

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MARCH, 1993

**GOD CAN DO MORE
WITH YOUR SIN THAN
FORGIVE IT.**

* * *

"The Bible stresses the necessary exertions of self-discipline and spiritual warfare [if we are to be holy]. That means battling to say 'no' when world, flesh and devil urge you to say 'yes', and to say 'yes' when weariness, deadness and unbelief prompt you to say 'no'

"In Scripture 'yielding' and 'abiding' are matters, not of mystical passivity, but of resolute habitual obedience, in which you pray as hard as you work and work as hard as you pray, because you know that God works in you to make you will and do His pleasure as revealed in His Word."

—J. I. Packer

HOLDING HANDS

Hall C. Crowder

A man and his son went for a walk in the country one cold, snowy day. The boy, trudging along with both hands rammed down in his pockets, soon slipped and fell. Getting to his feet he decided to guard against another fall. This time he grasped the sleeve of his father's coat for security. It wasn't long until his foot slipped again and the weight of his body broke his grip on the sleeve. Down he went!

Getting to his feet once more, he had a new idea. "Father," he said, "you hold my hand!" This time, with father carefully choosing the path and holding him up when he slipped, he was able to finish the walk without further falls.

This little story illustrates three different attitudes we may have toward God as we go through life. Check and see which one is most like yours.

1. The boy with his hands in his pockets is like one of us saying to God, "I don't need you; I can get along O.K. by myself." The boy didn't want to fall, and neither do we, but, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Can't we all tell by the bruises from past "falls" that we can't make it through life alone?
2. The boy, holding on to his father, was not really much better off than before. He realized he needed help, but the way he went about getting it was wrong. He was still depending on his own strength! Many people admit that they need God's help in living but still believe that salvation depends on their own strength, faithfulness and good works. My grip on God's hand offers no security at all!
3. The only security comes from saying with the psalmist, "I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand" (Psalm 73:23). This involves real surrender! With this attitude of faith and trust, though we may sometimes "slip" we shall not "fall". Jude says, "Now unto Him that is able to *keep you from falling* and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory..."

Have you really asked God to take hold of you?

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

"God Can Do More With Your Sin Than Forgive It"

Alex V. Wilson

The above statement, our theme for this issue, is a quotation from John Wesley, I believe. It is gloriously true. God's solution to our sins is not only to forgive them (last month's theme) --as important as that is. He also provides us with power to *overcome* sin. Though we Christians must still sadly admit that "sin dwells in me" (Rom. 7:17,20), we can also gladly proclaim that "the Spirit of God dwells in me" (Rom. 8:9-11). And by His power we can both put to death the misdeeds of our sinful nature, and live in obedience to God and loving service to our fellowmen (8:13,4; 12:9-21).

And so this month we concentrate on holiness. Such a theme is highly appropriate as W&W begins its 86th year of publication. (Our first issue was in March 1908!) For it is a topic both important and neglected.

Maximum Importance, Minimum Attention

"The Restoration Movement has treated holiness like an unwanted stepchild . . . Only three articles were published on the subject during the thirty year life of the *Millennial Harbinger*, according to the subject index." Alexander Campbell, its editor, was absorbed in various other doctrinal and practical issues, so the matter of personal holiness was mostly bypassed.

Barton Stone scored higher in this area, saying, for instance, "Oh my brethren, let us repent . . . , let us seek more holiness, rather than trouble ourselves and others with schemes and plans of union. The love of God, shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us, will more effectually unite than all the wisdom of the world combined."

Around 90 years ago, Z. T. Sweeney published three books of sermons by outstanding preachers of the Restoration Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Not one sermon in those three books dealt with the subject of holiness. "Perhaps the best known preaching forum among the *a capella* churches in the twentieth century has been the Abilene Christian University Lectureship . . . Most of the main speeches in that forum have been published. According to published records, holiness has been addressed twice in seventy years." *Twice in seventy years!* And we call ourselves "New Testament Christians." But the New Testament alone (excluding the

OT) uses the word "holiness" thirteen times, and "holy" over 175 times (excluding the words "sanctified" and "sanctification," which are from the same Greek words). Folks, we need to restore balance.

The foregoing quotations are from the a fine book by a Church of Christ preacher: *He Died to Make Men Holy*, by Norman Bales; published by College Press; 354 pages. He points out that many other church groups are just as woefully lacking in this area. "Take a visit to your local Christian book store and start searching for contemporary titles which address the holiness theme. You'll find 'Christian' books on how to lose weight, how to manage money, how to have better marriages and even how to play better baseball with the help of the

**He may not be able to repair his automobile or
solve a problem in math, but he can love God with
his whole heart.**

Lord. You won't find many books telling you how to be holy . . . [because] sanctification doesn't sell."

In addition, Bales observes that many (not all) church groups which do emphasize holiness are overly superficial and negative. "You can observe all the taboos . . . and still be unholy. You can withdraw from the world . . . and still not be holy. Vance Havner said it well, ' . . . living in a hole does not make you holier!' Prudishness must never be equated with holiness."

Compliment or Insult?

If someone were to tell you, "You are really a holy person," would you be humbly pleased or hotly irritated? The very word has assumed negative overtones in our time. More often than not, if one person tells another he is a *saint*, he means "You creep, you nerd, you wimp!" The term "holiness" conjures up pictures of pale-faced, unnatural-looking men in stained-glass windows, with robes, sandals and haloes.

How sad. For, you see, "the greatest saints of God have been marked, not by haloes and unapproachableness, but by their humanity. They have been intensely human and lovable people with a twinkle in their eyes . . . They have revealed a very real sense of purpose and victory" (James Philip). Yes, holiness is *wholeness*, moral and spiritual *healthiness*. It involves being good, caring, cooperative, sacrificial, dependable, honest, self-controlled, wholesome, upbuilding, Jesus-like.

What Holiness is NOT

It doesn't mean being flawless or perfect--though you want to be so, and sin grieves you. It doesn't mean you are interested only in spiritual things--though you will seek to see bowling, gardening, basketball, camping, cakebaking, fishing, dating, photography, music (or whatever) through God's eyes and not let them become idols. Also, "there are several things holiness of heart does not change," observes an unknown writer. "A man's business ability, mechanical ability, or scientific ability remain unaffected. If he was awkward before, he'll remain so after dedicating himself totally to God. His judgment may be poor, he may not be able to operate a grocery store, repair his automobile, or solve a problem in math, *but he can love God with his whole heart.*" Yes, that hits the nail on the head. Love God. Center your life around Christ.

Some years ago a man who had long been a drunkard was converted to the Lord, and stayed sober for several weeks. But one day as he passed the open door of a bar, the odor drifting out aroused his appetite for liquor. Just then he saw a sign in the window of a cafe: "All the buttermilk you can drink--25 cents." Dashing inside, he ordered one glass after another. Then he walked past the bar, no longer tempted. He was so full of buttermilk that he had no room or desire for alcohol. The lesson is clear: to overcome our evil desires, we must leave no opportunity for them to repossess us. Many a person fails at living for Christ because he doesn't allow Christ to *fill* him.

O Lord Jesus, fill us! Make us holy, like You.

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Good Books about Holiness

By Norman Bales: see above. Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*. William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* [try to get a modernized version of this classic.] F. B. Meyer, *The Christ-Life for My Life*. James Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* and also *Rediscovering Holiness*. J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*. Hannah Whitall Smith, *A Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*. John Stott, *Men Made New*. [an exposition of Rom. 5-8]. John White, *The Fight*.

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This month's booklet-length article, "CHANGING YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS," is very helpful. Don't skip it because its long. Study it, then share it with other fellow-strugglers.

CAN I LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

R. H. Boll

When he reads the lofty concept of the Christian life as set forth in Rom. 12-15, in Eph. 4-5, in Col. 3-4 and elsewhere in the N.T., the Christian is apt to lay his book down with a sigh saying; "Ah, if a man could only live like that!" And what, my brother, do you think a man would need in order to live like that? Likely he will reply: "It would require strength of character and tremendous will power: and that is more than I have. I can try, and do try, but I fail all the time." If this is the true answer, then (I say it with all respect) the gospel is a failure. It is inadequate to meet the actual condition of human life. It is not applicable to the majority of mankind--nay, not even to the strongest and best, much less to the utterly lost and ruined whom especially Christ came to seek and to save. For that "strength of character" and that "tremendous will power" is exceeding rare. The common man neither has it, nor has he the stamina to build it up.

