

1986

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 18, No. 2
Apr., May, June
1986**

**Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, Okla.
73044**

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

(USPS054-680)

Volume 18

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No. 2

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Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Wayne Murphey

Subscription Price-50¢ a copy for quarter of year, or
\$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.

Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma

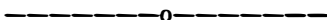
Published Quarterly By

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
920 W. Mansur Ave.
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044

Theme for Second Quarter, 1986

In our series of studies in the previous quarter, we studied the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs that introduced the setting forth of the rest of the book. Now let us study the proverbs and wise sayings that are presented here, remembering that these are observations and emphatic truths that have been proven true and steadfast throughout all generations of time. Instead of studying this volume by chapters and sections, we will study by subjects. We will start with the most abundant of the subjects dealt with in Proverbs, which is the comparison between the righteous and the wicked. Then we will take up the next most mentioned comparison, which is that between the wise and the foolish. Then we will have studies about the tongue, pride and humility, the fear of the Lord, sayings about the Lord Himself, labour and fruit, love and hate, poverty and riches, slackness and diligence, anger and wrath, discipline, reproof and instruction, and others. Let us study these subjects earnestly and with prayer that God will bless these lessons for the spiritual benefit of all. And it is our hope and prayer that we will all see Proverbs as more than just a bunch of wise sayings, but, rather, a volume of valuable aid in our pursuit of life and favor with God.

—Leslie C. Busbee



April 6, 1986

COMPARISON OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND EVIL

Prov. 10:2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

16 The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin.

24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

11:3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.

18 The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

21 Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be

unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.

31 Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.

12:5 The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

21 There shall no evil happen to the just: but the wicked shall be filled with mischief.

13:15 Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.

14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.

21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

21 He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour.

28:1 The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

29:6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.

Memory Verse: The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Proverbs 15:3.

Central Thought: The way of righteousness and the fear of God brings great blessings, benefits, and true riches to man while the downward path of sin and wickedness against God brings sorrow, disappointment and damnation in the latter end.

FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SIN COMPARED

(For Group Discussion)

SIN	RIGHTEOUSNESS	PROVERBS
No profit	Delivers from death	10:2
Name shall rot	Blessed memory	10:7
Evil fruit	Fruit unto life	10:16

One's fears will come	Desire shall be granted	10:24
Will pass away	An everlasting foundation	10:25
Will be destroyed	Will have right guidance	11:3
Work is deceitful	Will have a sure reward	11:18
Shall not be unpunished	Shall be delivered	11:21
Shall not appear	Shall be tried and judged here	11:31
Counsels are deceit	Has right thoughts	12:5
Cruel	Merciful	12:10
Filled with mischief	No evil happens	12:21
The way is hard	Has good understanding	13:15
Filled with his own selfish ways	Satisfied from himself	14:14
Reproach	Exalted	14:34
Cowardice, fear	Boldness and courage	28:1
Shame, snare	Rejoicing	29:6

QUESTIONS:

1. What shall the end of the wicked be? What does the righteous hope for?
2. What are the boundaries of the pleasures of sin?
3. What are the boundaries of the joy of the righteous?
4. Is there any way for a wicked man to escape the reward for his sins?
5. Why does a righteous man regard the life and welfare of his beast? Can this regard be to other matters also?
6. What is promised to both the righteous and the sinner?

7. Why does a backslider have to find pleasure in his own ways? What contrast is there in this and the good man who is satisfied from himself? How can a man be satisfied from himself?
8. What difference is there between the vaunting of the wicked and the rejoicing of the righteous?
9. How can a sinner obtain mercy from God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This subject of the comparison between the righteous and the wicked is spoken of more than any other thought in the book of Proverbs. The verse in our lesson found in 11:31 in the Septuagint reads: "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" I Peter 4:18 quotes this verse like this. Peter quotes this Scripture in reference to the trials and tribulations of the godly as bearing the judgment of God. "If the judgment of God begins at us [the godly]," he says, "what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" I Peter 4:17. There has always been and always will be a sharp line of difference between the godly and the sinner. They are contrary to one another. Even though it is possible for both to live domestically in agreement to a certain extent, yet basically their dispositions of heart are so at variance that there will be discord. The thrust of our lesson today from these sayings from Proverbs reveals the state and the ultimate end of both the righteous and the wicked. This has been written and preserved for us to read, consider, and govern our actions and decisions accordingly. In this day of grace when the price has been paid for the atonement and salvation from evil and iniquity, there is really no reason why any one should continue in their sinful way of life. If we continue in sin, it is because we are either ignorant of God's way of escape or we just simply do not want to change our lives. Knowing, however, that these sayings are wise and true, and being persuaded that they are authentic, and seeing that they have been proven true in the lives of many witnesses, we ought to consider them with an open mind, and be wise enough to choose the fear of the Lord and His ways.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many of the verses in our lesson could be commented on, but let us particularly notice two of them. The first is Proverbs 12:21, "There shall no evil happen to the just." From a

humanistic standpoint it would appear that this phrase is nothing more than the simplistic ideology of someone with his head in the sand. How contrary our lives seem to prove. Hardships and trials seem to seek us out and stay with us. However, when we take God into our lives we can with assurance say, as did the Apostle Paul, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28. Paul could testify that he knew this from experience. That which is meant for evil can be a stepping stone in our lives. Socrates, the ancient philosopher, who met death at the hands of others, declared to his accusers just before death, "Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth; that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after life."

Another verse that holds much truth when properly considered is Proverbs 21:4, "An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin." This proves that the way of an evil person is a lifestyle. Some people interpret that a certain look someone gave them at one time proves that person is haughty; or the apparel that someone wore on a certain occasion means that individual is proud. Sin goes much deeper than this. It says the "plowing of the wicked is sin." Everything the wicked do, all that they cultivate, is done with an evil thought and intention. Before the flood "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6:5. Paul wrote Titus, "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled." Titus 1:15.

To the same extent that the wicked man's complete lifestyle is evil, the righteous man's lifestyle is holy. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I Corinthians 10:31. —Wayne Murphey

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April 13, 1986

WISDOM AND FOLLY

Prov. 10:1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

8 The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall.

11:22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

13:20 He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

14:6 A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth.

16 A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

33 Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known.

17:24 Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

19:3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.

8 He that getteth wisdom loveth his soul: he that keepeth understanding shall find good.

26:11 As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.

27:12 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.

28:26 He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whose walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.

