

# ***GRACE & TRUTH*** MAGAZINE

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- A woman with dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and light blue jeans, is sitting on the ground under a large, thick tree trunk. She is smiling and looking down at an open red book she is holding. A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink lace-trimmed top and blue jeans, is sitting next to her, also smiling and looking at the book. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.
- ***A Letter To New Believers***
  - ***A Few Words For Mothers***
  - ***A Life That Magnifies God***

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# GRACE & TRUTH MAGAZINE

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# Good For All Believers

When a person plants a new tree in his yard, he will give it special care to be sure it grows and becomes strong. Unlike other, established plants on his property, the new tree may need extra watering and fertilizer during the first month or so to help it grow strong and healthy. Once a tree is well-rooted, it doesn't generally need the same kind of care on a frequent basis, although some additional water and compost may still be good from time to time.

Our lives as believers are very similar. When we have just been born again, the Lord encourages and guides us by various means to help us take root in the faith. Writers this month seek to provide some advice, as led of the Lord, for individuals who are newly saved. If you are one of those individuals, we rejoice with you in this new relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. May you carefully follow Him, staying close to Him each and every day.

The articles in this magazine are valuable as well for those of us who are more mature believers. We need reminders to encourage us to continue walking in a manner pleasing to Him. The apostle

Peter was not bashful about repeating points to the saints, for they were intended to stir them up in their faith. He wrote: "I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder ... I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" (2 Pet. 1:12-13, 3:1-2 NASB). Both Paul and Jude gave reminders in their letters as well. We need them!

Like a tree of any age, we need to be rooted in the source of life continually in order to avoid the dangers that exist, get through the hard times that come, produce fruit honoring to the Lord and prosper in God's sight (see Ps. 1:1-3). May we take to heart the instruction from the Lord, which is good for all believers, and grow in Him to His glory!

*Paul*

# Channels Only

How I praise Thee, precious Savior, that Thy love laid hold of me;  
Thou hast saved and cleansed and filled me that I might Thy channel be.

*(Chorus)*

Channels only, blessed Master, but with all Thy wondrous power  
Flowing through us, Thou canst use us every day and every hour.

Just a channel, full of blessing, to the thirsty hearts around,  
To tell out Thy full salvation, all Thy loving message sound.

Emptied that Thou shouldst fill me, a clean vessel in Thy hand;  
With no power but as Thou givest graciously with each command.

Witnessing Thy power to save me, setting free from self and sin;  
Thou who bought me to possess me, in Thy fullness, Lord, come in.

Jesus, fill now with Thy Spirit hearts that full surrender know;  
That the streams of living water from our inner man may flow.

—*Mary E. Maxwell*

**“I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God,  
to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,**

*Acceptable to God,*

**which is your spiritual service of worship”**

—*Romans 12:1 NASB*

## A Letter To New Believers

Dear fellow believer,

When you made the decision to believe on the Lord Jesus and accept Him as your personal Lord and Savior, that was the greatest decision you could ever make on earth. You now have “exceedingly great and precious promises” (2 Pet. 1:4 NKJV). Such promises are from the Lord Himself, and they are for time and all eternity.

You have eternal life; this is priceless and precious. “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son ... These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 Jn. 5:11,13). The life we now have – this eternal life – enables us to have fellowship with God the Father and His Son: “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ” (1:3).

You are embarking on a tremendous future with God in your life. “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3).

Let me share with you some things which will help you as you begin your Christian walk. I would encourage you to tell others about your decision to follow the Lord Jesus. I know you may be a little afraid – I was too – but the Lord will help you. “With the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). The Lord Jesus, after His resurrection, said, “Go and tell” (Mt. 28:10); “He is not ashamed to call [us] brethren” (Heb. 2:11). The apostle Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He said, “It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). He also said, “I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Tim. 1:12). The apostle wanted Timothy and us to “not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord ... but share ... in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God” (v.8). The Lord will strengthen you (4:17), enabling you to stand up for Him. Ask the Lord for the right words and all that you need to be a testimony for Him.

*continued on the next page*

Praying is extremely important. You must make everything a matter of prayer. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (Phil. 4:6). "Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Th. 5:16-18).

Reading the Scriptures is also extremely important. You will need a Bible to read regularly. This is how you will grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. A good place to begin is by reading the Gospel of John. It is the fourth book in the New Testament. You will enjoy reading God's Word – remember to do what it says. The Lord Jesus loves to see growing Christians. Growth is one of the characteristics of living things. Because we have life in Christ we are able to grow in Him.

There are many good biblical books and magazines available. Read them with your Bible open, looking up referenced verses. Good publications will help you to understand and appreciate more and more the preciousness of God's Word. If you find something that the Lord used to help you, share it with others that they too can be encouraged and rejoice in the Lord. Seven days without praying and reading makes the Christian weak. Be like the Bereans: "they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Fellowshipping with, which implies "being with," other believers is also important. Ask the Lord, as the psalmist did, to direct your steps by His word (Ps. 119:133). The Lord will never lead you to a group where His name and Word are dishonored, nor where the Holy Spirit is quenched or grieved.

You have begun your walk with the Lord; continue with Him. "Continue in the faith" (Acts 14:22) until you see the Lord Jesus face to face. Many years ago Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) wrote these encouraging words: "*Grace it is, free grace, which keeps us on the road. Till we behold the Savior's face and city of our God.*"

"He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

May these thoughts be of help to you,

*Paul Palmer, Sr.*

# THOUGHTS FOR New Believers As They Begin Their Walk

by Milton P. Jamieson



**“And now,  
Israel,  
what doth  
the LORD  
thy God  
require of  
thee.”**

*Deuteronomy  
10:12 KJV*

**N**ow that you have bowed to the lordship of Jesus Christ and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior, He requires that you:

- Turn your back on your old life – from the paths of sin and shame, and from worldliness and ungodliness.
- Hate sin and love righteousness.
- Do all your deeds in the light to the glory of God.
- Walk no longer according to the darkness, and the thoughts and ways of men who know not God. Here are some practical suggestions to help you.

## Read The Word

As God’s child, God expects you to spend time reading His Word and meditating on it. Do not neglect the Word of God – the Bible. We were born again by it (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). The Word is able to:

- Build us up (Acts. 20:32),
- Keep us clean (Jn. 15:3, 17:17; Eph. 5:26; Ps. 119:9),
- Prevent us from sinning against the Lord (v.11), and
- Guide us as a light for our path and a lamp to our feet (v.105).

We need the Word of God for every step of our life. It is by His Word that we judge all things and are able to distinguish right from wrong. We should therefore read it frequently (Josh. 1:8), meditate upon it deeply (1 Tim. 4:15; Ps. 1:2), receive it gladly (Acts 2:41) and obey it

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readily (Rom. 6:17; 1 Pet. 1:22). By this we will have prosperous Christian lives, and the Lord will use us greatly. He will bless our lives and make us a blessing to many people.