If Christ came to save only a few phenomenal characters, then faith is made void and the promise made of none effect. The grace of God in that case means nothing. If the gospel does not actually extend a practical and practicable salvation, not only from past sins, but from a sinful life, and that available to the poorest and weakest of our race who are willing to accept it, then the gospel is not what it is represented to be. The only alternative is that which is generally urged, that the life described in Romans 12, etc., is "ideal"--a "standard for us to work up to." With other words, that the Lord never expected us to come up to that, but we should only "try" and "do the best we can." *What dishonoring of God's word is implied in this view!* What actual lowering of the standard, what nullifying of God's teaching, what winking at sin and making provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof! God forbid!! This is not the solution of the problem. What then is the solution? It is summed up in one word, in one name--*Christ.*

What Christ Stands For

The life set forth in the New Testament is not such as can be lived by human nature. Figs do not grow on thistles. It is a divine life, growing out of the divine nature. The Son of God lived such a life as that. No one but a child of God can live it. It is indeed high, and no average man, nor any man, can attain unto it. It is not natural, but supernatural. Nevertheless, God expects us to live it. Yet again God expects nothing of us as human beings--no natural goodness, virtue, character, will-power--nothing but faith and willingness. The rest comes from Him. He counts that we are dead, but that our life is hid in Christ. He counts that we are weak; that we are without wisdom or

righteousness of our own; but that we are "of God" and that Christ is "made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." Whatever glorious results follow this fact, the praise is due not unto us, but to the Lord (1 Cor. 1:30,31). Our power to live the Christian life lies not in us, but in Christ.

The Source of All Power

This fact is illustrated in the incident of Peter's walking on the water (Matt. 14). When Christ came to the disciples as they were rowing across the lake in the night, and said, "It is I, be not afraid," Peter requested that Jesus bid him come to Him on the water. Jesus said "Come." Peter boldly stepped out upon the water, and --lo!--the water sustained him. It was a miracle. Yet Peter did nothing miraculous. He simply walked by Christ's command, using his feet just as one would on firm land. In Peter there was not anything marvelous nor any supernatural ability. He simply heard, believed, obeyed, just as you and I might have done. That was his part. The wonderful part was all on Christ's side, for it was Christ that sustained Peter's feet upon the water. Note, then, this fact, that Peter's power to walk on the water did not lie in himself, but in Christ. So likewise, my ability to live that transcendent life required in the Bible lies not in myself, but in the Son of God, who bade me come. It matters not how weak or strong I am by nature, as the question was not whether Peter was a skilled water walker. The power is in Christ, comes from Christ, that every man may take advantage of it, and that all the glory may be the Lord's.

Looking Unto Jesus

So long as Peter looked to his Lord, he stood and walked safely on the waters of Galilee. But why does he now look at the winds and waves and begin to be afraid? Has he forgotten that it was only by the Lord's power that he could stand on the water in the first place? Does he now turn his eye from the Lord to the dangers and difficulties of the situation? Does he now abandon his thought of the Lord and begin to study about his own utter inability and weakness? That is why he sinks. For if he puts it on this basis, if he shoulders the danger and difficulty of his position and looks to himself for his own safety and success, then Christ is counted out. The result is inevitable: Peter goes down. Happily, in the last moment he remembers the Source of his strength and cries out: "Lord, save me!" And Jesus promptly stretches out His hand and takes hold of him, "and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" It is not little character, little strength, little power, my brother, that accounts for your failures in living the Christian life: it is *little faith*.

"The life that I now live," says Paul, "I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). It is not because the standard of Christianity is too high, my brother, but because you are looking to yourself for the power to live it, instead of looking unto Jesus. Not in you, not in you are the resources necessary, but in Christ. Your power to live pure and upright, to deal lovingly and justly with your fellows, to overcome sin in the world, is in Christ. If you run your race, you must run looking unto Jesus (Heb. 12:1). In yourself is only weakness and discouragement. But in God, in Christ--"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth . . . Only in Jehovah, it is said of me, is righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come" (Isa. 45:22-25).

THE CHRISTIAN AND HOW HE THINKS

by A. W. Tozer

We all live in two environments, the one being the world around us, the other our thoughts about that world. The larger world cannot affect us directly; it must be mediated to us by our thoughts, and will be to us at last only what we allow it to be.

Three men walking side by side may yet be inhabiting three different worlds. Imagine a poet, a naturalist and a lumberman traveling together through a forest. The poet's mind races back over the centuries to the time when the mighty trees now towering above him were but beginning to appear as tiny green shoots out of the gray earth. He dreams of the mighty of the world who then wore crowns and swayed empires, but who have long ago passed from this earthly scene and been forgotten by everyone but a few historians.

The naturalist's world is smaller and more detailed. He hears the sweet, hardly audible bird song that floats among the branches and seeks to discover the hidden singer; he knows what kind of moss it is that clings to the base of the centuries-old trees; he sees what the others miss, the fresh claw marks on the bark of a tree, and knows that a bear has recently passed that way.

The lumberman's world is smaller still. He is concerned neither with history nor nature but with lumber. He judges the diameter and height of the tree and by quick calculation determines how much it will bring on the market. His world is the dull world of commerce. He sees nothing beyond it.

It is obvious that one external world has been turned into three internal worlds by the thinking of the three men. Judas Iscariot and John

the Beloved lived in the same world, but how different they interpreted it. The same may be said of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Saul and David. From these we learn that *circumstances do not make men: it is their reaction to circumstances that determines what kinds of men they will be.*

What then can we Christians do? The answer is, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" The mental stuff of the Christian can be and should be modified and conditioned by the Spirit of Christ which indwells his nature. God wills that we think His thoughts after Him. The Spirit-filled prayerful Christian actually possesses the mind of Christ, so that his reactions to the external world are the same as Christ's. He thinks about people and things just as Christ does. All life becomes to him the raw nectar which the Spirit within him turns into the honey of paradise.

**Judas the traitor and John the apostle lived in the same world, but how differently they interpreted it.
The same may be said of Cain and Abel . . .**

Yet this is not automatic. To do His gracious work God must have the intelligent cooperation of His people. If we would think God's thoughts we must learn to think continually of God. "God thinks continuously of each one of us as if He had no one but ourselves," said Francois Malaval; "it is therefore no more than just if we think continuously of Him, as if we had no one but Himself."

We must think of the surrounding world of people and things against the background of our thoughts of God. The experienced Christian will never think of anything directly; his thoughts go first to God and from God out to His creation. His thoughts, like the angels of Jacob's ladder, ascend and descend, but ever God stands above them presiding over all.

To be heavenly-minded we must think heavenly thoughts. "So let us return to ourselves, brothers, . . . for it is impossible for us to be reconciled and united with God if we do not first return to ourselves, . . . striving constantly to keep attention on the kingdom of heaven which is within us."

So wrote Nicephorus, a father of the Greek Orthodox Church, in the fourteenth century, and nothing since has changed. God must have all our thoughts if we would experience the sanctification of our minds.

A long, but *very valuable* article --

CHANGING YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS

George Sanchez



These and other similar statements and questions are constantly brought up as I counsel with people. What they are asking basically is, "How can I change? How can I bring my thoughts under control and develop new attitudes?"

Experiences we have had including childhood ones, make impressions on us. These experiences cause us to respond in certain ways to situations we face later in life. This is a common pattern for all of us. One person never experienced an outward manifestation of affection from his father, and now struggles with a deep need for that kind of expression. Another was made to feel he could never do anything properly, so today he battles with a sense of uncertainty and inferiority. Another was deeply hurt by someone to whom he reached out, and now finds it difficult to trust anyone. But there are also the positive experiences. Many people experienced love, acceptance, support and encouragement as children. They are able, as life develops to relate more easily to people and circumstances.