29:9 If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest.

11 A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.

Memory Verse: The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death. Proverbs 13:14.

Central Thought: To be wise in the fear of God is profitable, beneficial, edifying, and the only true source of happiness, while foolishness brings shame, sorrow, and destruction.

Word Definitions: *Prating:* Talkative. *Rageth:* Goes beyond good sense, crosses the line of control. *Resteth:* Is quietly kept in reserve ready for use at the appropriate time. *Hideth:* Prepareth, fortifieth, equipeth.

COMPARISON OF WISDOM AND FOLLY

Let us remember that Solomon asked for wisdom above everything else. God promised to give him wisdom. His observations of wisdom and its benefits and folly and its dreadful consequences are to be taken seriously and heeded carefully. "How foolish I was!" is a statement that all of us have made one time or another. We were foolish because we were uninformed. We had not heard or heeded true counsel. In this lesson we see the proper values of wisdom and the damage that folly does. May it move our hearts to seek God for more wisdom every day.

FOLLY	WISDOM	PROVERBS
Heaviness	Gladness	10:1
Failure and defeat	Receives commandments	10:8
Superficial, inconsistent	Inward beauty	11:22
Right in one's own eyes	Hearkens to counsel	12:15
Will be destroyed	Walks with wise men	13:20
Blindness	Knowledge is easy	14:6
Goes beyond control	Fears and departs from evil	14:16
No secret guidance	Wisdom stored for use	14:33
Wandering to things out of reach	Wisdom close at hand for use	17:24
His way is perverted frets against God	Loves his soul and finds good	19:3, 8

heedless and is punished	Prepares for evil and escapes	27:12
Trusts in his own heart	Walks carefully	28:26
Hasty in talk	Waits on God before speaking	29:11

QUESTIONS:

1. How is a foolish son the heaviness of his mother?
2. What keeps a prating or talkative fool from receiving commandments?
3. What is more in view: a woman's beauty or her folly?
4. Who partakes of the fruit of a righteous life?
5. Is it possible for us to think ourselves right and be wrong?
6. What happens to a person who is a companion of fools?
7. What keeps a scorner from finding wisdom?
8. What is the basis of a fool's confidence?
9. Is it hard to keep quiet and wait on God to speak?
10. Has it been a wise venture for science and our nation to explore space and put men on the moon? It has been stated that man has walked on the moon but has not learned how to walk on earth.
11. What causes a man to fret and complain before God?
12. Is vomit a good likeness of folly?
13. Is it possible for us to foresee evil and prepare ourselves for it?
14. Why is it unsafe to trust in our own heart to guide us?
15. Why is a foolish man so hard to deal with?
16. Why does a fool get good out of telling all his mind? Why is it wise to keep it in until later?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To be wise and possess godly wisdom is the most important thing in life. We have a good clear picture of the beauty and blessing of wisdom to the soul. We should consider our ways and turn our feet unto the Lord's ways. Being willing to listen and be taught is so important. God wants to teach us from His precious Word, and He has His children and ministers who are given authority and responsibility to teach and give counsel to us. If we listen, we will be made wiser, and we will attain unto wise counsels. The wisdom of a man's life will

shine out far brighter than his good looks. People do not need to see outward beauty as much as they need to feel confident in one's counsel. We need to watch who we companion with. We need to be friendly and kind to all, but there is much good gained by choosing associates who are wise and godly. Let us not be so hasty to form opinions on people and things. Wait a while, and give the Lord a chance to teach you. Haste makes waste. A wise man does not go and broadcast his wisdom so quickly. Solomon told in Eccl. 9:14, 15 about the poor man who delivered a city from a besieging king, and how that no man remembered the poor man. He concluded: "Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." verses 16, 17. It is folly to fret and murmur against God's ways. This has happened many times, causing men to go the downward path to destruction. It just really pays to take God's way and seek earnestly for His wisdom. He will give it to us liberally and not scold us for asking. But we have to be steady in faith and His fear. (Have someone read James 1:5, 6) It is surely profitable to be wise and of good understanding. Seek for it daily and pray for it always. Count not yourself wise, but realize how ignorant and unlearned you are. Keep your heart open to God, and the sound wisdom He has laid up for the righteous will be given to you.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion." Somehow there is an inclination to just naturally expect a lot out of a beautiful person. It seems that good character should accompany a lovely face. I think of a woman I knew who was rather attractive; that is, as long as she kept quiet. Her loud boisterous voice just didn't seem in keeping with discretion. Beauty will by nature put a person on display and it behooves such a one to manifest the inner qualities that fulfill the beauty.

Let us consider discretion in spiritual matters. This includes both men and women. Jesus said, "ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. There are many other Scriptures that teach that we are to be an example for all the world to see. Some accept this truth and then boldly place themselves on display and yet do not use discretion. This is a reproach

and shame to the cause of God. They are not lifting up Christ. Perhaps they are overbearing in their mannerisms or slack in their dealings with others. When we lift up the beauty of Christ and His Church for all the world to see, let it be with the same humility and wisdom that Christ portrayed. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

Discretion, simply put, is being careful about what one does and says. It is using good sense and sound judgment, not being rash. It is putting into practice the golden rule. A person may have ever so many commendable qualities, but unless they are used discreetly the result will be a curse rather than a blessing. How earnestly we should strive to be discreet in all that pertains to life and godliness, so as to be a credit to the God we claim to represent. —Wayne Murphey

April 20, 1986

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Prov. 10:11 The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.

20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

11:12 He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor: but a man of understanding holdeth his peace.

13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

12:18 There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.

19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a **breach** in the spirit.

23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!

26 The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

28 The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.

16:24 Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

17:28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.

18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.

21:23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

25:11 A word fitly spoken is like **apples of gold in pictures** of silver.

26:20 Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Memory Verse: Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof. Proverbs 18:21.

Central Thought: The tongue is a member of our body that can cause the greatest joy and blessing, or it can be used to inflict the worst sorrow and trouble upon one's self and upon those others round about.

Word Definitions: *Frowardness:* Contrary to that which is right. *Breach:* A fracture or break, as that of fellowship. *Apples of gold:* Yellow, luscious, ripe apples (like Golden Delicious). *Pictures of silver:* A pitcher, bowl, or carved container of shiny silver color.