### **Spend Time In Prayer To God**

It is said that prayer is the Christian's vital breath; as breathing is important physically, so is prayer in the Christian's life. If we stop praying we will start losing the power of the new life. How very true is the saying "Seven prayer-less days make one weak"! We are encouraged by the Lord to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16), to "pray without ceasing" (1 Th. 5:17), and to "watch ... and pray lest [we] enter into temptation" (Mk. 14:38). When we pray we are in touch with unlimited power, talking to and communing with our God. Our Lord sometimes continued all night in prayer to Him (Lk. 6:12). The Lord is our perfect example; let us be like Him.

The first thing we read of Saul, a man who acted violently toward Christians, after he submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ was that he prayed (Acts 9:11). Ananias was afraid to go to Saul, but when the Lord told him that Saul was praying, he realized that

Saul was no longer a persecutor. Instead, Saul was now a believer and a brother beloved in the Lord. Prayer is truly a sign of the new life and the relationship that we have come into, wherein we cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

### **Attend The Meetings**

God has established local assemblies in various locations for our help, encouragement and usefulness. We must not forsake "the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). The Spirit speaks in the gatherings of believers, for He wants to minister to us not only as individuals, but also as the local church. We bear testimony to the Lord and to the one body of Christ to which all believers belong. In fact, there is no other gathering on earth to which the Lord promises His presence – but to the gathered saints alone. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:20).

We encourage you to find the local assembly in your area and get the schedule of the various meetings. Be active as a member of the body of Christ in that locality. Do not let your seat at the meetings be empty, unless there is absolutely no way you can avoid being absent.



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## Get Baptized

Before our Lord left this world to return to His Father, He gave the commandment that those who believe on Him should be baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). While baptism does not save anyone, it is the Lord’s command.

When we are baptized we are publically placed under the lordship of Christ, declaring that we have died *with Him*, are buried *with Him*, and raised up to walk in newness of life *with Him* (Rom. 6:3-4). While being immersed in water does not bring about a good conscience (the blood alone does that), baptism is an answer to it before God (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 3:21). It is one of the first steps in discipleship, saying we are prepared to follow and obey Jesus Christ as Lord. If you have not done so, do not wait; arise and be baptized in obedience to the Lord’s command.

## Get Busy

Get busy in the Lord’s service. The Lord could have taken us home when we got saved, but He has left us here on earth to serve Him while He is away. When He was here He was the Light of the World (Jn. 8:12, 9:5). Now, like the sun at night, He is gone, and we are here to shine as the stars in this dark world. “Let your light

so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mt. 5:16).

“Let none hear you idly say, ‘There is nothing I can do,’ while the souls of men are dying and the Master calls for you” (Daniel March, 1816-1909) to act. Take a few gospel tracts with you everywhere you go and hand them to people. Some will refuse, but others will be only too glad to receive them. Tell everyone you meet about the Savior; write letters, texts and emails; call your friends and tell them; put a gospel tract with your letters. Help in Sunday School and young people’s programs. Be at the street meetings, prayer meetings and all the other meetings. Don’t wait to be asked to do something; open your eyes and see what needs to be done, be it great or small. Do it for the eyes of the Lord rather than to please men or to get praise for oneself (see Col. 3:23-24). All praise should go to Him.

Keep busy! Satan will find things for you to do if you do not keep yourself busy for the Lord. Visit the Sunday School children and their parents at their homes, the sick and the shut-ins, read for them and pray with them. Attend Bible camp in summer – meeting other faithful Christians of your own age, sharing with and sticking close to them.

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## Remember The Lord In The Breaking Of Bread

In Acts 2:41-42 we see that not only were the early disciples baptized to show their allegiance to the Lord Jesus, but they continued steadfastly in the teachings of the apostles, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers. It is the Lord's desire for you to fellowship with His people. You need to be in that company of believers where the Lord is pleased to take His place in the midst, and where you will have things in common with others who are saved. We find that after Saul was converted he was in the company of the disciples who were at Damascus (9:19).

Another thing close to the heart of the Lord, which He would have you do, is to remember Him in the breaking of bread. On the night before He went to the cross, having gathered with His own, He took bread and gave thanks; He likewise took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, "This do in remembrance of Me" (Lk. 22:19). We therefore ought to carry on this happy function of remembering our beloved Lord.

The early disciples used to practice this every day, but later it became the custom to break bread every first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The breaking of bread is so close to the heart of

the Lord that after He ascended into glory, there at the Father's right hand, He revealed these things to the apostle Paul. So let us remember Him. We cannot do so too often. He said as often as we do it we do so in remembrance of Him, and in this way we show His death until He comes (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

### What If I Sin?

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 Jn. 2:1). God hates sin, and we should hate sin too. But if we sin our Christian life does not end, for we have an Advocate with the Father. He represents us in the courts of heaven on the basis of His shed blood. We, as believers in Christ, are told to confess our sins, and He (God) "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9). Do not hide or try to cover your sins, but confess them to God (Prov. 28:13). He loves us as our loving Father, and He will never leave us to suffer forever in sin. Instead, He will pick us up and clean us up that we may fellowship with Him again!

So, what does the Lord require of us? We are to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God (Mic. 6:8). **GT**



# Flight Safety For New Believers

by Stephen Campbell

On a December night in 1996, an *American Airlines* plane began its descent toward the airport in Cali, Colombia. The airport's radar systems had been ruined by terrorists a few years earlier, so pilots approaching Cali would rely on various regional radio signals to determine exactly where to fly as they descended over mountainous terrain. On this occasion, however, the locations of those signals were accidentally deleted from the plane's navigation system; and then, as the pilots tried to select one of the nearby signals, they chose a wrong location, causing the plane to turn in a fateful direction. Minutes later, the plane slammed into a mountain-side, killing 159 passengers and crew, leaving only four survivors.<sup>1</sup>

Airline crashes like this are rare, but it is always particularly tragic when airplanes, which are specifically designed to go *over* mountains, are caused by mechanical or human error to crash directly *into* that terrain. Investigators

painstakingly analyze these incidents in order to make safety recommendations for future flights.

This example contains spiritual lessons for us, for at the moment of salvation all Christians are equipped to change their altitude from earth-dwelling creatures to those who understand life from God's perspective. The pattern for faith is set out in our "flight manual" – the Word of God. Potential dangers are identified, but active attention must be given. In the case of the pilots, one probable cause of the crash was the flight crew's "lack of situational awareness" regarding their surroundings and the location of radio navigation aids. Similarly, in the case of the Christian, a lack of awareness about biblical guidance will lead us into potentially disastrous experiences.

## Guidance To Follow

New believers may be particularly susceptible to these troubles. The apostle Paul was especially worried about new Christians in

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Thessalonica, where he had spent only about three weeks. He was concerned that trials of life and temptations of the Devil might have overcome them, causing them to abandon the pathway of faith. Therefore he was overjoyed to receive the good news that they were continuing in the faith, and he wrote a letter to encourage them further. Let's consider several valuable principles from Paul's letter as well as other parts of the Bible.

• **Treat the Bible as God's direct message.** Paul wrote that his Christian friends had "received the word of God ... as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Th. 2:13 NKJV). This means that those Christians deeply valued everything they were taught from the Bible. Suppose military officers received a detailed message from their highest-ranking commander. What would you say if they looked over the document and then left it behind, talking only about the weather as they walked away? You would say they had no respect for the message or its author! But what if those officers completely rearranged their goals and strategies because of the directions from headquarters? Then you would be certain that they valued the message and recognized the authority of their commander.

