth (18 years and older) at the 4-day Easter Camp.

Senior Camp (High School age had 82, and the Junior Camp had 88 Bible campers.

The Women's Camp (May 23-26) had a record-breaking 365 women. They had also asked two of our men to give special lessons, one on the role of women, and the other concerning idols. Both were excellent. There were 29 who came forward for rededication after the lesson on idols.

The Lord Provides: Although this country is experiencing shortages of some food items, the Lord enabled us to find all that was nec-

essary. Some was purchased here, some in South Africa and some was donated.

Lupani is another two hours northwest of Bulawayo. Brother Khumalo had started a congregation there a few years ago while teaching at a secondary school there. We have been granted a church site in the nearby township. Because it is a rural area the building codes and restrictions are minimal so the local people should be able to put up a building without my having to be heavily involved.

Mhondoro. For many years the church there has met under a "temporary" shelter. Lord willing, they will have a proper building before this year is out. The Mbare church is helping much with making of bricks and other things. They also, using our 4-ton truck, hauled several loads of river sand from a nearby river and some pit sand dug out of an area some distance away where the soil is poor--being mostly white sand under the thin topsoil. The river sand will be used for making concrete and the pit sand will be mixed with cement to make mortar for the brick walls.

The building will be on top of a rocky knoll. We have marked out and pegged the foundation lines. Soon, as the Lord enables, we hope to prepare the foundations.

Tshekedi: Just a few miles away in another part of Mhondoro another congregation has recently been started by the working of Bros. Sunny Nyahora and William Kalela. It is quite a densely populated area and shows great potential. They will also need a building.

Binga Bible Seminar. The last week of this month, Lord willing, will see myself and three of our ministers in Binga. After men from Binga had attended our local Bible Seminar in January they requested that we come and hold the same kind of lessons in Binga. They expect from 40 or more people to attend this three-day session. Because of the shortage of corn meal, I will be taking 200kg (over 400 lbs.) to help them out. We were able to get this our last shopping trip down south.

More News from Joy Garrett:

This weekend, August 9-12, will be our second men's camp meeting this year. Earlier we had a one day men's meeting paid for and planned by one of our young men. There were 91 there.

Every camp meeting we have had this year has had record attendance except one. There have been 39 baptisms and many believers have repented. God provided food and firewood and diesel despite

there being shortages of many commodities in the country. There have been many disruptions but the church work progresses.

Bob has been to Binga twice taking several of our ministers. There are many little congregations in this rather arid area near the Zambezi River and Lake Kariba. The drought was severe there and this past weekend three of our ministers went to Kamativie Mine to take what food we could find and some Tonga Bibles. People are starving up there. **Pray for the starving Zimbabweans.** Corn meal is on its way from donor countries, but it must reach the needy areas.

Michiya Nakahara Shizuoka City, Japan August, 2002

Now concerning our work for the Lord in Shizuoka City Japan: 1. God has given us a burden to pray specifically for truth seekers in our own neighborhood. We have been asking the Lord to let us witness to these ones and bring them into our fellowship. In order to better prepare ourselves, I have been presenting "seeker-sensitive" messages on the last Sunday of each month. God has begun already to answer our prayers as we have had a few visitors in recent months.

2. God has given more than we asked for. A family of four (a husband, a wife who is expecting in November, and two children) just started to come to worship with us. They are believers from another denominational group; however, they have experienced some heart-ache in their previous church, and have been looking for another place to worship. We have several members with similar backgrounds. We feel God has called us to be sensitive, welcoming those who need to experience his love through His people, and we are *honored* to serve our God in this special capacity.

3. We have recently incorporated a sharing time after our monthly potluck lunch. A leader for that sharing time volunteers, and it has been a blessing to see other fellow brothers lead in such gatherings (i.e. one leader led a Bible study, another organized a picnic, etc.)

4. We have quite a few senior citizens whose health is such that they are not able to attend our worship services weekly. It is unusual for seniors to drive in Japan (they get around by using public transportation and walking). For those seniors who cannot come, we have started writing letters to them, and sending them church bulletins and sermon tapes.

Now concerning the Sunday School work: 1. We visit once a month an elderly sister who is in a retirement home. This is one of our Sunday School ministries. The children sometimes take hand-made gifts with them for her. It is evident that she and the other residents

are thrilled to see little children, and they are encouraged by the visits. 2. The theme for our August Bible Camp is "Blessings from God's Love." It is a three day camp, and most of the members and their children will be attending. 3. Starting this school year (April 2002) there is now no school on Saturdays (it used to be every other Saturday), so we are planning to start a children's program of some kind at the church on Saturdays.