COMPARISON

The Word of God gives us both sides of the power of the tongue. There is life and there is death in the use of the tongue. The communication of man to man has inflicted the greatest blessing and the greatest curse. It is for us to compare these uses of the tongue, and to seek God for grace and, with strong self-control and discipline, control our tongue that it be used as an instrument for the betterment of our fellow man.

DEATH	LIFE	PROVERBS
Violence	A righteous well of life	10:11
Multitude of words: sin	Refrained lips: wisdom	10:19
Little worth	Choice silver	10:20
Lack of wisdom	Food for many	10:21
Speak frowardness	Acceptable	10:32
Speaks against his neighbor	Holds his peace	11:12
Revealeth secrets	Conceals the matter	11:13
Piercings of a sword	Health	12:18
But for a moment	Established forever	12:19
Heaviness	Gladness	12:25
Stir up anger	Turns away wrath	15:1
Pour out foolishness	Uses knowledge aright	15:2
Break in fellowship	A tree of life	15:4
Abomination to God	Pure and pleasant words	15:26
Pours out evil things	Studieth to answer	15:28
Folly and shame	Soul kept from troubles	18:13; 21:23

QUESTIONS:

1. From whence comes the wellspring of the tongue?
2. Why is a multitude of words a harbor for sin?
3. In what ways do we need the tongue of the just?
4. What kind of food comes from righteous lips?
5. Our words should be acceptable to whom?

6. How does a man void of wisdom show up himself?
7. Why does a faithful spirit seek to conceal a matter?
8. Does it pay to be careful with our words?
9. Is there any chance that today I might misuse my tongue?
10. How can I keep my soul from getting ensnared by my tongue?
11. What should one do when given a difficult question?
12. How can we have more words fitly spoken?
13. How can I keep my soul from troubles?
14. What does a talebearer do for strife?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

James brings out the truth that it is through the tongue that we encounter the most difficulties in life. God gave man a tongue, and it was the tongue that got him in trouble in the fall from the favor of His Creator. Satan got Eve to talking. Cain's anger against Abel, his brother, reached murder as he talked with him. You can trace all of man's woes and heartaches to the misuse of the tongue. While the Scripture declares that the love of money is the root of all evil, we can also declare that the tongue is the instrument of all evil. When diagnosing any spiritual ill or problem, you had better inspect the tongue and its use. How wonderful to use the tongue for good and wise purposes! We can express to others the love of Christ. We can dispense knowledge aright. We can expound the Holy Word of God in the ears of hungry hearts. We can comfort the troubled, encourage the weary, enlighten the ignorant. We can sing the praises of God and extol His wonderful works of mercy. We can lift up the heart that is hanging down with a cheery word of love. Or, we can gossip about others and defame them in the ears of others. We can say harsh, cutting words that will wound and break confidence and unity. We can pour out foolishness and vain expressions before God and man. We can lie, and cover evil deeds with fair speeches. It is but for a moment, however. We can talk about people behind their back and increase our displeasure toward someone before we really know the truth. Oh, this tongue can give us problems. If we will learn the great lesson of keeping our tongue and taming it to the love and grace of God, we will keep our soul from many a trouble. Oh, let us diligently take heed to this lesson. —Leslie C. Busbee

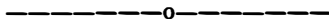
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Solomon says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Yes, we can speak words of comfort and strength to our brother, or we can speak words that will crush, bruise and kill. No wonder David said, "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue." We are told of a people whose tongue is as a sharp sword and they whet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. Yes, those kind of words could no doubt stop the mouths of our enemies, but James tells us that such a tongue "setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell." On the other hand, the wise man said, "The tongue of the wise is health."

We are instructed in God's Word, "To keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." It takes God in the heart to be able to control our tongue. We may desire ever so much to keep our tongue, but without the power of God, we are helpless, for the Word says, "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Again Jesus said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If we have bitterness, jealousy, ill-will, or an unforgiving spirit toward our brother, hid away in our heart, our tongue is sure to speak it out. But if our hearts are clean and we have nothing but love and good will toward all men, even for our enemies, our words will be seasoned with salt (the preserving Spirit of God) that it will minister grace to the hearers.

—Margaret Eck

(Taken from Feb., 1961 *Faith and Victory*)



April 27, 1986

PRIDE AND HUMILITY

Prov. 11:2 When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.

12:9 He that is despised, and hath a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

13:10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

15:33 The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.

16:5 Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.

18 Pride goeth before destruction, and an **haughty** spirit before a fall.

19 Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is **haughty**, and before honour is humility.

23 The poor useth **intreaties**; but the rich answereth roughly.

21:4 An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.

Psalms 138:6 Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

Prov. 21:24 Proud and **haughty** scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.

22:4 By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life.

25:6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men.

7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.

28:25 He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.

29:23 A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Memory Verse: God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. I Peter 5:5b.

Central Thought: We must humble ourselves to gain the favor of God, and we must resist and deny pride in all its various forms.

Word Definitions: *Haughty*: Another word for pride meaning exalted, lofty, high minded. *Intreaties*: Earnest prayer.

COMPARISON

In our lesson today we are looking at two contrary opposite forces. Pride is the opposite of humility. Humility is the absence of pride and a sense of one's true state. One man asked a minister how far down he should humble himself. The minister replied: "Come on down to where you are." Pride elevates one in the mind to a higher plane than what he really is. It has been truly said that pride is not a sin among sins, but it is rather the taproot of all sin. So let us compare the two, and may there be in every heart a great desire to be humble, and not proud.

PRIDE	HUMILITY	PROVERBS
Shame	Wisdom	11:2
Contention	Being well advised	13:10
Rough complaining words	Uses earnest prayer	18:23
Afar from God	Has God's respect	Ps. 138:6
Stirs up strife	Fat, bountifulness	28:25
Will be brought low	Will be upheld by honour	29:23
Will be resisted by God	Will be given grace	I Pet. 5:5b

Pride is self, connected with several words: self-honour, esteem, defence, exaltation, promotion, awareness, adornment, interest, concern, and many other things. I believe that it is safe to say that the root of sin is pride, and the root of pride is self.