The Bible is the all-sufficient source of information for the Christian when it comes to understanding God, humanity, heaven, hell, sin and salvation. It reveals to us God's precious promises and His flawless character. It explains what we are without God and what we become when we trust Jesus Christ, whom God sent to be our Savior. It teaches us how to live in godliness, integrity and grace. It contains essential principles that apply to every culture and generation. No other book can take its place, and no voice can supplant its authority.

Skeptics have tried to undermine faith in the Scriptures for many years, but you can trust your Bible! The text is reliable and verifiable. As ancient manuscripts go, thousands of copies of Scripture are preserved for our reference, in comparison to several dozen or even fewer copies of great classical texts by renowned authors like Plato and Aristotle. Skeptics have questioned historical names and other biblical references, claiming they reveal errors in the text – only to have archaeologists later discover precise confirmation of those very facts. Many skeptics who have set out to disprove the Bible have come to trust the God it proclaims.

For all these reasons, treat the Bible as it truly is: The Word of

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God. Drink it in! It will energize your spirit, inform your mind, invigorate your conscience and guide your feet. Learn the grand themes of the Bible, like forgiveness and justification. Trust its promises and heed its directions. Prepare to rearrange your attitudes, actions and goals. No one who responded to the Bible this way has ever been sorry for it.

• **Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart.** Jesus said, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” (Jn. 6:37). This and many other verses establish the teaching of the eternal security of the believer. However, while no true Christian can ever be lost, many thousands of true Christians have slipped away from a life once devoted to Christ. This is why Barnabas, a leader in the early Church, encouraged new believers to continue following the Lord intentionally and consistently (Acts 11:23).

Paul’s Christian friends in Thessalonica were true-hearted in their determination and dedication. Repeatedly, Paul mentioned the troubles and temptations that came upon them when they became Christians. He had sent Timothy to establish and encourage them in their faith, for he hoped that “no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for

you yourselves know that we are appointed to this” (1 Th. 3:2-3). When the report came back that they indeed had not allowed the trials of life to disturb their confidence in Christ, Paul joyfully encouraged them to continue standing fast in the Lord (v.8).

We should not be surprised when afflictions come. Not only are difficulties a natural part of life, but there are additional troubles for followers of Jesus, the One whom this world rejected. Yet faith in God is enough to establish our hearts. We are responsible to cling to the Lord with determination and purpose.

• **Understand the teaching of sanctification.** The Bible doctrine of sanctification has two sides. On one side, Christians are fully sanctified as soon as they trust Jesus as the Savior. Because He offered Himself for us (Heb. 10:10), we are set apart for God, made completely and uniquely His people. Saint, sanctified, holy – all those words carry the same idea that God has separated us for His own purposes. The Bible teacher F. B. Hole said sanctification means that Christians are like God’s good china set, the special plates that are kept separate from the everyday dinnerware. What dignity this doctrine gives to every believer in Christ!

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But there is a second side to sanctification. If the first aspect is *permanent*, the second is *progressive*. We must *intentionally* live sanctified lives, keeping ourselves separate from ordinary lifestyles of low morality and little integrity. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust” (1 Th. 4:3-5). He added, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:23). We have a daily responsibility to conduct sanctified lives in a world that is satisfied with much less. Culture’s sexual standards, for example, have shifted dramatically in just the last ten years. By the help of God’s Spirit, possessing our bodies in sanctification and honor will increasingly align our behavior with our calling. This is a lifelong process – all the way, until we are in the presence of the Lord.

• **Seek unity and community with other believers.** Sometimes Christians tend to isolate themselves from each other. We might feel that no one else understands our needs, and therefore we pre-

fer to work through challenges by ourselves. At other times we might simply feel disinterested in spending time with fellow believers due to a busy schedule, family activities or other reasons.

However, it is actually quite dangerous to live as an isolated Christian who never seeks to be with other followers of the Lord. Naturally speaking, God has designed us to participate in life with others; and spiritually speaking, God makes us a part of His true Church as soon as we become Christians. His Church is described as a building and a body, and those figures of speech make it clear that every part must interact together for growth to take place.

The Thessalonians were encouraged to “increase and abound in love for one another” and to “build one another up” (1 Th. 3:12, 5:11 *ESV*). These are important parts of the Christian life. You *need* other Christians to do these things for you, and they need *you* to do the same for them. Avoiding Christian fellowship eliminates one of the ways God intends to use for our growth as believers. While we can enjoy those blessings, it is also true that life with other believers will add to our challenges since we will be confronted with both their needs and weaknesses. But that is precisely the context in

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which we learn to apply biblical principles for displaying the unity of Christian relationships.

• **Recognize the implications of the Lord's return.** Sprinkled into every chapter of 1 Thessalonians are teachings about the return of the Lord Jesus. This is not a minor point; nearly every book of the New Testament refers to His second coming. It will be the fulfillment of His own promise: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself" (Jn. 14:3). This teaching reminds us that we are on the way to a heavenly home, traveling through this world like pilgrims who have not yet reached their final destination.

For the Thessalonians, each day was another opportunity to wait for Jesus to come from heaven (1:10). If we are gripped by the same reality, a conscious knowledge of the return of Jesus Christ will keep us involved in His service and will teach us to deny worldly desires. The expectation will help us store treasures in heaven instead of fattening our bank accounts on earth. It will

remind us that the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is to come.

There is nothing to prevent the Lord's return from occurring today! And if He does not come today, perhaps it will be tomorrow. This is the Christian's blessed hope. It is a helmet of salvation for us (1 Th. 5:8), guarding our minds as we live for Christ in a troubled world.

### Closing Thoughts

The crew on that *American Airlines* flight crashed because they lacked situational awareness. New believers, and indeed any Christian, will also experience a spiritual breakdown because of the same reason. The world is filled with distractions, temptations and outright evil. If we are unprepared to face, endure and overcome these disturbances, our spiritual course will soon spiral downward.

Planes are not designed to crash, and Christians are not either! With the Bible itself as a guiding beacon, the Christian's life of faith and godliness will set and hold a true course, navigating safely past every obstacle. **GT**

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#### Endnote:

1. Sources: <https://aviation-safety.net/database/record.php?id=19951220-1>;  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Airlines\\_Flight\\_965](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Airlines_Flight_965)

# WHAT IF A BELIEVER SINS?



by H. L. Heijkoop (adapted)

If we believers sin, what happens then? Can this change our position as children of God? Will we then be put out from the presence of God?

We have the answer in Hebrews 9 and 10. Christ has found an *eternal* redemption. “For by one offering He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14 KJV). Our relationship as creatures to God has been settled for all time. We have been brought into the relationship of children to the Father, and this relationship shall nevermore be altered.

But does our Father, then, overlook the sins of His children? Our Father is the God who is Light and in whom is no darkness at all. He is too holy to behold sin. He must be hallowed, or regarded as holy, by them that come near Him. He cannot put up with any sins in His children. How should He, the Holy One, be able to have fellowship with sin or with someone who has been defiled by sin. This is why our *fellowship* with the Father and His Son is broken

off instantly by every sinful thought, word and deed. This fellowship is not restored until the sin is put away in a godly way. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1:9). Only through confession and self-judgment are we cleansed.