Where the patterns are negative and destructive the person needs change so he can find release and experience a new freedom, freedom that comes from knowing the truth and how to apply it. "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Where the patterns have been positive and affirming, they can be developed and reinforced by utilization and specific, planned action.

The important fact to recognize is that our thought patterns and habits can be changed constructively and we can experience release from reactions and responses that continually defeat us.

Let's look at a typical pattern of thinking in this type of situation. First, we recognize that there is a need to change an attitude, whatever that attitude may be. Maybe it's an attitude toward an individual or an attitude toward a situation. In order to change his attitude, the Christian resorts to prayer. He hopes his attitude will change as a result.

We have been instructed that the way to change is through the means of prayer. After we pray, somehow something is supposed to happen and our attitudes change. We may not say it that way, but there is the implication that some mystical process takes place and attitudes change when a person reads the Bible or prays.

We recognize that there is a certain truth to that concept. The Bible says it, so we know that there has to be truth in it. "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy Word" (Psalm 119:9). God is the only One who can bring about real change in our thought patterns. We must always keep that in mind.

However, people repeatedly struggle in vain for results in this pattern--they pray and ask for help but nothing happens. No change of attitude takes place. They continue to struggle with the same basic conflicts. When this happens a pattern of defeat begins.

Of course, the enemy takes advantage at this point and begins accusing, "You see, there must be something else wrong or this attitude would change." So people look deeper, pray harder, spend longer periods of time with the Lord, and still many of these attitudes don't change. This is a real issue which we are going to encounter continually in our relationships with people.

Not Do-It-Yourself Religion

In considering this we want to be very careful to avoid any idea of a so-called "do-it-yourself" Christianity. *We* do not make the changes in our lives. Only God has the power to make deep inner changes. We want to emphasize that so that there is no misunderstanding.

On the basis of Proverbs 4:23, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life," and other Scripture, we encourage people to saturate their hearts--their minds basically--with the Word of God. We believe that the more saturation takes place the more people's conduct and way of thinking are going to be affected. Again, this is a true concept. But to experience change, we must put into *practice* the truths with which we are saturating our minds.

In order to begin to understand how this applies to the concept of changing our thought patterns, let's examine one little phrase from Paul, "Be transformed by the *renewing of your mind*" (Romans 12:2). Every one of us must seek to answer the all-important and practical question, "How do I renew my mind?"

Raindrops....Rivulets...Chasms

Let's use a hilltop as an illustration. When rain falls on a hill, the water drains off. How does it drain off? In rivulets. Initially, they are just small rivulets, but each time rain falls, the rivulets cut deeper and deeper. They can become deep chasms.

Now let's compare these rivulets with thought patterns in our minds. The longer we think along any given line, the stronger that thought pattern becomes. Every time we react in a certain way, we reinforce that thought pattern. This is how habits are formed.

If we want to get rid of rivulets on a hill, we could take a bulldozer and cover them up. We could also build a little dam where the rivulet begins so that the next time it rains the rivulet will change course. While we can't cover up our thoughts with a mental bulldozer, we can build a dam in our minds when certain thoughts begin. We can refuse to think them. We can say, "I will not allow myself to think that."

Building a dam in the mind, however, is not enough. That is, saying "no" is not sufficient by itself. We also need to provide a new course for our thinking. *We should not just suppress thoughts; we should redirect them.* We should change negative thought patterns into positive thought patterns.

We find a good illustration of this in Paul's words: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need" (Ephesians 4:28). How does a thief stop being a thief? Is it just by not stealing anymore? Not quite. Certainly that is part of it. That's saying "no" to a negative, destructive habit. It's building the "dam." But it's not enough. In order to change the thief is told to get a job and earn money honestly. Then he is to give to others in need so that perhaps they won't be tempted to steal. *Now the process is complete.* The negative habit has been dealt with by an act of the will which chooses to stop it. But the will must also choose to replace that with the corresponding constructive action in order that the change in thought patterns may be complete.

And so it becomes clear that in order to change these thought patterns we must do two things. *First, we must build the da.* that is, refuse to allow wrong thoughts. *Second, we must redirect the flow* and

develop a new way of thinking. Eventually the old patterns will fade. They may never disappear, but they will fade and will become less and less influential in controlling our thinking.

You Become What You Choose

We need to realize that this takes place by an act of the will, not by wishful thinking and not solely by devotional meditation and prayer. Meditation and prayer are necessary, but we must move beyond that to an act of the will.

Paul gives us some helpful thoughts on the subject: "Set your minds on things above" (Colossians 3:2), a declarative statement that involves an act of the will. *You set your mind.* "Put to death . . . whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires" (verse 5). "*You must rid yourselves*" (verse 8). "*Put on*" (verse 12, NASB). Changing thought patterns is not just "putting away" by building dams, but also "putting on" by building new patterns. It is not just suppressing, but redirecting our thoughts into healthy positive ways of thinking.

What does "put to death" (verse 5) mean? The old thought patterns do not just die naturally; it would be great if they did and we never again had this desire or that temptation. But because "the heart is more deceitful. . . and is desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17:9), and because the flesh is the flesh and lusts against the Spirit, those battles go on continually. Therefore, the statement "put to death" requires a continual action. We must put old thought patterns to death every time they rear their heads. We cannot just put immorality to death, and then no longer have immoral thoughts. They will continue to come up and every time they do, we have to stop them right at the headwaters with that dam. *Every time!* The more times we put those wrong thoughts to death and put on the new ones, the less our thoughts tend to flow in the wrong direction.

Paul commands us to develop healthy, positive spiritual ways of thinking (Colossians 3:12). We are to "put on" certain positive thought patterns as we "put off" the wrong ones. These two steps are essential if there is to be genuine change. We have looked at the illustration of the changed thief (Ephesians 4:28). In the same passage Paul gives another helpful illustration of "putting off" and "putting on." He states that the liar is to stop (put off) lying, but immediately reminds us that he must speak (put on) the truth (4:25). Not only does the liar stop lying, but he begins telling the truth. The two steps are clear--"put off" and "put on."

Paul deals with this concept in his letter to the Romans (chapters 6-8). It helps to have some one-word titles for these passages. Romans 6 describes our "provision." We have been delivered from the

power of sin. "Our old self was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (verse 6). "Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin"(verse 7). "Sin shall not be your master" (verse 14). "You have been set free from sin" (verse 18). *Provision* has been made so that we might overcome the power of sin.

"Struggle" is the key word in chapter 7. We struggle all the time. We struggle about how to get the provision of chapter 6 into our lives. The solution is the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 25). He is always the final answer. We all believe this. We preach sermons on it. We teach it. But too often we have not told people how to experience it in a practical way.

Chapter 8 tells us how. One phrase is repeated several times. Different versions state it in different ways, but the idea is the same. They all refer to "setting the mind." "Those who are according to the flesh *set their minds* on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, [*set their minds* on] the things of the Spirit. For *the mind set* on the flesh is death, but *the mind set* on the Spirit is life and peace, because the *mind set* on the flesh is hostile toward God" (verses 5-7, NASB).

Add to that these words of Paul, "*Fix your thoughts* on what is true and good and right. *Think about* things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. *Think about* all you can praise God for and be glad about" (Philippians 4:8, *Living Bible*).

There, in essence, is the whole concept of what is commonly called the power of positive thinking: "fix your thoughts." It is a statement of command which requires a response of the will to fix our thoughts to set our minds on these things.

The practical application of this concept is this: "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to do what pleases Him" (Philippians 2:12,13). This statement presents the chronological process of the effective outworking of Romans 6-8. Another version states, "For God is the Energizer within you, so as to will and to work for His delight" (verse 12, *New Berkeley*).

Turn On The Power

A light switch can be used to illustrate the Christian's responsibility in this process. As the light switch is moved, it turns the light on and off. That switch connects to a wire that goes through the house and out to a power line that eventually goes to a generating plant. Millions of volts of electricity are being produced there. The source of energy is enormous. The power comes through the lines to the wall

switch. Whether the light is illuminated by the electrical energy depends on the position of the switch. The switch is a circuit breaker.