QUESTIONS:

1. What comes with pride?
2. How can contention come and continue?
3. How does God look on the proud?

4. What will always follow pride and haughtiness?
5. Can you recall individuals in the Bible who were proud and were brought low?
6. What goes before honour?
7. What kind of language does a poor, lowly, humble person use?
8. What makes a person have a high look?
9. When the wicked plows, what is usually his purpose and cause?
10. How can we avoid being humbled or put down?
11. Why is it that pride and strife go hand in hand?
12. Can you explain why and how God resisteth the proud? What does grace mean to the humble man?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I John 2:16 mentions the pride of life as one of the things that is not of the Father but of the world. When Eve looked on the forbidden tree and considered the word of Satan that made her think that eating thereof would be the means of making her wise, she reached out for it, took it and ate. The seed of pride was sown in her heart. This seed of pride has been passed upon all men. Her son Cain allowed pride to work in his heart. It caused him to slay Abel, his brother. It was the cause of all of his failure in life. According to Josephus, Cain never did straighten up. Pride ruled his life. Pride caused the people to resist the message of Noah and refuse to go into the ark. Pride caused the people after the flood to want to build the tower of Babel. Pride worked in Lot and caused him to pitch his tent toward Sodom, proving to be his downfall. And the list grows as we think of the sons of Jacob in their jealousy against Joseph. Pharoah was a man stiff with pride. See what was his end. Pride was the downfall of Israel and kept many out of the promised land. Pride keeps a person from being obedient to the will of God. Pride was the cause of the fall of Israel's first king, a king that their pride clamored for. Pride worked in David, Solomon, and many other kings. Even Hezekiah was caught in pride on one occasion. The good king Josiah met his end because of pride. The high and lifted up king of Babylon had to be humbled and ate grass like an ox for seven years. Haughty Haman fell before the Jewess Queen Esther and was hung on the gallows he had prepared for the humble Mordecai. It has been proven over and over that pride will be one's downfall. Oh, how we need to resist pride and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Self pity is

pride. Murmuring is an indication of pride. Grudge and malice and gossip and evil speakings stem from pride. Strife, division, discord, and any other disruption of the unity of God's people has its basis in pride. Let us take heed, examine our hearts, and pray God to search out and cast down every trace of pride from our being.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame.” If people could realize the full truth of this verse, it would save a lot of heartache. Often when one begins to feel exalted, a real come down is just ahead. Robert South once wrote, “Pride is an expert wrestler; usually gives a man a lift before he gives him a throw.” The sad thing about pride is its deception. A person does not feel that he is proud, but that he is worthy of pride's exalted position. Many times it is very obvious to others when a person becomes proud. It doesn't require a great gift of discernment to notice it. Pride makes itself prominent and obvious. Our lesson says, “the proud He knoweth afar off.” Isn't it rather remarkable that God and everyone around can see the pride but the afflicted person fails to?

Undoubtedly you have encountered the type of individual who is a “know it all,” and you dare not contradict such a one or you will receive a “piece of their mind.” That person has the knack of making others feel so little. They display the “proud wrath” that Proverb 21:24 warns us about. It is the kind of wrath that accompanies a proud spirit and is opposite to the spirit of humility we find in Christ.

—Wayne Murphey



May 4, 1986

LABOUR AND FRUIT

Prov. 13:11 Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.

23 Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for want of judgment.

14:1 Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.

4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

16:26 He that laboureth laboureth for himself; for his mouth craveth it of him.

18:20 A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled.

21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

27:18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

24:27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.

27:23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.

24 For riches are not forever: and doth the crown endure to every generation?

25 The hay appeareth, and the tender grass sheweth itself, and herbs of the mountains are gathered.

26 The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.

27 And thou shalt have goats' milk enough for food, for the food of thy household, and for the maintenance for thy maidens.

28:19 He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough.

Memory Verse: A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth: and the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him. Proverbs 12:14.

Central Thought: It is God's plan for man to labour, working with his hands to bring forth fruit for himself and those he is responsible for.

Word Definitions: *Tillage:* The working of the soil for harvest. *Crib:* Barn, stable, shed where oxen are fed and sheltered.

LESSON BACKGROUND

When God created Adam He gave him work to do. He was to dress (work or till) the garden and to keep (guard or protect) it. And he was to eat of the fruit of his labours. Had Adam remained true to God his labour would not have been hard and difficult like it became after his sin. After the fall of man the work was much harder and afflicted with so many woes. Thorns and thistles made it more so and by the sweat of his face did he eat bread. Anyone who ever had any favor with God had to work and toil earnestly. A slothful and lazy person will not get anywhere with God. Much is said in the Bible, especially here in Proverbs, about work and labour. Everyone has to work and needs to learn the value and blessing of hard work. Work is good for the mind, body, and soul. Being overtaxed and carrying it too far is not good, but God has a balanced plane for us to walk on. In the 104th Psalm the writer is making mention of the wonders of creation in the landscape, plant, and animal kingdom. He mentioned the "herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart", verses 14, 15. Then in verse 23, after describing some of the attributes of the animal realm, he said of man: "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening." The Psalmist saw the goodness of God in that. God wants us to have good, but the good will come through the avenue of our labours. In Ecclesiastes 9:10, while speaking of the vanity and brevity of life, he said: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Let us consider well our lesson today. Life is the time of labour. We should thank God for work that He gives us to do, and do it with a full heart. There will be a reward at the end of the day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Think of the various ways that wealth can be gotten by vanity.

2. Why is good judgment and wise use so important concerning labour and fruit?
3. What is there about folly that tears down and destroys?
4. What are some of the responsibilities that are involved in having an ox or any other kind of serviceable animal?
5. What is the driving force that causes most people to labour?
6. Why is the desire of a slothful man so fruitless?
7. Why should one prepare their work and be established in it before planning on building a house?
8. Is there anything worthwhile that is not gained by labour?
9. Is labour a part of the Christian life?
10. We are saved by grace, through faith. What does work have to do with us, then?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

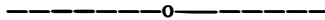
Paul said in I Corinthians 3:8, 9 that we are labourers together with God, and that every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. He exhorted Timothy to study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Timothy 2:15. He also said in I Timothy 5:17, 18 to "let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." So we see that labour is to be found in the spiritual realm of the salvation of men. God calls and qualifies men and women to work and labour for Him. This is the greatest work of all. Jesus said in John 4:34, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Jesus did that. He was able to say to the Father in John 17:4, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Jesus left His work in the hands of His saints. It is wonderful to have work to do for the Master. To be in His employ is the greatest joy and yields the most supreme happiness and satisfaction that there is. An idle, shiftless, careless person is not happy. We are created with a disposition to work. It is the gift of God to be able to work with our hands. Labour is honorable and when it is directed by the Holy Spirit of God it is profitable for all. Let our lives be of service to our Lord and to humanity. May we find work to do that is glorifying to His name and of benefit to ourselves and others. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the book, "What Men Live By" by Richard Cabot, he suggests that there are three kinds of labor. "One is toil that is tedious and tiresome without any hope of reward; this is drudgery. Another is activity that is unpleasant and tedious but carries with it the hope of reward; this is work. Then there is the kind of activity that is so enjoyable that one is eager to do it regardless of the reward or compensation; this is play." The verses in our lesson teach us that a person who is industrious will be able to enjoy the good things of life. The exhortation to work should not be a hard saying for us, for we need to realize that there is profit in labor. Too many have the idea that the world owes them a living. This is "wealth gotten by vanity." This type of person never succeeds in life because to them work is drudgery. There is satisfaction in a job well done and in knowing that you are a productive person to both society and your family.