## SELF-JUDGMENT – THE ONLY WAY TO RESTORE FELLOWSHIP

Leviticus 5:1-4 lists for us the three major groups of defilements occurring in daily life:

- The failure to witness either against evil or for the good (v.1). Omission of something, too, can be sin.
- Defilements through things coming from outside oneself (v.2). These are the consequences of not being practically separated from what is of the world.
- The sins that come out of our own hearts (v.4). Such sins are the result of not being sober and the lack of self-control.



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Verse 15 and those following add the use of something that God has reserved to Himself for one's own self, while Leviticus 6:1-7 includes taking away or keeping something that belongs to another.

If an Israelite had transgressed, how could he be cleansed? There was only one way, and it is mentioned in Leviticus 5:5-6: "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned." Other things could be added to this, such as to more than make good that which had been taken from the LORD or from one's brother (5:16, 6:5). But the first requirement was to confess the sin and bring a trespass offering.

Self-judgment – declaring one's own sins and thus one's own failures – is a necessary condition for all forgiveness and restoration (see 1 Cor. 11:31; 1 Jn. 1:9). God wants to bring us to true self-judgment, that is, He wants us to judge not only the deed which we have committed, but our condition, as David did in Psalm 51:5-7. So He turns our eyes to the cross that we might learn what sin is. It is not that the blood of Christ must be applied to us again. This has happened once for all, but we should recognize how

terrible sins – even the one that I just committed – are, and we do this by seeing what the Lord Jesus had to suffer on the cross for our sins (the trespass offering). In Leviticus 1-7, then, we find not the cross itself, but a looking back upon the cross. The cross itself, as the foundation of our nearness to God, is found in Leviticus 16 and Exodus 29.

Only by looking at what the Lord Jesus had to suffer at Golgotha for our sins do we learn how horrible sins are. He had to be forsaken of God, bear the judgment of God, die – because He "Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24 JND). In this way we come to a true judgment of ourselves and a true sorrow for what we have done. Let us never pass over sin lightly. Never forget that confession of guilt is the only way to restoration of fellowship – confession before God, and before men when they have been affected by what we have done.

### UNKNOWN SINS

Often we commit sins of which we are not aware, and sometimes even when we think we are doing something good. But ignorance does not make us innocent! "If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments

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of the LORD, though he does not know it, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity” (Lev. 5:17 NKJV). That is why David prayed in Psalm 19:12, “Purify me from secret faults” (JND).

If we are to confess these sins and thus obtain restoration to fellowship with the Father, we must first be made aware of them. Therefore in Leviticus it says, “If his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge ...” (4:23). But who should do this? Who should make us aware of thoughts, words and deeds which others know nothing about? And who should convict us when we feel we are in the right? For this too, God’s love has made provision. “My children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn. 2:1 KJV). May we read this verse well and meditate on it.

### CHRIST OUR ADVOCATE

The only other verses where this Greek word *parakletos*, here translated as “Advocate,” is used are found in John 14:16,26, 15:26 and 16:7, translated “Comforter” in each and referring to the Holy Spirit. The footnote in the Darby translation (JND) informs us that this Greek word means “one who carries on the cause of any one and helps him.”

The Lord Jesus now carries on His service in heaven for us. He does not carry it on before God as Judge, for as far as God is concerned our case has been fully settled at the cross, but before God as *the Father*. The Lord Jesus is our Advocate with the Father when we sin. For believers, He does not become our Advocate only when we repent and confess our sins. No, the moment I sin He is my Advocate in heaven who represents me and my cause with the Father.

And who did we say this Advocate is? He is Jesus Christ the Righteous. He measures up to the righteousness of the Father perfectly, and at the same time He is my righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). He has completed a work that is so perfect that He is not only the propitiation, or satisfaction, for our sins, but He is that for the whole world. Thus both as to His person and His work He is completely acceptable before the Father – and no less so when He is my Advocate, when I have sinned.

Prior to this we saw that forgiveness is only after confession. Therefore, the second part of the ministry of the Lord Jesus as our Advocate is that He occupies Himself with us and brings us to confession of our guilt. To Him be all the glory! **GT**



# A Few Words For Mothers

by Norman Anderson (adapted)

Mothers' hearts are needed today as much as ever. It was in a time of disorder and disarray when Deborah is brought to our attention. In her song (Jud. 5:1-9) she recalled the glorious and prosperous days when leaders led in Israel, and the people presented themselves willingly to the LORD. Those were happy days of the testimony of God, but then things changed dramatically! Lawlessness became rampant, and traveling was dangerous. There was no fear of God before the eyes of the people. Leaders had ceased (v.7). Idolatry was practiced. These are not just characteristics of days gone by, for even in our day we are exhorted, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 Jn. 5:21 KJV). What is an idol? Anything that takes the place of God in our affections!

Conflict proved their weakness: "Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?" (Jud. 5:8). Their defenses were down; they were weaponless. "Then sang Deborah ... I arose a mother in Israel" (vv.1-7). What a need then, and what a need today: mothers with a heart for the testi-



mony of God, who bless the Lord and who feel with God!

## The Specialness Of A Mother

What a blessed place the mother has in the home and with the children (Prov. 31). The father, usually, spends less time with them than the mother, who scripturally is the worker at home. How responsible and yet how privileged she is to have such close links with the family in their tender and formative years. What an opportunity for godly mothers to lay a good, scriptural and Christian foundation in her children.

Our holy and ever gracious Lord, when suspended upon the cruel cross, demonstrated the perfection of His humanity. Seeing His mother standing nearby in the company of that disciple whom He loved, the Lord Jesus put the stamp of His approval upon the blessedness of the natural relationship, saying, "Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" (Jn. 19:26-27). Blessed consideration of our Lord! Oh, you younger

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believers with believing mothers, cherish them and listen to their admonishments, for they know what is best for you. “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law [teaching] of thy mother: for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck” (Prov. 1:8-9).

### **A Letter To A Mother**

This leads us to the consideration of 2 John, which is probably the last household word in the Scriptures. How dignified was the approach of John in this letter to a mother, perhaps a widowed mother for it is evident she was in charge of the house (v.10). “The elder unto the elect [chosen] lady and her children” – they walked in the truth. Notice the emphasis on truth!

“The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Ps. 119:130). How much such a mother needed divine help in leading her children aright. So John desired for her, first, “grace.” Grace senses the favor of God which had opened out the grand revelation of the present era: “Jesus Christ is come in flesh” (2 Jn. 7) and “the doctrine of the Christ” (v.9). That is, Himself come down and Himself gone up, and the unfolding of the truth of the Father and the Son – even eternal life! There is no rea-

son at all why sisters in the Lord – Christian girls and women of any age – should not be spending time in the light of God’s Word and gaining from the deep things of God. How else will they be able to teach their children the truth?

In John’s letter, following grace comes “mercy” (v.3). In the busyness of life with its daily family cares and household chores, the mother needs mercy. It is that blessed quality of care and consideration which comes down to her in all the intricacies and pressures of the daily family life, to strengthen, bear her up and arm her for the way.