In the same way what happens in the first part of Paul's statement determines whether the energy in the second part comes into our lives. Continually working out our salvation has to do with what we think, what we fix our thoughts on, what choices of will we make. In effect Paul says, "You do your part. You do what you know is right." This means we should renew our thoughts, and not allow them to continue following negative patterns. This is difficult and requires personal discipline. Thus we are turning the "switch" on for God's energy to flow whenever we choose not to allow wrong thoughts to continue.

Thought patterns are so ingrained that we don't recognize the stimulus that sets them off. And before we know it, one of our old thought patterns is off and running downhill. We respond to it as fast as a snap of the fingers. For example, when we hear the word "fireplace," we immediately see an image--good, bad or indifferent. The words "ocean beach" immediately bring a specific picture to mind. These words are stimuli which induce an immediate thought pattern.

In the same way therefore, there are many things that "trigger" or set off wrong thought patterns. We need to ask God to alert us through His Holy Spirit the minute these negative thought patterns begin.

That is all we can legitimately ask Him to do. When we ask God to change our thought patterns, we are asking Him to do something for which He has already said *we* are responsible.

Let's consider conflict in an interpersonal relationship as an illustration. One person says, "I have prayed for months, literally, for love for that person but I just can't love him. " However, when God says we are to do something, it is never a question of "can't" but "won't." God commands us to love others, whether or not they are our enemies, whether or not they have mistreated us. We are to love each other. No matter how we feel, God commands that we demonstrate the qualities of love (I Corinthians 13:4-7) by an act of our wills in obedience to that command. As we act in obedience, our feelings will respond accordingly. "A new commandment I give you: Love one another" (John 13:34). The issue is not "can't" but "won't."

There are many similar areas where we often find ourselves asking God to change something when He has told us what to do. He tells us clearly that it is our responsibility to "fix our thoughts" and "set our minds." We have the right to ask God to alert us to be sensitive to the beginning of that negative thought pattern, but as soon as He alerts us, then the responsibility to take action is ours.

Looks and Lust

For example, one of the areas that men have a great deal of difficulty with is their eyes--what they look at. We teach men that it is their responsibility to control their eyes. And while that emphasis may be proper, it presents a problem. The problem is that we are asking them to suppress a normal reaction. The Bible refers specifically to this. We are told in the words of the Lord Jesus that if a man looks on a woman to lust after her he has committed adultery in his heart. Jesus didn't say it was wrong to look at a woman. He said it was wrong to look and lust. There is a difference.

Jesus never condemned seeing what normally crosses our line of sight. Yet, we do. We ask a man to act contrary to normal reaction and we produce a conflict immediately. The moment that a man looks at anything that might cause lust, he feels guilty. It is as though he shouldn't see or is supposed to wear blinders. It produces a tremendous amount of frustration.

What we should do is help men realize that looking at someone or something that is attractive is normal. However, how a man handles his subsequent thoughts is important. If he allows himself to dwell on lustful desires for that person or thing, according to Jesus, he is sinning. But I would emphasize that the same stimulus can be used to produce a positive response as well as a negative one.

Years ago when I began to realize this, I learned for the first time how to have real victory in this area of my own thought life. I remember how revealing and liberating it was. Whenever I would find myself looking at an attractive woman who could have generated thoughts that were wrong, I would admit them and control them by saying, "Thank you, Lord. Thank you that I am healthy, that I have normal responses, that I am made the way you intended me to be made, and thank you for a wonderful wife with whom I can enjoy what You have given me."

It only took a split second, but a dam was built and a new positive channel was being produced. It happened very quickly. By the praise of God that has become a thought pattern now.

If I were a single man I would say the same thing, but the last phrase would read, "And thank You that in Your own time You will allow me the privilege of enjoying this part of my life, if that is Your plan for me." In either case, the principle is the same. That is, utilizing the same stimulus that could produce negative thoughts to produce positive responses instead by choosing that which I am going to allow my mind to think about.

I did not suppress those feelings. I did not say, "Come on, George, you are not supposed to think that way." That only reinforces the negative response which I am trying to overcome. *Suppression reinforces negativism.* Sublimation or redirection reinforces a positive replacement of that negative thought. So, the same stimulus can produce positive results, if we are alert to catch them the moment our thoughts begin a negative pattern. We do this by building a "dam" by saying "no" to the destructive thought and saying "yes" to a positive, constructive alternative.

This is where Scripture comes in. Verses or concepts of Scripture can be used to build these dams which check our thinking. The next time that same thing stimulates our thinking we shouldn't say, "Don't think that way," but instead we should tell ourselves, "Don't think that way, *think this way.*" This redirects those thought patterns into positive directions. "Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right" (Philippians 4:8, *Living Bible*).

If we do what God requests (Philippians 2:12), then he promises to energize us (verse 13). We submit our wills to His. We decide by an act of the will not to continue in the old patterns but to let Him change us. He promises to do that. All we do is throw the switch by saying "no" to wrong thoughts and "yes" to the right ones, and the energy from His enormous source of power flows through us and energizes us to do the very thing we want to do and that He wants us to do. Thus, it is not by our efforts that this is accomplished. *He produces the change, but we must make the choice.*

Let's look at another personal example. I found that in my relationship with my wife, Florine, I am not beyond feeling impatient. I never will be. As long as I am in this body and have the heart of flesh that I have, I am going to have these tendencies. But I find now that I am able to recognize these impatient feelings.

Feelings, Thoughts and Choices

Speaking of feelings, I think it's important to understand a few things about them. It seems to me that there is an emphasis which says, "Christians shouldn't have certain feelings." As a result, many sincere people find themselves struggling with guilt because they still have feelings that they are told they shouldn't have. Feelings are normal to every human being. In themselves they are neither good nor bad. They simply are. We all experience them--anger, resentment, envy, jealousy, defensiveness, lust and others. These are part of the temptations spoken of by Paul (I Corinthians 10:13). The important thing is what we do with these feelings. A follower of Christ is not to be controlled by his feelings. This is what is referred to in Proverbs 25:28 as self-control. Well then, how do we handle these feelings? This triad should help answer that:

1. *Our Emotions React.* As we've seen, we all have feelings that are set off by a variety of stimuli. It's important that we admit these feelings. It is destructive to try to deny or suppress them. But, as followers of Christ, we must not be controlled by these initial reactions.

2. *Our Intellects (Minds) Evaluate.* We are responsible to "set our minds" and think through on our emotional responses and their possible results. It is at this point that the Bible is so important. The more we know of what the Bible says, the more truth we have by which to evaluate our reactions. This will also help us know what to do with the feelings we are experiencing.

3. *Our Wills Choose.* Having had the initial reaction and having evaluated we now must choose our course of action. Here is the crucial step! Our evaluation may have told us that our feelings (reactions) are not biblical; they are neither constructive nor loving. In spite of this we may choose to act on the basis of our feelings. This would be immature response and behavior. It is also disobedience and sin (James 4:17). However, the mature choice, the one that we have been discussing in order to change our thought patterns, is to heed the evaluation and act responsibly as a result of the evaluation even though our feelings might be otherwise.

Now back to my illustration of my feelings of impatience. When I recognize them, I admit them to God, to myself and to Florine, so that she might understand and even give me added support. Then by an act of my will I determine, with God's help, to demonstrate patience because that is what love is. "Love is patient, love is kind" (I Corinthians 13:4). I have found that as quickly as I do that, God energizes me to be patient! I have been surprised to see the distinct change that takes place from one brief moment to another. It is not because of my ability, but because I choose to submit my will to God's will. As a result, God energizes me.

Paul is right when he refers to Christ as the One "who will rescue me from this" (Romans 7:24). The Lord Jesus Christ is the One. But first we must be willing to change our thought patterns--we must set our minds, fix our thoughts on what is true and good and right, and submit our wills to His. In other words, we must do our part. Then God can release the energy which He wants to give us to accomplish His purpose.