We can carry this thought of labor and service over into our spiritual life. It should not only be our main purpose in life to serve God, but our pastime. We should do it because we love to. This would place it in the third classification of play; not that we "play religion", but that religion is very enjoyable to us. The songwriter must have felt this way when he wrote, "I love to serve my Jesus, a privilege so sublime, My life afresh with beauty bright is sparkling all the time; 'Mid scenes that are unfading, of rapture and of bliss, Transported I am soaring in my Saviour's righteousness."

—Wayne Murphey



May 11, 1986

THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD

Prov. 10:22 The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

11:1 A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight.

12:2 A good man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.

15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

16:2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.

7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

20 He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.

18:10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

19:21 There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

20:22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.

27 The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

21:3 To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

22:2 The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

28:5 Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the Lord understand all things.

29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord.

Memory Verse: The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. Proverbs 15:9.

Central Thought: The Lord God, who created the earth and mankind upon it, is gracious and merciful to us; hating evil, loving righteousness, rewarding the faithful, punishing the wicked, blessing, guiding, providing, searching, directing, saving, counselling, and judging each and every living soul for the best in welfare and happiness.

Word Definitions: *Weigheth the spirits:* Searcheth, trieth what is in man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the light of these Scriptures, it is a tragic mistake for any one to try to chart their journey in life without the Lord. The title "Lord" denotes ownership, authority, and supreme jurisdiction. In the Hebrew the word for Lord is Jehovah. This is speaking about the Almighty God, the Self-existent One, the Eternal, the All-wise, All-knowing and Ever-present God. What a joy to think that such a One can be so interested in you and me! Let us behold the truths in our lesson with gladness, and may there be in each one a supreme desire to serve and trust this wonderful Lord. The Holy Bible is a living testimony of men and women who proved the Lord in their lives. It also shows the tragic mistake that many have made who turned away from the Lord and went their own way. To obtain favour of Him and enjoy His blessings, to have Him hear and answer our prayers, to have Him weigh our spirits and convict us of personal needs, to behold Him unsolve deep mysteries and undo heavy burdens of life, to enjoy the good things that He provides, to wait upon Him in faith and patience and see Him work miracles and wonders, and to hear and follow His counsel—all these experiences are the height of happiness and joy and satisfaction. The Lord is good, and His tender mercies are over all of His works. We can join with the great cloud of witnesses who have left a good report and testimony in declaring the blessing and benefit of allowing the Lord of glory to work in our lives His precious will.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the blessing of the Lord do for the soul?
Can you tell of an actual experience of the blessing of the Lord?
2. What is there about a false balance that is so hateful to the Lord?

3. What can a man whom the Lord condemns hope for?
4. What are the Lord's feelings about the prayer of the faithful?
5. If the Lord did not weigh our hearts and convict us of the truth, what would happen to you and to me?
6. What is the name of the Lord to us?
7. If you have a good wife or husband, where did he or she come from?
8. Is it easy to frame one's own devices and not look to the counsel of the Lord?
9. To whom does vengeance belong?
10. Who is going to have the last word to say about you and about me?
11. What is there about the fear of man that is a snare?
12. Name some of the blessings that the Lord gives to those who faithfully serve Him, which are found in our lesson.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Lord God created the earth in six days. He spoke it into existence by His Word. The Word of the Lord is mighty and triumphant over all things. He blessed His creation after putting it in order. He blessed man. But He wanted man to serve Him by choice, not by constraint and force. It is a most wonderful state to be in favor with this Lord. This wonderful Lord came down in the person of Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. All must answer to Him. Every knee is going to bow and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. We had better make Him the Lord of our lives now. If we turn away from Him who speaks from Heaven, we will not escape. His blessings will bring a richness to our lives. This richness is not in material wealth, dollars and cents. But it is richness of the Spirit, that of love, purity, holiness, faith, hope, joy, gladness, peace, rest, and every good aspect of character and virtue. There is no judgment or device against the Lord. He can frustrate every thing that rises up against Him. Oh, to be in His favor at all times! How terrible to think of being condemned of Him and having Him as our enemy! We need to pray to Him, obey His precious Word, worship and honour Him faithfully, wait on Him and not get ahead of His leadings, open our hearts to Him honestly, look earnestly to Him for His counsel for every decision that we have to make, let His name and salvation be our safety and shield from danger and harm, and strive with all of our hearts to do justice and judgment. If we will sincerely endeavor to

follow the Lord, He will reward us with wonderful blessings that we never dreamed possible. Let us reverence and fear Him, exalt and praise Him, and above all, obey and serve Him all the days of our life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A baker in a little country town bought the butter he used from a near-by farmer. One day he suspected that the bricks of butter were not full pounds, and for several days he weighed them. He was right. They were short weight, and he had the farmer arrested.

At the trial the judge said to the farmer. "I presume you have scales?" "No, your honor." "Then how do you manage to weigh the butter you sell?" inquired the judge. The farmer replied, "That is easily explained, your honor. I have balances and for a weight I use a one pound loaf I buy from the baker."

This illustrates the injustice many manifest. They have two standards, one for themselves and another for the other fellow. This false balance is an abomination to God. We can rest assured that the judgment we receive at the hand of God will be absolutely fair. If we wholeheartedly, without reserve, give ourselves to Him, He will enrich us with His blessings. His blessings have no sorrow mixed with them. "The blessing of the Lord maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith." Proverb 10:22. This is not to say that we will have no trouble in life, but that when God gives us peace, joy and contentment in the Holy Ghost, it is pure in every aspect. We can depend on it to be of a satisfying quality.