Now concerning news from Japan that affects us: As most of you know, Mt. Fuji is a snow-capped 12,000 ft. plus volcanic mountain. The last time it exploded (like Mt. St. Helen in Washington) was in 1707. It belched out a cloud of ash that blanketed Tokyo 70 miles away. It has become very active again. The mountain is only about 25 miles from Shizuoka and we can view it easily from our place. The government has increased its observations and research, monitoring it around the clock. If the east side of the mountain erupts, it will destroy (or at least immobilize) our entire economy because the Sinkansen (the bullet-train) and the Tomei Highway (the main highway which runs between Tokyo and Nagoya--Shizuoka is right in the middle) are both located on the east side of the mountain. Of course, in case of such an eruption, the ashes will definitely reach Tokyo, and if that happens scientists speculate that several inches of ash will again cover the city as well as other cities around. We are closer and would feel the effects even more.

In addition to this, for the past few years scientists have been predicting enormous earthquake. They also say that Shizuoka City may be the epicenter if it occurs. There was an "Osaka Earthquake" seven years ago that took many lives and caused catastrophic damages to the entire region. However, this new earthquake scientists are predicting is said to be several times more powerful. Their research data verifies this prediction. Further, scientists are beginning to connect the condition of Mt Fuji to this possible earthquake.

We ask that you please pray about this condition and pray for the safety of our congregation should these things happen. Already, everyone is learning to take survival measures. Perhaps the Lord is speaking to our nation to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that our church and my family will be strong in the Lord and that we will be used of God to offer the only true hope in this uncertain and fearful time in Japan. True faith, hope, and love are only found in the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of the Cross is our only hope.

Dennis & Betty Allen

August 7, 2002

We only have three more weeks here. Time has gone so fast. Last Sunday Dave Moldez took us to Novaliches. We spoke at the

mother church there. It was a full house with people sitting in the vestibule. It was a blessing to be with them. They manifested the joy of the Lord in their worship. In the afternoon we were taken to two daughter churches. We visited and prayed with the leaders at one church. They have a regular program of home Bible studies, 16 a week, carried on by 4 workers. The other church at which we spoke was in a store front, provided rent free by one of the Christians. It is on a busy street with the constant noise of motor bikes and jeepneys passing outside. Loudspeakers are essential! The Sunday before that we were in Mindoro where I spoke four times in two days. The churches seem to be growing there. In San Jose the church has a Christian school with over 200 students. We met a 75 year old brother there who has a real burden for the Mangyans, the tribal people of Mindoro. He says there are 11 groups--all with different dialects. He spent 2 months with one group, and when he came back brought 10 children with him. The parents were glad for them to come and get a chance for education. They live with him, do their own cooking and chores. He is teaching in a Montessori school in San Jose without salary, so the children can go to school there without tuition. He would like to find sponsors for the children. It would be \$15 a month for one child. We got to visit the children at the school. They were very friendly and responsive. They are learning some English.

I am teaching two classes a week at CBC--Prophecy and Church Leadership and Relationships. There has been good attendance and interest. Friday I asked one student how long it had taken him to come. I was shocked and humbled when he said, "Three hour." Later I found out he had just come for that class. He is working among the Dumagots of Bulacan. Another brother is working among another tribal group. I'm so glad to see so many have a vision for reaching the unreached tribes.

Counselor's Column

A Divorced Parent's Dilemma

Dennis Kaufman

Question: What should I tell my child when asked if I still love and miss my ex-husband? I want to be honest, yet my child is upset if I say I don't.

Response: This is a situation where the primary goal is to avoid two unhealthy extremes. The first danger would be telling your child only what he/she wants to hear. Children have an uncanny ability to

perceive the truth. If you begin misleading your child about your true feelings, he/she will likely perceive, at some level, that you are not being honest. This also creates a dilemma as the youngster gets older and is able to see more clearly the real dynamics that are present in the parents' relationship.

The other extreme would involve telling your child all your feelings on the back side of a divorce. Young children struggle to handle negatives about their parents because they need to be able to trust and idealize them. In some ways explaining divorce is like educating them about sex. It is important to give them little pieces of truth as they are able to understand. Learning to teach children at the age appropriate time is one of the greatest challenges we face as parents.