Then John sought “peace” for this mother. Oh, the tranquility and serenity of the mother who knows and enjoys the favor of God and is helped by the mercy of God! Note the source: “from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (v.3) – all that He is as Lord and Head.

This is what the beloved John desired for her, and with it the consciousness of all the charm and sweetness embodied in the precious name of Jesus. He sought for her the blessed atmosphere of the divine family – “the Son of the Father, in truth and love” (v.3), the bond of all.

### **Encouragement For A Mother**

Such then is the requested supply

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for a mother among the Lord's people in our day, with its erosion of family life and other problems. Here is the bulwark to hold back these issues of the world from intruding into the Christian home: grace, mercy, peace and truth,

with love. Let every mother, and father too, "love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments" (vv.5-6). May we remember always that obedience to the truth is the proof of love in truth. **GT**

Lord, I am satisfied tonight to be  
A mother, in a world gone mad with hate;  
Here in this hour of earth's agony,  
I do not ask that I might do some great  
Magnificent achievement, bringing fame;  
I do not covet larger fields to roam;  
I only want to keep alight the flame  
Of God's love, shining from a Christian home.  
I thank Thee for the children, if the way  
Should lead to heartbreak grant me courage, Lord.  
I will remember that there was a day  
Thy mother's heart was pierced, too, by the sword;  
Thy grace will be sufficient now – as then.  
I am glad to be a mother, Lord – AMEN.



*(Writer unknown)*

# Meditations

## On The Son's Prayer In John 17

### Part 3: The Son Asked For The Apostles (Verses 6-19)

by *David Anderson*

All believers in Christ are included in this second part of the Son's prayer because He said, "I do not ask<sup>1</sup> for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word" (v.20 *ESV*). That means each and every successive generation of believers. Therefore, from now on whenever I refer to the apostles or other disciples, I am including every believer of the Christian era.

He was urgent in prayer because He was about to leave His chosen followers behind in the

world. His concern for their well-being was expressed in His words, "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You" (v.11). Then more fully He said, "While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given Me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves" (vv.12-13). Additionally, in verse 14, He underlined the continuing hatred they would face from the world because, like Him, they are "not of the world."

With these thoughts on His mind, the Lord Jesus made His own the focus of His prayer. "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours" (v.9). He was confident that the outcome of their witness to Him would be that His name would be magni-

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fied, therefore He said, “I am glorified in them” (v.10). In verses 10-12 He asked for their safety and security as they served Him in the world – that they would be preserved, that is, kept in the good of the Father’s name.

We realize how much the Son wanted them to grasp about His Father when we read John 13-17. In these chapters the name Father is mentioned 53 times, which approximates to half of the total occurrences in the gospel of John. Twice in John 17, in verses 11-12, the Lord referred to Father as the name He was to especially make known to His own people. To be kept in the name of the Father is to be in the knowledge, understanding and benefit of its meaning. We must remember that our salvation depends solely on who the Father is in His nature and on what He does. “For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from My Father ... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to

Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one” (10:17-18,27-30).

The Lord Jesus was conscious that He was leaving His disciples behind in a hostile and evil world, which would hate them because it hated both Him and His Father. He had already warned them about the true nature of the world and its attitude towards them:

If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: “A servant is not greater than his master.” If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin, but now they have seen and hated

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both Me and My Father. But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: “They hated Me without a cause” (15:18-25).

While He was with His disciples He prayed about this attitude of the world and the situation His own would soon face. He prayed that during His absence they would have the experience of being completely full of His joy (17:13). Then He asked the Father for their protection from the hatred of the world and from its ruler, the Evil One (vv.14-15). He also stated that this necessitated their sanctification – that they would be practically separated to the Father by obeying His Word, which is truth (vv.16-18). The Son was sending them into the world in the same way He had been sent by His Father (v.18).

John 17:19 records the special action that the Lord Jesus took on their behalf. “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth” (NKJV). He set Himself apart for them in heaven as their High Priest to enable them – and by extension us – to be holy in lifestyle. Verse 19 is the assurance that He continues to intercede for us even now, and it is the reason why John 17 is often called “His high priestly prayer.”

We need to understand how-

ever that it is only as we obey the Word of God – not to be conformed to the world – that we will be practically separated to God’s service (Rom. 12:2). Let us heed John’s warning in his first letter: “Do not love the world or the things in the world” (2:15), which are very appealing to the flesh, or sinful nature. If we fail to do what John has urged we will not have the Father’s love within us, for we will not experience the reality of family life with God (2:15-17). **GT**

*Look for the conclusion next month!*

#### **Endnote:**

1. The ESV uses “ask” in verses 15 and 20 but “pray” in verse 9 to translate the Greek word *erōtaō*. W. E. Vine wrote: “*erōtaō* (ἐρωτάω, 2065) more frequently suggests that the petitioner is on a footing of equality or familiarity with the person whom he requests ... In this respect it is significant that the Lord Jesus never used *aiteo* in the matter of making request to the Father. ‘The consciousness of His equal dignity, of His potent and prevailing intercession, speaks out in this, that as often as He asks, or declares that He will ask anything of the Father, it is always *erōtaō*, an asking, that is, upon equal terms (Jn. 14:16, 16:26, 17:9,15,20), never *aiteo*, that He uses. Martha, on the contrary, plainly reveals her poor unworthy conception of His person, that ... she ascribes that *aiteo* to Him which He never ascribes to Himself, as in John 11:22’ (Trench, *Syn. Sec. xl*)” (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words*).

Therefore, I have used the word “asked” in the sub-titles of each part of this series to reflect the fact that the Son speaks as an equal with His Father throughout His prayer.

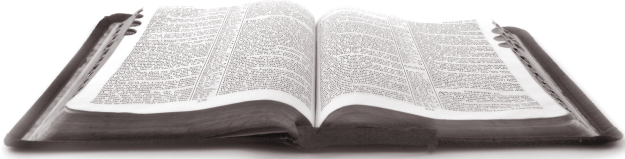




The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

# The Bible – Its Writers

by Alan Groth



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**T**he last writer we will look at is Jude, who is also called Judas. He, along with the writer James, was a brother of the Lord Jesus. Only after the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection do we find him among the disciples. Jude wrote the book "Jude" with its warning and encouragement. Let's turn to Matthew, Mark, Acts and Jude for our study of this writer.

## Read Matthew 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6

1. Where did Jesus go? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why were they offended at Him? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many brothers did Jesus have? Name them. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How many children were part of the family? \_\_\_\_\_

## Read Acts 1:9-14

1. Where were Mary and Jesus' brothers? \_\_\_\_\_

## Read Jude 1-3

1. Who was Jude's brother? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Jude view himself in his relationship to Jesus Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. To whom was he writing? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What three things were to be multiplied to them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What do we have in “common” with Jude? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What are we exhorted to do? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Jude 4-7**

1. Why are we to contend for the faith? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What will happen to these men? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Jude gives us three examples of those who have fallen under God’s judgment. Name them. \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Jude 8-11**

1. Name some characteristics of these men. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name the three Old Testament characters they follow. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Which angel contended with the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Jude 12-15**

1. How does Jude describe these men in verses 12-13? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who prophesied of these men? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Jude 16-19**

1. Name more characteristics of these men. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who spoke of the men that would come in the last days? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read Jude 20-25**

1. What does Jude encourage us to do? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is God able to do? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is to receive “glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and forever”? \_\_\_\_\_

*In our next study we will learn  
more about the Bible and its writers.*



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

by Brian Reynolds

## - Tithing -

### No Exaggeration

Is the Christian under a legal obligation to give tithes? The question is not whether the Christian should financially support the Lord's work or his local assembly, rather we are asking if we are still under the Old Testament tithing laws?