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WORLDLINESS AND REVIVAL

James Alexander Stewart

Worldliness is anything that takes the keen edge off my spiritual life and dims my vision of the Lord. Worldliness is anything that robs me of my deep inner love-life with my glorious Redeemer. Worldliness is anything that takes away my burden for souls. Worldliness is anything that hinders my spending time in earnest intercession for the Church and the world. *The curse of worldliness has invaded the Church. We must enter a crusade against it. We cannot be neutral. We cannot be silent. It is a matter of life and death. The Church is slowly being choked to death in the atmosphere of worldliness.*

The end times are upon us, and Satan is employing every means possible to crowd the Lord out of the lives of His saints. He is finding very effective, for instance, his scheme of invading their homes through the medium of television. The vast majority of evangelical Christians who would not for one moment visit places of worldly amusement allow the same places to enter their homes through television. The popular programs have more power over many of God's children than the week night prayer meetings. Many "Television Christians" know better the names of current film stars, comedians, sports heroes and politicians than they know the names and characters of the Bible.

There is an established pattern that has settled in our evangelical churches all over the North American Continent. The majority of members attend the service on Sunday morning. Less than fifty per cent attend the evening Gospel service. Less than twenty per cent attend the only week night praying meeting of the assembly. Thousands of hours each year are forever lost over worldly television programs, which should have been spent in deep spiritual conversation study of the Word, and glorious communion with the Lord. Surely the hardest and most discouraging task on earth today is to be assigned by the Head of the Church to shepherd such flocks. I had far rather face a Communist firing squad than to be the pastor of such a people. I had rather spend five years in a Communist prison camp than five years as pastor of some of these churches!

We know of one pastor who could not understand why his prayers for revival in his church were not being answered, even though he and his wife fasted and prayed far into the night. One Sunday, on his way to the prayer meeting before the evening service, he visited some of his best members, who had not been present in the service that morn-

ing. He feared they were ill. Imagine his dismay and astonishment when he discovered that they and four other church families had settled down for the evening around a worldly television show. We know of another pastor who went a great distance to visit some of his members in order to read and pray with them, as is the custom with every holy man of God. They welcomed him and served him coffee, but gave him no time to talk with them about the Lord. They had their favorite program on and did not offer to turn it off during the whole visit. There was no opportunity for spiritual conversation, and the pastor left with a terrible sense of frustration. The tragedy was that these dear people felt no sense of shame that they allowed a program to crowd out the Lord that day, since such action was their normal daily routine.

If Andrew Bonar could say seventy years ago: "I looked for the Church, and I found it in the world; I looked for the world, and alas I found it in the Church!"--what would this dear man of God say to us today? When I see these starry-eyed television fans wasting precious hours that could be spent more profitably, the words of Paul to the Galatians keep coming to my mind, "O SENSELESS Galatians, who hath bewitched you--you who have Jesus Christ the crucified placarded before your eyes?" (Gal. 3:1, Moffatt). Who has been casting a spell over you? Surely today it is Satan, through the eye-gate!

Worldliness dims the vision of the saints and causes them to lose the sense of eternal values. They become eccentric in the sight of God and the holy angels. They forget that they have been purchased to be possessed. They have lost their pilgrim status. There is no longer a distinction between them and the worldlings. They no longer live as aliens and exiles. Although they profess to the unsaved that they are "strangers and pilgrims," on their way home to "The Celestial City" alas, the world does not believe them. Like Lot of old, they have lost their testimony.

Again, *because the spirit of worldliness has invaded the Church, there is so little sacrifice in the average Christian life.* The church is too comfortable and cozy. "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he has settled on his lees" (Jer. 48:11). Each pastor knows he has two congregations; the congregation of "the dead" and the congregation of "the living." Like Gideon, we need to have a revival by subtraction.

If Christians were half as much excited about their heavenly heritage as they are their earthly possessions, they would be branded at once as fanatics. Amy Carmichael wrote, "We who follow the Crucified are not here to make a pleasant thing of life; we are called to suffer for the sake of a suffering sinful world. The Lord forgive us our shameful evasions and hesitations. His brow was crowned with

thorns; do we seek rosebuds for our crowning? His hands were pierced with nails; are our hands ringed with jewels? His feet were bare and bound; do our feet walk delicately? What do we know of travail? Of tears that scald before they fall? Of heartbreak? Of being scorned? God forgive us our love of ease! God forgive us that so often we turn our face from life that is even remotely like His."

The love of the things of this world robs the Church of her passion for souls. Few church members take more than casual interest in the salvation of souls. Many of us have ceased to be amazed at the indifference outside because there is so much apathy inside. When I see a vacant seat in the prayer meeting I say to myself, "There is a vote against revival." When I see an empty place in the Sunday evening service I say to myself, "There is a vote against revival." When I see a Sunday School class left without a teacher I say to myself, "There is a vote against revival." When I hear of church members who leave the place of prayer for places of amusement I count them up as votes against the Lord's coming in revival power among us.

The following incident took place during an evangelistic campaign somewhere in Oklahoma. The preacher had tried earnestly to get the church people to visit, to invite the lost to the services, but very few responded. There came the week's half-holiday. A barber in that town, with several of his friends, went on a fishing trip. The boat overturned, drowning the barber. Everything in that town stopped as the lake was searched for the body. They hired a diver at \$100 per day. On the fourth day the body was located. As the people slowly walked past the coffin in the church, the pastor was heard to say softly, "Oh, Sam, if these people had cared as much for your soul as they do for your dead body you wouldn't be in hell now!" How true! How tragically, bitterly true!

The Church of God must robe herself in sackcloth. The Church of God must make a public confession of her awful position of backsliding. For a Christian redeemed by Calvary's blood to live a worldly life is treason and spiritual suicide. It is better to be branded a fanatic than to be at ease in Zion. Oh that we all could say with Paul: "For me to live means Christ." The love of Christ overwhelms me! I have only one purpose in life and that is to live for the One who died, rose again, ascended, and is coming back for me!

[Taken from the book *Open Windows*. Used by permission of Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Publishers.]

Distribute this important message to young people, as a tract (see note at end)...

TOP SECRET

I'll tell you a secret. It's not supposed to be a secret but it is, simply because nobody has the guts to tell you: Sex is sacred, holy, wonderful part of God's plan for mankind. It is something too wonderful to be played with, abused, wasted. It has a purpose because God had a purpose in making us the way we are. Anyone who tells you otherwise is not telling you the truth. Teachers who tell you otherwise are misleading you. Your peers who tell you otherwise are mistaken. Any organization that tells you that the only thing wrong with sex is getting pregnant is trying to ruin you. Anyone who tells you that you can't wait or shouldn't wait is trying to rob you of your most precious possessions: Self-control and virginity.

One of the most beautiful but puzzling aspects of growing up is becoming aware of oneself and others as procreative beings. There are boys and girls, males and females. When we become aware of sexually maturing, we become aware of ourselves as a male or a female person and aware that persons of the other sex are somehow fascinating and attractive.

Why is this so? Is it just an interesting but meaningless accident? If there is any purpose to life at all, you'd better believe there is purpose to our sexuality. You may have been told that we just evolved through stages from a "Big Bang." But that explanation of human life has a lot of holes in it. Truly, although many people, especially teachers, are afraid to admit it, we were created by a Creator with a purpose. And His purpose includes a purpose for us. He didn't put the human race here just to live and die. His purpose for us is to live with Him forever. So that we can achieve that end, He has made us to have both a body and a spirit, or soul. We know we are more than just body. When someone dies, the body remains but the soul is gone (to its reward). But the body that remains is not Mary or Joe; it is not a person. So you see, the body, despite its importance, is not the whole person. The body and the soul together make up the person; the body, being the weaker part, must be controlled by the soul. The soul is the part of us that can say yes or no, I will or I will not.

But the body is also a part of the human person. And our bodies are either male or female in form. Now, why would God make us like that? Because He had a plan for making more people to know, love and serve Him so that one day they could be with Him in heaven. His plan allows His creatures to cooperate with Him in making more peo-

ple. His plan calls for a man and a woman each to contribute to the forming of a new person who will live forever. The act of cooperating with God in forming a new person gives the man and the woman great pleasure; it is an expression of their love for each other and if a child is conceived as a result of this loving act the child is a constant reminder of their love for each other.