Some sample responses that avoid extremes would be:

Age 5: Sweetie, I'm happy that you love daddy so much, and I know it hurts you that mommy and daddy aren't together. When you feel sad about that, you come sit on my lap and I will hold you. Age 9: I'm glad you have such a strong love for your daddy. When your dad and I tried to love each other, there were so many hurts, our marriage wasn't strong enough to take it. If there's more you need to ask me, I will do my best to help you understand.

A part of the maturing process for any child is learning how to tolerate frustration. All of us must develop this skill or we end up being very self-centered. But the frustration tolerance must be built in small doses. Otherwise a child can be overwhelmed and become broken-spirited. Divorce takes its toll on youngsters, but the trauma can be lessened by creating as much trust and security as the parents can provide.

I would also encourage you, in this situation, to make sure you personally work through your own grief process toward forgiveness. This will provide more of a sense of objectivity toward your ex-husband, so your anger doesn't spillover and contaminate your child's view of his/her father.

If an ex-spouse is abusive or highly manipulative, of course, it will be essential to provide as much protection as is possible for your child. When it comes to your ex-spouse's negative relational patterns that you will be tempted to tell your child all about, be assured he/she will figure it out soon enough.

“Quick, God -- Catch up!”

JOYce Broyles

When I saw the ladies at our table bow their heads, I lowered mine. Betty prayed aloud, closing with "and dear Lord, help us let You stay in front." I sat there, wondering what she meant. Opening her eyes, she smiled at me and explained, "Sometimes I look over my shoulder and say, 'Come on, God, keep up with me!'"

Her words set my mind in motion. I recalled many times when, as a child, I ran in front of Mom as she warned, "Don't run ahead of me. You'll fall, and I'll have to pick you up!"

How often I run ahead of God! And just as often, I fall, then He picks me up and sets me on my way again. How different it would be if I could let God stay in front! If I could wait for His leading before jumping ahead with my plans, speaking without thinking, or crying about fears that rarely materialize.

The same day I hear Betty pray, my sister is diagnosed with cataracts. She runs ahead to worry about the time when she will lose her job because she will not be able to see, and all the repercussions that will ensue. I offer her the comfort from Betty's words.

Later, my daughter hears that her child has been hurt. She runs ahead to fear the worst before hearing the complete story. I tell her of Betty's prayer.

Then I receive word that my annuities have lost money again. I run ahead to agonize about how I will afford to live after retirement. I remind myself of Betty's plea.

So many gray hairs are whitened in the rush to get ahead of God! When the "if onlys" begin, we should start with "If only I had left God in front!" Perhaps God sent Betty to me that day because He knew I would need her prayer.

I suppose most of us want to lead. We are not good followers. We want to take charge. We are not good at "wait and see." Today, I am setting a new goal. It is to learn to follow Christ better. Learning to leave Him in front will curtail my worries, as I count on promises like "it will go well with you" and "I will never leave you." If only I had faith to really believe that and rely on it!

Following behind, waiting for guidance, and remembering Betty's prayer will help me believe in God's leadership. That consistency will place obedience in my personal expressions.

TEMPTATION NOT FROM GOD

Edward Fudge, GracEmail

A gracEmail subscriber in Alabama asks why Jesus taught his disciples to pray that God "lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13) yet the Epistle of James says that God "does not tempt anyone" (Jas. 1:13).

* * *

Jesus points us to God's sovereignty -- all that happens is under God's control even though he does not cause everything that occurs. James points us to God's character and purpose. God does not entice anyone to evil. God does not wish for people to do evil, and it gives him no pleasure when someone does what is wrong.

Satan is the tempter of humans, but he cannot act beyond the boundaries God imposes on him. We see this dramatically illustrated in the story of Job (Job 2). Jesus himself was "led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1). The devil was behaving according to his own character (enticing Jesus to sin) and God was acting in keeping with his (perfecting Jesus as our sinless yet sympathetic Savior).

We ask God to keep us from evil's enticement and he often does so. He never allows us to be tempted beyond our capacity if we rely on his power, and when we face temptation he always provides a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13). God permits us to be tempted to strengthen our character and he uses it to that end (Jas. 1:2-4). Yet God, who gives only good gifts, is never rightly blamed for our sin. We are responsible for our own bad choices, which he can both forgive and use to his glory and for our eventual good (Jas. 1:12-16).