Psalm 37:21-22 contains a similar thought. "The wicked borroweth and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of Him shall be cut off."

—Wayne Murphey

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May 18, 1986

DILIGENCE AND SLOTHFULNESS

Prov. 10:5 He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.

12:11 He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

24 The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.

19:15 Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.

24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

22:29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

23:21 . For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.

26:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets.

14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful man upon his bed.

16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

24:30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding.

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Memory Verse: He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Prov. 10:4.

Central Thought: A careless, indifferent person who neglects his responsibilities, his family, his business, his home, and the welfare of his own soul will bring shame and disgrace upon himself, while the earnest, hard working, diligent person will progress and become qualified for leadership, honour, and success.

COMPARISON

SLOTHFUL	DILIGENT	PROVERBS
Sleeps in harvest— causeth shame	Gathers in summer—is wise	10:5
Follows vain persons void of understanding	Tills his land— is filled	12:11
Shall be under tribute	Shall bear rule	12:24
Cares not for his effort	Counts his substance precious	12:27
Desires, but has nothing	Shall have riches	13:4
His way is as a hedge of thorns	His way is made plain	15:19
Kin to a great waster	Hard working	18:9
Sleepy, idle, hungry	Wide awake, busy, happy	19:15
Afraid to assert himself	Daring, willing to try	19:24
Hindered by every obstacle	Surmounts difficulty	20:4
Loving sleep— misses opportunity	Eyes open to accomplishment	20:13

Poverty and rags	Will stand before kings	22:29
Fearful, unreasonable, gross	Courageous, open minded	23:21 26:13-16
Neglectful, lazy, and careless	Watchful, dutiful, sincere	24:30-34

QUESTIONS:

1. Is sloth and carelessness very easy to get into?
2. Can a person be spiritual and close to God in sloth and slackness?
3. How often should we work on our experience and relationship with God?
4. Will there be any escape if we neglect our salvation?
5. How would you describe a soul who is in a sleepy and slothful condition?
6. When a person allows little things to hinder his progress and duty, what could be said of him?
7. Is a careless slothful person a happy joyful one?
8. What does hard work and diligence do for a soul?
9. Is a lazy, sleepy person very easy to reason with?
10. What will happen to you if you open your eyes to duty and responsibility?
11. Is it possible for one to be unaware of work to be done?
12. Where is the hedge of thorns in a lazy man's way?
13. What would happen to your home if you never trimmed, cleaned, repaired, or always neglected any duty or payment in its upkeep?
14. What would happen to your soul if you never prayed to God, read His Word, reached out to help others, testified, or witnessed of His grace?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how we need to stir ourselves every day to live and work for Jesus! We need to make it a business to live for the Lord, and go at it so carefully and earnestly. Just as a man is diligent about his business and making a living for those that he loves, so we need to be very diligent in our devotions and service to Jesus Christ. It is so much better to apply ourselves to work, study, effort, accomplishment, and getting things

done than it is to be self-indulgent, indifferent, dull, stupid, and scornful. Many people learn too late the cost of not being diligent. While you are young and full of energy you should apply that strength toward God and His will in your life. Be diligent and sincere about it. Be at the front doing your very best. Oh, it is so much easier to sit around and be a spectator and be free with your criticism toward those who are trying. But what is the gain in that kind of spirit? Spiritual poverty comes to those who are slack in their experience and devotions to the Lord. Compare the two ways of life. See the frustration and defeat that comes to the lazy ones. Look at the love and joy that beams on the countenance of the hard worker for Jesus. Those who are concerned about the work of God and are applying themselves to that work as the Lord lays it on their hearts are happy and joyful with that holy shine on their countenance. They are ready to lead out in prayer, to testify, to back the minister, to be present on work days and nights, to offer aid to those in need, to shoulder responsibility when it is offered, and to do anything that is needed to help promote the progress of the work of the Church of God. There is joy and rejoicing in their souls. As we serve the Lord, He serves us. It is a great truth and lesson to learn in life to be diligent, fervent in spiritual life, and active in doing what God wants us to.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An incident occurred in which a sheep rancher hired a man to tend his flock. The shepherd carelessly allowed the sheep to get away from him one by one. After three or four months he sought out his employer and said, "You are going to have to get me more sheep to herd; I've run out of sheep." Needless to say, his termination was swiftly affected. This story brings to mind the verse, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" If we do not carefully watch over the salvation that God has made available to us, we can expect no mercy on the day of reckoning.

As brought out in the "Adults' and Young People's Comments", we must have the same diligence in serving Christ as we do in temporal matters. Christ instructed His disciples to "watch and pray that you enter not into temptation." Proverb 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." II Peter 1:10 exhorts, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

"The race is not to the swift." Eccl. 9:11. It does not matter how talented or courageous a person may be, without diligence all is in vain. We must do as the prophecy of Christ says, "I set my face like a flint." Isaiah 50:7.

"As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful man upon his bed." A person in this condition is not really asleep. He is aware of what is going on and yet rolls and tosses because he just does not want to rise and work. We find many in sin who are miserable by a consciousness of what they need to do, yet fold their hands and allow time and opportunity to pass them by. "Be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." II Peter 3:14.

—Wayne Murphey

The Scripture Quilt

"In one of the boxes sent to us by the Sanitary Commission," writes a Christian worker in a southern army hospital, "was a patch-work quilt of unusual softness and lightness. When we opened it, we found a note pinned to it. It read as follows:—

"I have made this Scripture quilt for one of the hospital beds, for I thought that while it would be a comfort to the poor body, it might speak a word of good to the precious soul; the words are so beautiful and blessed, and full of balm and healing! May it be blessed to the dear boys in the army, among whom I have a son."

"It was made of square blocks of calico and white cotton intermingled, and on every white block was written a verse from the Bible or a couplet from one of our best hymns. On the central block, in letters so large as to catch the careless eye, was that faithful saying, in which is our hope and strength—'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' And below it the prayer of all prayers, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' The head border, which would be nearest to the sick man's eye, and oftenest read, had the sweetest texts of promise, and love, and comfort. Among them I read, 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.' 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!' 'I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.' 'Oh,' we said, 'Oh that all our beds had such quilts! God will surely

speak through these texts to the sick and wounded men! They will read them when they will read nothing else. Who knows how much good they will do?"