Now, it should be obvious that if a child is to result from the sexual act of love, the child has the right to the love of both his or her parents. The child has a right to be born into a loving, stable family--a family which can provide for his bodily needs (food, shelter, clothing) and his spiritual needs (love, education, religion). That is one reason sexual intercourse must be reserved for marriage, when a man and a woman pledge to love each other for better or worse until death.

"Hold on now," you say, "You're talking about marriage. I'm not ready for that." Fine. Then you're also not ready for sexual intercourse. It may help you to know that the proper for what are called "sex organs" by many people is really "reproductive organs." Their purpose is to make possible the reproduction of human beings, a part of God's plan. The reproductive organs of male and female are designed specifically in God's plan to make procreation of children possible. (This is the main reason that homosexual acts are wrong: they are a misuse of the human body. More about homosexuality later.) And for God's plan to work properly, love is involved. Let's look at real love for a minute.

Some people call the act of sexual intercourse "making love." But that is obviously not true. Rape is an act of intercourse--no love there. Having intercourse with many different persons--how could that be love? Love involves a giving of oneself to another, primarily by the part of us which is spirit, or soul. It is the desiring of something good--not for oneself, but for the other person, the loved one. But when we are talking of a love so strong that a man and a woman pledge to give their whole being to each other forever in marriage, then love also involves giving the body of each to the other in the sexual expression of love. This is the second reason sexual intercourse is to be saved for marriage.

In the natural course of events, a girl is the first one to become aware of love, love as a giving of oneself to the beloved. It is here that she finds herself in danger, because a young man may find himself physically attracted to the girl but may not have any notion of really loving her. A girl is tempted to give in to his request for sex to hear him say, "I love you." He, in turn, finds it easy to say, "I love you" as a means of getting sexual pleasure. It is here that self-control comes in. If they both know that sexual intercourse is part of God's plan and is meant for use only in marriage, they both can and will resist the

temptation to engage in the sex act. Furthermore, both of them will know that they should be cautious with themselves and each other so that they will not even be tempted strongly to violate each other's virginity. This means no getting together in out-of-the-way places, touching each other's private parts, spending too much time together, dressing immodestly, talking about sex, reading or looking at pornography, or doing anything that tends to make a person sexually excited. It also means saying no to using drugs or alcohol; they make self-control very difficult, or even impossible.

A word you don't very often hear is "chastity." But chastity is the key to a person's maturing sexually. It means taking control of yourself, not taking advantage of someone else. It means preserving your virginity until you can give it to your husband or wife in marriage. It means treating your sexuality as a gift from God to be used as a part of His plan. It means as an unmarried person using them only with your wife or husband.

Chastity also means never under any circumstances engaging in homosexual acts. Homosexual acts are so naturally repulsive that they have always been called perversions. They devastate the health of body and soul. And they are the chief means by which the AIDS epidemic is spreading. Anyone who tells you that homosexuality is merely an "alternate lifestyle" is inviting you to a life of sin and misery and to a painful death.

Chastity has some other practical advantages, too. Besides the trust it engenders between men and women in general and boyfriend and girlfriend and husband and wife in particular, it is also a great insurance policy. It insures against all manner of venereal disease, the health hazards of contraceptive pills and devices and, of course, against all the problems connected with out-of-wedlock pregnancy: no shotgun wedding, no adoption or single parenthood, no temptation to kill an unborn baby by abortion, and no mental and/or physical problems that almost always follow abortion. Chastity preserves your personal integrity; it is the only basis for true happiness in courtship and marriage (mere sensual pleasure will never make you happy). And despite what anyone may have told you, chastity is not impossible. Your sexuality is a beautiful gift from God. It is part of His plan. Please use it as He intended.

There--I've told you the secret. Now tell it to everyone else. Don't let it be a secret any more.

P.S. For those to whom this message came "too late":

Some will say, "If I had known the secret of God's plan for me, things would have been different. But it's too late now." Well, that is

only partly true. You can never regain your lost virginity but you can regain your self-control. You can begin to live chastely from this moment on. You may still suffer some of the consequences from having already violated God's plan and law. You will have to live with that. But if you determine to control yourself and live chastely from now on, if you confess to God that you are sorry for having violated His rules, even if unknowingly, and if you ask Him for help in living chastely in the future, with His help you can do it. (You can be certain, moreover, that if you don't make this new beginning, things will only get worse.) God is generous and He loves you. Determine now to live chastely according to His plan and He will bless you for your decision and help you to stick by it.

*Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God. (Matt. 5:8)*

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QUESTIONS ASKED OF US

Carl Kitzmiller

It is very hard for Christians always to find suitable Christian marriage partners. Why do you insist that Christians always marry Christians? Some mixed marriages have worked out well.

Yes, some mixed marriages have turned out well in that the people have found happiness and have created good stable homes. Some of these have later turned to the Lord and are now Christian homes. And we are aware that some Christian(?) marriages, i.e., those which started in that way, have gone on the rocks. That all of the mixed marriages have not failed is to some extent due to the fact that God forgives sin and His mercy is very great. In counting the ones that have met with some measure of success, we do not want to forget the others where Christians have married out of the Lord and have pursued a steady course toward destruction of their faith. In many other cases there has been a neutralizing of the good works and of the testimony the Christians should have. Since our Christian faith is such a vital part of our whole life, it seems to me that simple good judgment calls for diligence in making a marriage where this will not be a problem but a blessing, where another difficulty is not added to successful adjustment.

My greatest insistence on Christians marrying Christians is based on something more than good judgment, however. The word of God insists on it! Two passages are outstanding and specific. To the widow (or, by application, to the widower) the clear instruction is this: "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*" (1 Cor. 7:39, italics ours for emphasis). To all, the statement of 2 Cor. 6:14 applies: "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." If it be objected that this latter passage does not mention marriage specifically, I agree. It is a statement of general principle that should govern the whole of our Christian lives, not just one phase of them. But since there is no closer relationship than marriage, I would point out that if it does not include marriage then the passage is without meaning. Personally I suspect that Christians are not nearly diligent enough in applying this passage in a multitude of ways, but that is not our point here. Certainly it includes marriage.

There are attempts to destroy the force of 2 Cor. 6:14 by defining "unbeliever" to mean an atheist or someone without any inclination to religious things. But "unbeliever" is not so used in the rest of the N.T., and even many of those who use this approach would not be willing to use such a definition in many another passage. An unbeliever is one who has not been born again or one who is in spiritual *darkness*, regardless of how cultured, tolerant, or even religious he may be. A person does not have to be openly antagonistic to the Christian faith to be an unbeliever.

Again it is said the "unequal yoke" is the situation where the unbeliever has force or power or upper hand over the Christian and that there is an equality in marriage. But the unequal yoke (as the passage goes on to show) consists of believer yoked with unbeliever, whatever else may be true. Believer with believer, or unbeliever with unbeliever is an equal yoke, but believer with unbeliever is an unequal yoke.

Now we know that Christians sometimes disobey and marry non-Christians. Sometimes such marriages take place because of an ignorance of the restriction. Or among unbelievers, one companion may become a Christian after the marriage and the other may remain in unbelief. These causes give rise to mixed marriages. The N.T. recognizes the sanctity of even these marriages, and does not teach their dissolution (1 Cor. 7:12-17). Instead the believer is to be diligent in trying to win the unbeliever (e.g., 1 Peter 3:1-6). But the force of the passage in 2 Cor. 6:14 is: *Become not* unequally yoked. Written to Christians, the instruction is that in the formation of a marriage this is to be avoided. Because of the high commitment involved in marriage and the importance of the home, and equal yoking does not take prece-

dence over everything else. But let us recognize its importance and not dismiss the requirement as just a sort of good recommendation that the Lord makes. It is more than a recommendation; it is a requirement. When we refuse it, neglect it, count it as not binding, etc., we sin.