There is a strong emphasis on the subject of tithing in many sections of the Church. This is an issue that runs much deeper than one would suppose, and how we view it is extremely important. An unbiblical teaching on the

nature and practice of tithing has the potential to undermine the character of the present dispensation of grace and even obscure a proper understanding of the nature of salvation. This is not an exaggerated statement, for a lot can hinge on what may appear to be a minor doctrine. If the question of tithes were simply a matter of food and drink<sup>1</sup> one would easily let it drop in the interest of Christian charity, or love, and individual liberty of conscience. The rule to follow would be "let

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each be fully convinced in his own mind” and “therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another” (Rom. 14:5,19 NKJV).

Let us now explore this interesting and important question.

### **New And Old – Grace And Law**

The introduction of the tithing law into Christianity is the mixing of law into the system of grace. The apostle Paul warned us about this in the book of Galatians. Earlier, the Lord exposed the danger with a simple parable, “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Mt. 9:16-17).

From the above words of Matthew’s gospel we learn that the Lord Jesus condemned the combining of Christianity, what is “new,” with the system of the law in Judaism, the “old.” This mixing destroys the character of each. Christianity is something totally new and separate from what went before, and it is not simply an improvement upon the old. The nature or heart of man is that

which would constantly turn to the law and earthly religion, which are but a shadow of the new (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17).

The Lord Jesus said, “And no one, having drunk the old wine, immediately desires the new; for he says, ‘The old is better’” (Lk. 5:39). This simply means that there is a tendency in the heart of the natural man to turn *to* the law and *away* from the system of grace and the Spirit. Again, the whole epistle to the Galatians was written to warn against this tendency (see Galatians 1:6, 3:2-3)

The fact that the New Testament is absolutely silent with respect to a *Christian* tithe should be enough for any sober-thinking, mature believer. Where tithes are mentioned in the Gospels, it is with regard to Jews seen still under the law and before the cross.<sup>2</sup> In Matthew 23:2-3 the Lord Jesus told His disciples to obey Moses, but in Acts 13:39 the apostle Paul said that we cannot be justified by the law of Moses. Is this a contradiction? No. The cross had effectually put an end to the old system of Judaism as shown by the rending of the veil in two and the bringing in of Christianity (Mk. 15:38).<sup>3</sup>

### **A Voice From The Past**

I am not presenting anything new or strange in this article; in fact

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Christians from other eras have believed that the doctrine of tithing does not apply to them. Another writer wrote the following words long ago:

“Did it never occur to these persons that we have the Lord preparing the way for Christianity and the Church in the four gospels, but not a hint of Christian tithing! We have a precise and comprehensive history of the gospel and the Church and the chief servants of the Lord for about 30 most eventful and instructive years, written by an inspired hand; but not a hint even here! We have the Epistles written by the most honored in various ways of the apostles, expressly providing divine light – didactic [instructive], exhortatory, ecclesiastical, and pastoral – but not a hint in one of them! We ought to know how solemnly the apostles spoke of the departure at hand for the Christian profession. So it was, as the Spirit predicted. Even during the earliest generation, the testimony of the apostle Paul was very largely a series of conflicts with the inroads of Judaism” (William Kelly, *Bible Treasury*, Volume 18, page 158).

These are important and true words which need to be considered.

### **A Bad Argument To Support A Bad Teaching**

Those who would contend for tithes are ignorant, perhaps unintentionally, of the heavenly calling of the Church, and they invariably fall back on what was said before the Son of God came. Most believers, I suppose, would not assert that the Christian is under the law or subject to the law of tithing as given to the Levites in Numbers 18:21,26. To avoid this obvious error the advocates of tithing sometimes try to take us back to the time long before the giving of the law through Moses, to the era of the Patriarchs, specifically to the time when Abram paid tithes to Melchisedec after the battle of the kings (Gen. 14:20). Their argument is that since tithes were paid long before the formal giving of the law, then we must also pay a tithing.

But this argument does not stand the test of Scripture. For example, the Patriarchs<sup>4</sup> practiced circumcision before it was commanded by the law, but this did not hinder the apostle Paul from warning the Galatians about the practice of circumcision. Did not the observance of circumcision among them cause him to marvel that they left the grace of Christ for another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7) and to exclaim, “Indeed, I Paul, say to you that if you become cir-

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cumcised, Christ will profit you nothing” (5:2)? It is evident that although the Patriarchs were circumcised before the law, this did not persuade Paul that it had anything to do with Christianity, but it was actually opposed to the nature of the heavenly calling.

It is recorded in Scripture that sacrifice and burnt offerings were practiced before the law. Noah presented a burnt offering to God after the flood,<sup>5</sup> and as early as the time of Cain and Abel<sup>6</sup> sacrificial offerings were given. Does this prove that the Christian ought to offer the blood of bulls and goats? God forbid even the thought! Did these offerings of early times hinder the writer to the Hebrews in telling them, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins” (Heb. 10:4)? From this we can see that there is no merit in the argument that since tithing is an ancient practice going back before the giving of the law it is therefore binding upon us. It is important for the Christian to understand which dispensational period he is living in and to thus “rightly [divide] the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

### **Buy A Blessing From God**

In Genesis 28:13-22 Jehovah promised Jacob that he would inherit the land of Canaan, that all

the families of the earth would be blessed in his seed, and that the LORD would be with him wherever he went. Jacob then stated that if the LORD would feed and clothe him he would give a tenth of all. This is not a testimony to Jacob’s faith, but one to his unbelief in the unconditional promise just given. Are we, who are the inheritors of heavenly and better promises based on the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, to say that we owe God a tithe? Christ’s work on the cross has perfectly brought us near to God, and the thought of owing God a financial debt is a slight, or affront, upon that work.

There is another and more serious point yet to be noticed in this matter. It is taught in some Christian circles that unless one pays his tithes, God will withhold spiritual blessing from him. Simon the sorcerer thought he could buy the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter’s reply was, “Your money perish with you, because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money” (Acts 8:20-21). I can see no difference in Simon the sorcerer’s sin and what is being taught today in some Christian circles concerning tithes. Again this is not an exaggeration of the case, for it is definitely taught by some that if you fail to pay your tithe you cannot even enter into God’s presence. It is also wrongly

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taught that if one fails to pay the tithe on one Sunday then it becomes a “back tithe” and must be added to the next gift<sup>7</sup> on the following Lord’s Day.