"It was not long before a man sick with pneumonia was brought in, and we put our new quilt on his bed. He noticed nothing at first, he was too sick; but when he grew better, I saw him intent on the texts. 'Handy to have 'em here!' he said, pointing to them as I stood near him. 'You know how to value them, then,' I said. 'I do,' he answered, with heartiness. After that I saw many studying the quilt—almost all who lay beneath it. One poor fellow, who had tossed in pain and feverishness for several days, caught sight of the words, 'And I will give you rest.' He beckoned to me, and said, 'Rest! where can I get it? Rest for body and mind, both! I am half mad—sick, as you see, but sicker—as no one can see. Tell me how to get rest!' 'Did you never hear of the way?—never hear of Jesus?' 'Tell me again.' I told him the story of the cross. 'Died for my sins?' he asked. 'Yes, yours. He saw you in your sins and pitied you, loved you, died to save you from sin and give you rest; to make you happy.' 'I have never been happy—never. I have been too wicked. And he *really* died for me? I never felt it before. It never seemed to me a real thing.' 'I hope you will come to feel it the most real thing. Have you seen the lines—

" 'None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good?"

" 'It's true. I know it is none but Jesus! I've tried everything else.'

" 'I'll go to Jesus, though my sins
Have like a mountain risen,'

I repeated, 'I can't go. I feel that I can't do anything. I am here a very wretched man; and that is all.' 'Just leave yourself to God, then,—

" 'Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.'

That's all you have to do.' 'Is that verse here?' I showed it to him on the quilt. 'I'll keep it before me. Oh, for rest! a little rest!' he groaned again. Not long after he found it,—found peace in believing, and left his hospital bed, happier than he had ever been before.

"An Irishman lay under the Scripture quilt. One day when nearly well, he was looking at it. 'Is that radin?' he asked, putting his finger on the text. 'Yes.' 'Sure, and what does it say?' I read, 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their

eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' 'Ye might rade that,' he said, pointing to another text. 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' 'It is the Lord who says this,' I added after the text. 'Sure, it's good to a lonesome pareson to hear what you rade.' 'So it is. There is no book like the Bible in dark and trying hours.'

"At last came the boy who had the best right to the comfort of our Scripture quilt,—the son, of whom the good woman who made it spoke in the note attached. It was a strange circumstance that he should have come to lie beneath it, but so it was. He had lain there nearly senseless for more than a week, when I saw him kiss the patch-work. I thought he might be wandering, or if not, had found a text of hope or consolation that seemed to suit his need, and marked with my eye the place he had kissed, to see what it was. It was no text, but a calico block, the pattern a little crimson leaf on a dark ground. He kept looking at it, with tears in his eyes, and I was almost sure his mind was wandering. Nay, he was never more in his right mind, and his thoughts were at home with his mother. A bit of the gown he had so often seen her wear had carried him back to her. He kissed it again. I approached him. He looked up, and smiled through his tears.

" 'Do you know where this quilt came from?' he asked. 'Some good woman sent it to us through the Sanitary Commission.' 'You don't know her name, nor where it came from?' 'No, but I saved a note that was pinned to the quilt.' 'Would you be willing to let me see it some time when it is convenient?' 'Oh, yes. I'll get it now.' I got it for him; his hand trembled, and his lips grew white as he opened it and saw the writing. 'Please read it to me quite slowly,' he said, returning it. I read it. 'It is from my mother; shall you keep it?' 'Yes,' I answered, 'I value it very much, and also the quilt.' He put his hands over his eyes. I thought he wished to be alone, and left him. As I stood by his bed the next day, I was wondering if he had not seen his mother's texts, as well as the bit of her gown. He had, and pointed one out to me. It was, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' 'I am no more worthy,' he whispered. I put my finger on the next white block, and read aloud, 'When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' As I looked up, I saw there were tears upon his cheeks, and his lips were tremulous. He covered his eyes, and I left

him. A few days after, when he had grown much stronger, he held up to me the text I had shown him. 'I was a great way off,' he said, 'but He has met me and had compassion on me.' 'You feel the Saviour's love?' 'It fills me with peace. What love! What a Saviour!' 'Shall I not write to your mother and tell her that her son, who was dead, is alive again; was lost, and is found?' 'Will it not be too much trouble?' 'Oh, no, a pleasure instead.' I wrote the blessed tidings, making the mother's heart rejoice. And now our Scripture quilt was even dearer and more sacred than before." —Selected

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May 25, 1986

**POVERTY'S PLIGHT, WEALTH'S VANITY,
AND TRUE RICHES**

Prov. 10:15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty.

11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

25 The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall, but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

14:20 The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.

15:6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure: but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.

16 Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

16:8 Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.

19:4 Wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbor.

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.

22:1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

28:11 The rich man is wise in his own conceit; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.

22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

29:14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever.

Memory Verse: The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all. Proverbs 22:2

Central Thought: There are hardships suffered in being poor, and there are advantages of being rich in material things; but poverty can be turned into a blessing and being rich can be a hindrance when it comes to obtaining the true riches of Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The rich and the poor have had to live together in this world for many, many years. The poor are in their condition for varied reasons, and the rich have attained their wealth in various ways, also. We have all through the Bible this scene of the rich and the poor. People have fought against poverty, trying to work out some kind of solution to the world's problem. In times past, before Social Security and Public Welfare were instituted, the plight of the poor was beyond description. And in many countries of today there is still found the poorest of the poor and the richest of the rich. In our country the in-between rank of people are more numerous. In our Scriptures for today we have the plight of the poor revealed. "The destruction of the poor is their poverty." The Hebrew word for destruction here is "ruin". Without some help there have been many poor who have starved and perished in their poverty. "The poor heareth not rebuke." The Greek Septuagint rendering of this says, "the poor endures not threatening". The poor is at the mercy of others. Jesus said, "The poor ye have with you always." "The poor is hated even of his own neighbor." "The poor is separated from his neighbor." Why is the poor thus treated? Because the carnal covetous disposition of mankind discounts a poor man and is inclined to overlook and despise him. But then we see that this vile treatment of the poor man is displeasing in God's sight. He promised blessings upon those who will seek to help the poor and relieve them of their distresses. Jesus told the rich young ruler to give to the poor and have treasure in heaven. Andrew Carnegie, the great rich millionaire at the turn of the century stated that after the man of wealth provided for the legitimate needs of his family he was to count the rest of his revenue as trust funds to be used as he sees best for the betterment of his community and poorer brethren. God would have us to realize that the unequal distribution of the commodities and wealth of this world shows that material wealth is not the true riches after all. A