Most of us have seen Christian young people start out recognizing the need for a Christian companion. But the opportunities are limited, and perhaps no suitable companion seems to turn up. The standards are dropped, and these settle for an unbeliever. Sometimes there is something close to panic, lest they get passed by. Or sometimes the body chemistry gets active and the Lord gets shoved into a back seat. Commitment to the Lord's will is sometimes too superficial. One realizes that it is not always easy for Christian young people to meet and date other Christians who "ring the bells" and who represent potentially good mates. But I do not believe that the Lord requires of us what He will not enable us to achieve. The Christian young person (or widow or widower or marriageable person of any age) who will commit this matter to the Lord truly, to make it a matter of prayer, to wait for His ordering, will have the Lord's provision. This does not mean that marriage is His will for everyone. And it does not mean that His provision will always bring the financial, social, or other attainments that may be regarded by the flesh as important. The Lord may test us, as it were, to see how committed to His will we are, so He may not act overnight. He may open doors for meeting possible companions that we are unwilling to enter for some reason. But I have no doubt of His provision for the one who will really commit the matter to the Lord.

In any case we must avoid the mentality that says, "Here is something very difficult to obey, or something very restrictive, and because it is hard we can pass it up and not bother about the Lord's will." Christian obedience is not conditioned on whether it is easy to obey.

As a preacher I have sometimes been in "hot water" for refusing to perform a marriage ceremony between believer and unbeliever. It would be *much easier* to abandon these convictions and not arouse the ire or resentment that sometimes arises. It is not my intention to sit in judgment on those men who go ahead in such cases. I know some of these hope to have a helpful influence on the couple or maybe an opportunity to further teach them. But I do not personally find it very convincing to teach what God's word says in this matter and then contradict that by helping someone to disobey it.

"Only in the Lord" is *the Lord's* restriction. It is not altogether popular, even with some "church" families. But it is the way of obedience and blessing. Disregard and disobedience to it are not unpardonable sins, but then neither is murder.

Refreshing changes are occurring...

THE NASHVILLE JUBILEE

Curtis D. McClane

My family and I had the wonderful privilege of attending the Fourth Annual Nashville Jubilee. This four day extravaganza was coordinated by the Madison Church of Christ with Dr. Steve Flatt, Madison Pulpit Minister, serving as the daily M.C. The "mainstream" a cappella Churches of Christ funded and sponsored this event. There were classes and activities for everyone: pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, middle school, junior high, high school, singles mothers, fathers, couples, etc. The main events were held in the Convention Center and the Stouffer Hotel. Probably close to 8,000 people registered during the week.

The atmosphere of this entire event did justice to the word "jubilee." The mood seemed to be characterized by three things: a spirit of freedom, joy/celebration, and reunion. I have never attended anything quite as festal in nature among the a cappella Churches of Christ.

This year's theme was "In the Name of Jesus." The focus was neither pentecostal nor authoritarian (as the terms tend to be used in opposite camps). Instead, there seemed to be an honest and earnest attempt to focus on various aspects and dimensions of Jesus Christ and his ministry. In doing so, I was struck with the unusual and wonderful blending of the traditional and the new. The entire week began with a soul-stirring message and challenge from Wayne Kilpatrick of the Homewood Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama. In fact, his presentation received front page billing in the Nashville Tennessean newspaper. He challenged the Churches of Christ to be more like Christ and to be known for our compassion.

Themes and Impressions

After reflecting upon the ideas and impressions that are still lingering with me, I want to mention five main themes that seemed to surface. First of all, the need and dynamics of change in our churches were addressed by Dr. Rubel Shelley of Nashville. If our Restoration heritage has anything of value to offer our kids and their kids of the next generation, then the needs of the boomer and buster generations must be addressed.

Secondly, Dr. Jack Reese of Abilene Christian University presented lessons on the historical, theological, and practical dimensions of worship. One statement he made I will never forget. He said that it is imperative before a church decides to make any changes in its cor-

porate worship that the body of believers know why it worships God in the first place. Worship is not primarily aesthetically or horizontally focused. Rather, its main purpose is to offer adoration and praise to God and draw the worshipper into the Divine Presence.

Thirdly, Chris Bullard from Overland Park Church of Christ in Kansas City, Kansas, shared with us the dynamics and differences between spiritual information and spiritual formation. During the past five years I have been exposed to the classics of Christian Devotion. This great body of literature is a testimony to spiritual formation. Chris contended that the wilderness experience of biblical characters provided an appropriate model for our own spiritual formation.

Fourthly, there seemed to be more explicit references and actual lessons on the power of God than I ever recall hearing before. Joe Beam presented a lesson on the angels and demons. All of us live in a society that is so secular and rationalistic in its outlook and mind-set that we tend to forget the "principalities and powers" that are at war in high places.

And last of all, relational needs were addressed. I attended a session on the role of fathers and storytelling in the spiritual maturation process of our children. Our own stories and the story of Jesus hold tremendous potential for communicating the ultimate values and priorities of life that we want to pass on to our children.

Everyday during lunch we would go to the food court in the Convention Center Mall, where throughout the week, twenty different singing groups took their place on the makeshift stage and sang their hearts out. It was intriguing watching shoppers in the mall stop to listen to contemporary gospel music. The singing groups also performed in many of the class sessions in the morning and afternoon.

Plan now to attend the Fifth Annual Nashville Jubilee (June 30-July 3, 1993) at Nashville's Convention Center. Approximately a dozen people from the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Lansing attended the last one and we hope to double that number next year! It is thrilling to me to see so many Christians celebrating their faith in Jesus. Praise be to God!

[Curtis D. McClane has been a pulpit minister in the churches of Christ (non-instrumental) for 15 years and currently serves the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Lansing, Michigan. This article is reprinted from *Integrity* magazine, which is sent free to those who ask. A donation is requested once yearly. 4051 S. Lincoln Rd., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.]

VOICES from the FIELDS

Mark and Candy Garrett Quebec, Canada Jan. 31, 1993

Bon jour! We're here at last! The first big step towards Senegal has begun. Quebec City, Quebec is now where we hang our hats . . . and gloves . . . and scarves . . . and long johns!

Our new surroundings require many adjustments for Southerners. Remember to plug in the block heater on your car every night. It helps your engine start at -10 F. When you see snow falling you know its *warming up*. Maybe a warm front is coming through with *highs* in the mid 20's.

God provides right on time. We reached our minimum support level *the week of our deadline!* This allowed us to begin our French studies on January 11. We now have 100% of our monthly support and 100% of our one-time needs in hand. Thanks goes to our God who deserves all the credit!! We are also thankful to many individuals who are now our partners in ministry. Some pledged their prayers, and others, their resources.

Student life feels a bit strange. After framing houses and newscasting I can hardly remember homework. The biggest stresses are from the language barrier we face every day. It is distressing to have people speak to you in French and understand only 10% of it.. But a few successes have encouraged me. A few store clerks actually understood a phrase I used!

While Candy and I are in classes, Kathryn is with a French-speaking nanny, Elise. Elise also keeps the children of a few other missionaries studying here. Kathryn loves it so much there that she often doesn't want to come home. She is learning a few words in French. But she resists the French version of her name, Katrine. If you call her "Katrine," she points to herself and insists, "Name is Kathryn."

**Our New Address: 2071 Presqu'ile Apt. 101 Quebec City, Quebec
Canada G1P 3Y1**

James Ashley Solomon Islands Feb. 7, 1993

In January I got back to Scripture work as David and I began the advisor check (2nd draft) of the gospel of Luke. We're more than halfway through and have gotten the reviewer committee going on the

early chapters. We hope to get at least 12 chapters ready for consultant checking by Feb. 25 when the United Bible Society consultant comes to visit us.

This last week Timo has been here to work on the changes suggested in the consultant check of Mark. We should finish that tomorrow (I hope), and so bring us one step nearer to producing our trial edition of Matthew, Mark, Philippians, and James. The trial edition is important because we need feedback from a wider group of people about spelling, dialect, and keyterms before we go too much further.

We have been praising God for His care in that we have all enjoyed good health (still no malaria!), and a hurricane that was heading our way in early January changed course just in time (my HAM radio antenna still stands -- and incidentally so does the house). We would appreciate prayer for speed and efficiency in checking the translation; that I will be able to put in the time that it takes, and that the reviewers would work with a constructive attitude. Karen would appreciate prayer that Kent and Philip would learn good work habits as they do their schoolwork, and that Susan would learn good play habits -- outside playing with her friends instead of inside disrupting school.