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NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Bennie Hill

The Kentuckiana Consortium of Restoration Colleges (KCRC) was formed in 1991 by three institutions of Christian higher education which are associated with the Restoration Movement: College of the Scriptures, Louisville Bible College, and SBS. This is a cooperative effort to provide greater opportunities for students at these three schools, as well for area churches and individual Christians. The KCRC dinner was held August 20th at Kingfish on River Road and everyone present enjoyed the fellowship and were challenged to even greater opportunities.

Winchester Center for Biblical Studies (WCBS) is beginning its second year at the Olmstead Library on the campus of former SCC and Bennie Hill has been asked to teach his class on Isaiah / Jeremiah. This is a tremendous opportunity for students who desire to know more of God's word and to be trained in Christian service.

Ladies Fall Retreat...is being announced for October 25-26th at Camp Kavanaugh in Crestwood, Kentucky. Registration is \$20.00 if paid by September 15th. \$25.00 after the 15th. This year's topic is "Faces of Faith."

Woodland Bible Camp.. announces its annual membership meeting & dinner for October 12 beginning at 11:30 a.m. (local time) Information about next camp season, update on the process of hiring a camp administrator, camp financial report, and camp needs & improvements will be shared. (Mike Abbott - Board President)

Borden Church of Christ...will be hosting the 5th Sunday Song Service on Sunday, September 29th. Service begins at 6pm.

Parksville, Kentucky (John McNerney) announces a revival with evangelist Julius Hovan for September 29th through Oct. 2nd. Services begin nightly at 7:00 p.m.

Bethany House (Japan) Bro. Moto has been encouraging young people to attend PCS now for several years. The latest is Nobuaki Ichikawa who desires to come the fall of next year. Pray for him as the Lord leads through Bro. Moto.

Tell City, Indiana: (David Johnson) Dick Rueben will be our October Revival speaker. He is a Christian Jew. The topics of the meeting will deal with the Jewish roots of Christianity. Be praying & inviting and mark

your calendars for Sun. Oct. 6th through Wed. Oct. 9th

Iroquois Church of Christ (Louisville) has stopped meeting due to only a few in attendance. We don't know what the future holds, but as of now it will not affect our Philippine Fund, and checks can still be made out to the "Iroquois Church of Christ" for "Philippine Fund." We are looking to our Father in Heaven for decisions which will be in His will. (T.Y. Clark)

28th Annual Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship is scheduled for November 18-21 at the Glenmora Church of Christ. This year's theme is: "Jesus Christ, Our Sufficient Savior." Bro. Sonny Childs will be speaking each evening at 7:30 to the youth. For hospitality information contact: Dennis LeDoux at (318)748-4243

55th Annual Kentucky-Indiana Christian Fellowship... was held the first week of August and those who made the effort to attend were richly blessed during the time of Bible study and fellowship with others. Attendance seemed to be encouraging this year especially during the day sessions. A special thanks to the area ladies who provided the daily meals. Sis. Betty Ridgeway served as coordinator. Each message was well received as each speaker relied on the Holy Spirit to issue a "Call to Holiness." The evening meetings were blessed by several spe-

cial singing group from area churches. And of course, Bro. Dennis Royse who coordinated many different youth activities during the week. To each of the committed members we say: "A job well done" and "thanks for allowing God to use you in this week of fellowship."

Goin' Fishing Dinner... was again well organized and attended by about 100 on Thursday night of the Fellowship week. Several reports were given that included: PCS Latin American Team; Northern Philippines; Michiya Nakahara work in Japan; and the Lighthouse Team. After a Continental Breakfast on Friday - several more reports were given: Iroquois Church Philippine Mission; PCS Work team to Guatemala; Bryantsville Hunger Relief Project; Senegal West Africa; Zimbabwe and Kenya; Church of Christ Worldwide; and St. Petersburg & Kineshma, Russia. A special thanks to Bro. & Sis. Earl Mullins Sr. for their coordinating these activities NOT KNOWING that the following day they would be honored as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

U.S. Supreme Court, 1892
"Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon the teachings of the Redeemer of Mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent, our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian."

America's founding fathers believed that a widespread faith in God was the true source of America's greatness. They would see today's war against Christianity by our government, our educational institutions, the media and throughout our popular culture as a grave threat to America's survival as a free nation.

God's Word is still true:
"Righteousness exalts a nation,

but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34)

Please send information of upcoming revivals, meetings, or other items for "News & Notes" to:

Bennie Hill
P.O. Box 54842
Lexington, KY 40555
or e-mail at

bhill40482@aol.com

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