Do these teachers not know the Scripture that tells us we are blessed “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3)? The thought of owing God a financial debt in order to gain favor with Him is a repugnant, or offensive, teaching. Who would dare attach to these things the price of corrupt silver and gold which perishes (1 Pet. 1:18-19)? Seeing we are bought with a price and made joint heirs with Christ, where is there any thought of a monetary debt owed to God? The very thought is an insult to the divine grace shown to us by God through Christ.

### **Robbing God?**

Some teachers use Malachi 3:8-10 to support this doctrine: “Will a man rob God ... Bring all the tithes into the storehouse.” But before we jump to conclusions, let’s look at the context. The prophet here appeals to the remnant of Jews who have returned from captivity in Babylon to repent, saying, “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant” (4:4). They had not been faithful to bring their tithes and offerings to the temple, therefore the priests

had no food (3:10). But this is strictly all Jewish in character.

Malachi ends his prophecy with, “Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse” (4:6). Is the Christian “cursed with a curse,” or is the Church “this whole nation” (3:9)? The storehouse is not the Church or any particular denomination, as some have taught, but the temple in Jerusalem (See Dt. 14:23). This is an example of twisting the Scriptures to apply everything to the Church. Those who in this way deceitfully handle the Word of God have well earned the rebuke of the apostle: “Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm” (1 Tim. 1:7). If you are going to teach the law of Moses you must first know to whom it applies.

### **The True Nature Of Christian Giving**

The New Testament, especially the epistles of Paul, has abundant and clear revelation as to the nature of Christian stewardship and giving. Paul, in his farewell address to the Ephesians, said, “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). Everything the Christian has belongs to the Lord,

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for we are “bought with a price” and we “are not [our] own” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We don’t owe God 10 percent; we owe Him 100 percent!

The Macedonians exemplified the true nature of Christian giving. Paul said that even though they were in great poverty and affliction through persecution yet they gave “beyond their ability” (2 Cor. 8:2-4). It is interesting to note in verse 5 that they “first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.” In other words, they gave everything. What outshining of devotion to the Lord! Is there any thought here of obligation to the law, either Levitical or patriarchal? Is it not the outpouring of hearts thankful for and actuated by His “indescribable gift” in giving

to us His Son (9:15)?

The Christian ought to give for the ministry of the saints (v.1) and to those who labor in the Lord’s work (1 Cor. 9:13-14). Paul, in speaking to the Corinthians concerning this labor of love, spoke not by commandment but to prove “the sincerity of your love” (2 Cor. 8:8).

The principle for Christians is very clear. We are to give *as the Lord has prospered us*, and that not grudgingly or “of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7). There has to be prayer and exercise as to the amount that is to be given. It is not a matter of legal commandment that we owe God a tenth<sup>s</sup> of our income – which would be a “necessity.” Rather, we owe Him everything! **GT**

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## Endnotes

1. “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit “ (Rom. 14:17).
2. See Matthew 23:23 and Luke 18:12.
3. Read carefully Hebrews 9-10; see also Colossians 2:14.
4. See Genesis 17:9-14,23-27. The fact is the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) practiced circumcision 400 years before it was commanded by Moses. Yet, Paul called the Galatians “foolish” and said someone had “bewitched” them because they thought they needed to be circumcised in order to be saved (Gal. 3:1).
5. Genesis 8:20.
6. Genesis 4:1-4.
7. This was the author’s own experience many years ago in the denomination to which he belonged at that time. Some of the believers had to use their credit card to pay their tithe in order to pay their *back tithes* and avoid “robbing God.” In some cases they went into financial debt due to this teaching!
8. That many Christians use ten percent as a guideline for their giving is not what I am arguing against in this article, for that practice is acceptable if done prayerfully. But I am contending against the teaching that the believer is under the *legal* tithing law of the Old Testament. Our giving ought to come from a heart of love and thankfulness, motivated by the Holy Spirit and not from a legal commandment.





# A Life That Magnifies God

by Timothy P. Hadley

*“I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.” —Psalm 34:1-3 KJV*

“**M**agnify” means to make large, praise, honor, boast about, lift up, promote and declare great. So what does it mean to “magnify the LORD”? How can we make God large?

Consider two different ways to view the word “magnify.” One is to compare it to a microscope, which makes a tiny object appear larger. The other comparison is to a telescope, which takes what is far away and extremely large and brings it near. A life that magnifies the Lord does just that; it is a life that brings God near to those with whom it comes in contact.

## The Life Of The Lord Jesus

That is exactly what the Lord Jesus did. His was the perfect life that glorified and magnified God. In Psalm 69 we read of the inner feelings and sufferings of the Lord Jesus (vv.2-4,7-12,20-21). We also see what such a life accom-

plishes for the glory of God, when the psalm prophetically speaks of the Lord: “I will praise the name of God with a song, and I will magnify Him with thanksgiving” (v.30).

In Hebrews 10:5 we see that the Lord Jesus was the instrument that God used to bring Himself near to us. We read: “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me” (NKJV). This is quoted from Psalm 40, a psalm that speaks of the Lord as the burnt offering. It goes on in verse 16 by declaring, “Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, “The LORD be magnified!” This is what the life of the Lord Jesus did. He glorified God in every way, and in doing so He brought God near to us.

Scripture says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

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was with God, and the Word was God ... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory ... full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1,14). In John 14:9, the Lord Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” He magnified God, being “God ... manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16). The Lord brought God near to us that we might behold His greatness.

### Our Lives

Our lives ought to magnify God as well. I believe Scripture teaches us that our entire being – body, soul and spirit – ought to magnify God. Consider Mary’s declaration: “My soul magnifies the Lord” (Lk. 1:46). The soul is the seat of our emotions, so her innermost being wanted to magnify her God. John the Baptist had the same desire when he said of the Lord Jesus, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (Jn. 3:30).

This should be our ambition too, through our body as well as emotions. Paul said, “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). He also urged, “I beseech you ... brethren, by the

mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2).

Examples of such a life are found in Daniel 1:8 and 3:28. The individuals there purposed in their hearts to live for God only; they would not bow down to any other. In a very practical way, their lives brought God near for all to see!

Paul was willing for his life to bring glory to God. In fact, he desired to magnify the Lord in life and death. Read what he wrote to the believers at Philippi: “According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall

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remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith” (Phil. 1:20-25). Paul wanted to go to be with Christ, but he also wanted the saints to grow in their spiritual walk with God. It was his desire that their lives would bear fruit for the glory of God and their faith would be full of the joy which comes from living for Christ. Therefore, whether by death or by life, he desired to magnify, or bring, Christ near to them!

At the end of his life Paul truthfully said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offer-

ing, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Paul magnified Christ.

Oh that our lives would bring God near to those we touch. Instead of seeing us, may they see Him whom we desire to magnify!

**GT**

**PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,  
WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE SERVICE.**

### **Three Principles Of Prayer** *That Will Change Your Life!*

**1. Be habitual** – the discipline of a regular prayer time that nothing should set aside. Good habits are hard to form, but once formed are hard to break. Sometimes you may feel like you are only “going through the motions.” That’s okay – continue and persevere.

**2. Talk to God.** Tell Him everything. He is a real person. Confess – keep short accounts with God. Don’t let the sun go down on your sin. Communication is the key to life in our human relationships – how much more when it comes to God.