Crystal Hardin "Pine Grove Academy", Honduras Feb. 15, 1993

Things are going well at the school. Enrollment is making it necessary for us to add another classroom by next fall, so plans for the all-purpose building are on hold. We have many teachers who are really burdened for the spiritual condition of the students and are willing to put in a lot of extra time working with them. Some students have come to the Lord, and others are earnestly seeking.

As always it is difficult to get teachers. Several will have finished their 3-year term this year and will not be returning. Please pray with us that the Lord will supply teachers of His choosing to replace those called to other work. We give thanks that the two teachers needed for January were found.

I've had laryngitis for over a month. I hope I don't have permanent damage. Please pray for healing.

Dan Wilson "Pine Grove Academy," Honduras Feb. 16, 1993

January was probably the best month in school for me since I've been here (1 1/2 years). Don't get me wrong, it was far from perfect, but I saw a lot of response in Bible classes. Much of it stemmed from

a student's close brush with death when a blood vessel in his nose ruptured. As a result my freshman class is going better than ever. I made many improvements over last year in teaching *Romans* to adolescents, such as using the "faith fall" and a faith walk to bring the truths about faith to life.

One of the new girls, Maribel, responded in one assignment that she was happy here at the school, had made good friends, was doing well in her studies--but that something was missing. I told her to come talk with me if she had time, but that's the problem, neither she nor I have any spare time at school. It gets frustrating teaching Bible but not getting to follow up on the leads I get.

The seniors recently returned from their "medical brigades," which is a week in which they go with a team of doctors, nurses, etc. from the Luke Society--Americans, mostly Christians. The seniors translate for them and get to see surgeries for harelips, clublimbs, etc. and even Caesarian births. It's the best thing the school does for its students, I think. I spend two weeks giving them the Biblical view of the poor, and they respond, "They're just lazy." But after the medical brigades they return to school claiming the economic system here is no fair because "the hardworking poor people don't have a chance to improve their conditions."

J. DWIGHT THOMAS 1944 - 1993

Dwight Thomas was born August 6, 1944 in Madison, Tennessee to Samuel and Ruth Thomas. He had one brother, Jack Thomas.

He was a graduate of Vanderbilt University Graduate School and a qualified speech therapist with his main office in Elizabethtown, Ky. Dwight and Judy Roberts were married July 12, 1968 and were parents of Chris, Justin and Allison.

For five years Dwight served as co-minister with Bro. Ernest Lyon at Highland Church of Christ. When Bro. Lyon retired in 1989, Dwight accepted the call to become the full-time minister. In March of 1990, Dwight was found to have cancer and was told he could not live more than six months. In faith he called for the elders to anoint him with oil and pray for healing. The Lord extended his life for two years of a strong spiritual ministry.

One did not have to know Dwight very long to know that his chief delight was to worship God who gave him life through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our comfort to know that he is at last with Jesus and can worship in the "better" land. Dwight also loved his earthly country and was proud that he had served in the United States Navy.

Pray for Judy, faithful and true help-meet, for Chris, Justin and Allison, and for his mother, Ruth Barwick and brother Jack.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Portland Christian School

At the March meeting of the Board of Directors and the staff, the Board recognized sister Clara Woosley for twenty years of faithful service of teaching in the high school and sister Lillian Smithson for twenty five years of volunteer service in the school cafeteria. Lillian is still "at it" in her eighty-second year.

"Women in Harmony With God"

This is the theme for the Ladies Inspirational Day to be held at the Hamburg Church of Christ, Saturday, April 24, 1993. See the back cover for details.

Bro. Boll's Books Into Spanish!

Former editor R. H. Boll's books on Galatians and on Christ's teaching about prayer will soon be translated into Spanish and distributed in Colombia, So. America, Lord willing. This project will be carried out by Action International Ministries. AIM's director, Doug Nichols, is a friend of ours from Manila days.

The plan calls for 2500 copies of each book to be printed (after translation into Spanish). They will then become part of a project to provide books cheaply for pastors & other church workers. In the future, the sales will help cover the costs of later printings. But to start the project, over \$2,000 is needed--mostly for translation. Anyone wanting to help in this ministry may send funds to W&W's office, marked "Boll bks for S.A." We will forward all funds to AIM.

Of course we have these books in English, in case you haven't read them! --Alex Wilson

His Tract Available Too

We planned to re-run Bro. Boll's "How God Forgives" in last month's W&W. But lack of space bumped it. It is available as an 8-page, pocket-sized pamphlet, @ 25 cents or 5/\$1.00. This is very well written, & handy to put in envelopes or hand to your friend, mailman or check-out cashier. Order from us; prices do not include tax or postage.

We're Smiling

While we try to make W&W inspiring, we know it's not inspired! Therefore it's not inerrant. Flaws sneak in every so often. So we chuckled when we saw this notice in another magazine:

"Just in case you find any mistakes in this magazine, please remember they were put there for a purpose. We try to offer something for everyone. Some people are always looking for mistakes and we didn't want to disappoint you!"

How do you like the larger print we have used this month and last? It makes a nicer appearance & provides easier reading. But it means we'll have less space for articles. Pray for God's guidance for our writers and editor.

Any suggestions re: our front cover? For the past few years we considered changing it. But the actual change in January resulted from some technical problems at the last moment, which left us no choice but to try something else. We'll

worked, whether in the past or (preferably) recently. It will bring glory to Him & encouragement to His people. Please type double-spaced, or write very legibly.

When Prayer Is Forbidden

Josh Peterson, a 17-year-old student body president of a high school in Utah, defied a school district ban and offered a prayer at his graduation ceremony. He said, "If I could say a prayer, this is what I would say" and then proceeded to pray!

Take a Working Vacation, In Alaska!

It is hoped that Winston & Irene Allen will visit the lower-48 in the fall for 6-8 weeks. They surely need a break & a chance to see loved ones & supporters. But they don't see how they can leave their trailer-home & the church building unguarded for that time. Burglary is common in Eagle River. Does the Lord want YOU to be their short-term replacements? It would help, but is not essential, if the replacer could preach a time or two. If interested, call Julius Hovan, Gallatin Church of Christ, (615) 452-0271. In passing, note that the proposed Alaskan cruise/tour to be led by Julius has been dropped for insufficient interest.

April 10 - 22. Jennings, La. with Bro. Julius Hovan. 7 PM

May 30 - June 2. Pine Prairie, La. with Bro. Paul Estes. 7 PM

--David Johnson, Minister

I Am A Junior Boy

"Last Sunday night I thought I would go to church. My buddy went to the movies and wanted me to go along, but I didn't think I ought to, so I went to church.

I looked for my Sunday School teacher, but he wasn't there. I looked for a couple of church leaders I have always respected, but they weren't there. I looked for my Mother's Sunday school teacher who called at our home, but she wasn't there either. I guess they don't think church on Sunday night is important."

Is there somebody looking for you, using you for their example???

--Ralph Ave. Bulletin

Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville

Whether a person goes to church regularly or not, does not depend on how far he lives from church, but rather how far he lives from God.

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:25 --Nathan Burks, Minister

LADIES INSPIRATION DAY:

WOMEN IN HARMONY WITH GOD

Hamburg, Ind. Church of Christ ** April 24th, 9:00 - 3:30

9:00 Registration

9:30 Singing and Prayer

10:00 Keynote Address -- Mazie Hecker

10:30, 1:00, and 2:00 -- Three Workshop Sessions

Workshop Topics:

Following the Drum Major -- Martha Embree
For Teens -- Patricia Lee, Deanna Collard

Singing the Duet -- Janell Lewis

Directing the Ensemble -- Joyce Lyon

Perfecting the Pitch -- Jackie Gill
For Teens -- Fonda Pound, Alice Mullins

Orchestrating the Home -- Linda Hobbs

Striking the Chord -- Joyce Dickson

Blending the Voices (for Teens) -- Joan Marsh, Cindy Taylor

Nine Churches in Indiana Planned the Program
Coordinator, Virginia Kitzmiller; (812) 246-6118