**3. Pray aways** – not only at habitual set times, but pray at all times. Be like Nehemiah (Neh. 2:4-5; 1 Th. 5:17).

—Brian Reynolds

# Ephesians

by Leslie M. Grant



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*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”*

—Ephesians 1:3 NKJV

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**E**phesians, meaning “one desire,” is an epistle without any reproofs. It declares in fullest terms the grand counsels of God concerning His saints in this present dispensation of grace. The letter tells of their present spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ and their position “in Christ.” The believers “sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (2:6).

Christ, in accordance with the glory of His person and the infinite virtue of His work, is the decreed Center of the blessing of the universe. “In Him” we have obtained an inheritance. He is seated on His Father’s throne and there represents us perfectly. Jewish and Gentile believers form “one body” united to Christ, the Head in glory.

As well as being the *body of*

*Christ*, the Church is seen as the *household of God*, a building growing to a holy temple in the Lord for a habitation of God, and as eventually presented to Christ as a *bride* fitted for her Husband. Such truths were not known or prophesied of in former ages, but they are now revealed through apostles and New Testament prophets. Our conflict also is seen to be “in the heavenly places” (6:12) against spiritual hosts of wickedness – satanic powers engaged in opposing our discernment and enjoyment of the truth as to our rightful heavenly possessions.

No book is more important than Ephesians as to cultivating a character conformable to Christ in the proper home of our souls: heaven itself. **GT**

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*This column is taken from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.” It is available for purchase from Believer’s Bookshelf USA ([www.bbushelf.org](http://www.bbushelf.org)) and Believers Bookshelf Canada ([www.bbcan.org](http://www.bbcan.org)).*

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# Q&A

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## How do we truly know when we are forgiven?

AS WE LOOK AT THE GOSPELS we find some things that the Lord Jesus said and did are told us in one gospel while other events are in two, three or all four books. Depending on how the Lord Jesus is presented in a particular gospel, added facts may be given in one that are not mentioned in another. Similarly, additional facts and teachings may be given us in other books of the Bible as well. God has scattered vital teaching throughout His Word, yet there is a lovely harmony throughout the Bible. It is helpful and important that we acquaint ourselves with all of God's Word.

The account of a paralyzed man being brought to the Lord Jesus by four of his friends is given us in Matthew 9, Mark 2 and Luke 5. Because of the crowd, the four had to open the roof of the house the Lord was in to let their friend down before Him. To their surprise and the shock of the scribes who were present, rather than the Lord immediately healing the man, He said to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." After asking which was easier, to forgive sins or heal a paralytic, He

pointed out to the bystanders that He, the Son of Man, had power on earth to forgive sins, and then proceeded to heal the man. His power has not diminished during the past 2,000 years; it never can nor ever will. His power in heaven is equally limitless.

We might like to wonder if the healed man had some questions as he walked home, such as: "Did I understand Him correctly when He said, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you'?" He didn't add any conditions, did He?" or, "Well, I really can't believe that it is that simple, and that I don't have to pay or do anything at all." But questions like these would indicate the man doubted the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, who had likewise healed his paralysis by just speaking a word.

An unbeliever is called on to repent and believe the Word that is brought to him. Throughout the book of Acts we see both groups and individuals coming to salvation through faith in Christ. Depending on the circumstances and condition of the hearer's heart, the message is varied. The Jews who had heard

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Peter's message in Acts 2 obviously believed what he had preached and asked what they should do. They were told to repent and be baptized, which separated them from the mass of Jews who had rejected Christ and called for His blood to be upon themselves and their children. In Acts 16 we see the jailor at Philippi, trembling and on the verge of suicide, told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Repentance was not mentioned for it was clearly there.

When it comes to a believer today, all his sins were future when Christ died for them. Thus all the sins of the person who has been saved have been atoned for and forgiven according to God's Word. He is saved. He has eternal life. He is a child of God. He cannot lose his salvation, for he is safe in the hands of the Lord Jesus and of God the Father.

But in 1 John 1:9 we believers

are told, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NKJV). Notice, it doesn't even say that we need to ask for forgiveness. The Lord guarantees us forgiveness if we confess our sins. Do we believe what He says in His Word? If we look closely at 1 John 1:9, we see that it doesn't say we will *feel* forgiven, but He tells us that He forgives us our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness *when we confess* our sins to Him. Do we believe Him? Is He trustworthy? *We truly know we are forgiven because we can count on what He says.*

People's feelings change constantly and are not to be depended on. However, the Lord Jesus is faithful. He cannot lie. May we rejoice in the knowledge of this and walk with our Lord, keeping short accounts with Him from day to day!

—Answered by Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

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**You are saved by Christ's work**, you are assured by God's Word, and your joy is maintained by the Holy Spirit who indwells you. But every saved person still has the old, sin nature that he was born with. The Holy Spirit resists the old nature but is grieved by every thought, word or deed that springs from it. When you walk "worthy of the Lord," the Holy Spirit produces in you His blessed fruit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22 NKJV). While Christ's work and your salvation stand firm together – because He cannot fail – your walk and your enjoyment stand or fall together because the one depends on the other." —George Cutting

Sinners do not gain forgiveness by begging or working. They are forgiven because Jesus died for them: “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

## The Means

However, sinners are not automatically saved. If we do nothing about our sinful condition we will be lost forever. Forgiveness must be received by believing in Jesus, whose blood was shed for us: “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (Jn. 1:12). How do we know? Because the Bible says so, and to doubt God’s Word is to call Him a liar (1 Jn. 1:10). You don’t want to be guilty of that!

Suppose you owe a lot of money and are unable to pay it. Hearing of your trouble, a friend pays your debt and gives you a receipt marked, “Paid in full.” Wouldn’t you accept it? How would you know the bill was paid? Because of the receipt. What assurance!

The Bible says we are forgiv-

en: “The blood of Jesus Christ His [God’s] Son cleanses us from all sin” (v.7). “He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (Jn. 5:24). What greater proof do we need?

## The Way

Jesus told a story about two men. The one who was self-righteous boasted about all his good deeds. He didn’t think he needed forgiveness. The other one was an outcast of society who knew he was a sinner. He prayed, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus said, “This man went down to his house justified rather than the other” (Lk. 18:13-14).

The worst sin is refusing to admit that you are a sinner needing forgiveness. Don’t fall into that trap. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9). Confess your sins and God will forgive you! **GT**

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# What It Means To Be Forgiven



by Sam Hadley

**S**uppose you accidentally hit your neighbor's daughter with your car. No doubt you would tell the family how sorry you were and would offer to do anything to help the girl recover.

You would feel terrible if the parents refused to forgive you. But wouldn't you feel good if both parents and the girl forgave you with open arms?

## The Need

No matter how good a person may be, we must admit that no one is totally free from doing, saying or thinking wrong things. God agrees: "There is none who does good, no, not one. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:12,23 NKJV). But God stands with open arms ready to completely forgive and receive all who come to Him confessing they have sinned against Him.

## The Basis

In the Bible, God tells us that He can forgive us because His Son has already suffered and died as our Substitute: "In Him [Jesus] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7).

*continued on inside back cover*

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