good name, understanding, wisdom, righteousness, and the fear of the Lord are the true riches that can be had by the poorest comer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our duty toward the poor?
2. Why is a poor man at a disadvantage, and why is a rich man at an advantage?
3. What shall happen to the man who trusts in his riches?
4. Why do the rich have many friends?
Are these friends always true friends?
5. Why would anyone want to oppress the poor?
6. What are the true riches that we should seek for?
7. How can a rich man be in reality poor and a poor man be truly rich?
8. What does a person do who gives to the poor sincerely?
9. How certain are the material riches of this life?
10. What should a ruler's attitude be toward the poor?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Sometimes we read about the plight of the poor and sometimes we come face to face with it. Means to live on, a house to live in, and the necessary and enjoyable things of life we take for granted. But did you know that it would not take very much to render every one of us as real paupers indeed? That is really what we all are anyway. We do not own anything in this present life. What we have is just lent to us of the Lord. If we are selfish and stingy with these things we will displease the One who gave them to us. He sends His messengers our way from time to time to collect some of the bounty He has bestowed upon us. These messengers are poor people that we have the opportunity to help. We know that we cannot help them all, but we must do what we can with a willing and open heart. This matter of money and making ends meet is a problem we all share. Some have more and some have less. Those who have more should be ready to distribute and willing to communicate or give to those who are less fortunate. Many beautiful stories and illustrations have been written concerning the blessing of giving to the poor. There will always be some poor people for us to help. We are especially called upon to remember the household of faith, and be ready to give help to others who are in need. There are so many Scriptures that deal with the thought of the rich and the poor. How many of them are you acquainted with? Thank God for the true

riches of grace and faith, riches that the rich and poor alike can enjoy together. Beware of covetousness, our Saviour warned. He had much to say about the rich, did He not? How sad to think that many are not willing to part with their riches, when they and their riches will pass away eventually. Oh, let us consider our lesson today and may it temper our desires and train them more and more toward the true riches, the riches of Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Eph. 3:8 it says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." I am glad that as we feel lowly and unworthy, as Paul did, we can be part-takers in these unsearchable riches of God. How rich every saint should feel! Many people are striving for "uncertain riches" (I Timothy 6:17), but true riches are found only in God. When men set their hearts on temporal riches, how prone they are to have eyes for themselves only. Other people and God become secondary. This thought was forcibly presented to a rich man one day. A minister led him to the window. "Look out there," he said, "and tell me what you see." "People," answered the rich man. Then the minister led him to a mirror. "What do you see now?" he asked. "I see myself," answered the man. Then the minister said, "Behold, in the window there is glass, and in the mirror is glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is a little silver added than you cease to see others and see only yourself."

How much do we really own? Most people are able to say that they own a piece of property. Some boast of great land holdings. Is this type of possession really ours? I would say, no. It would be more correct to say that the ground owns us. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3:19. The only true possession that we have is a home in eternity. Where that home will be is up to us. Some people make their bed in hell and others obtain a mansion in heaven. If we are laying up treasures in heaven we can enjoy the anticipation of them here on earth. If we lay up treasures here on earth we will most likely be miserable here and in agony in eternity. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which

thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:20-21.

—Wayne Murphey

June 1, 1986

LOVE AND HATE

Prov. 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool.

11:27 He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.

14:21 He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.

15:12 A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him: neither will he go unto the wise.

17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled [fattened] ox and hatred therewith.

17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth *very* friends.

17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

18:24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:

18 Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

26:24 He that hateth dissembleth [agrees, promises, or acknowledges] with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart.

26 Whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.

28 A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

28:23 He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.

29:10 The bloodthirsty hate the upright: but the just seek his soul.

Memory Verse: Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:10.

Central Thought: Hatred is deceitful, injurious, and defiling to the soul, paving the road to destruction; but love is honest, open, frank, true, beneficial, and triumphant on the road that leads to everlasting life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

What is the background of hatred? Where does it come from? What makes one man despise, downgrade, scorn, ridicule, or have desire to injure or harm his fellow man? History proves that this evil passion brings nothing but sorrow and trouble. Jesus Christ, the Saviour of lost souls caught up in this evil, taught us the way of love. Our lesson today from Proverbs reveals some of the benefits of love and the terrible consequences of hatred. Our first Scripture agrees with what Peter said in I Peter 4:8 where he said, "Charity shall cover a multitude of sins." Hatred in the heart will not allow a person to do that. To let love work in our hearts we must come to the place where we can overlook a persons faults and failings. If someone has to please us in every way and agree with us in every thing before we can be friendly to them, this is proof that we know but very little about love. Love does not cover another persons faults and sins to condone and justify them in their wrong. It is rather to cover it from view and from hindering us from trying to help them. The Lord had to overlook man's ignorance and pass by his iniquities while He prepared a way of salvation. It is wonderful to know that God is a God of love. He hates no one. He loves sinners and those who are living contrary to His will. He hates the sin, but loves the sinner. And sometimes, in love for a man's soul, God afflicts and wounds a person for the design of helping them in spiritual life. A true friend loves at all times, even when you are at fault. A friend will look beyond your fault and see your need. The Septuagint has a very good rendering of the verse in 17:17, "Have thou a friend for every time, and let brethren be useful in distress, for on this account are they born." A friend or a brother who loves you is a wonderful blessing. But to come up against someone who hates you is trouble indeed. It is for us to cultivate the love of Christ in our hearts and

overcome hatred and strife in this world with love and peace.
—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What all does our lesson tell us that hatred will cause a man to do?
2. In what way do you think love covers sins?
3. Does hatred readily show itself out in the open?
4. Why does it want to hide and cover itself?
5. What is there about love that is so far superior than hatred?
6. In what way is a friend such a blessing?
7. In what way can a brother be a help in adversity?
8. How can a man have friends?
9. Who is that Lover or Friend who sticks closer than a brother?
10. What will happen to hatred that is covered with lying lips?
11. Why is open rebuke better than secret love?
12. In what way will a friend wound you?
13. What do the just seek for in people?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Love is the greatest force in the world. It will work and accomplish what nothing else will. Love found a way to redeem our souls from sin, and when nothing else could help love lifted us out. Along with these Scriptures that we are studying from Proverbs, we need to remember other places in the Bible that tells of the power and wonder of love. Paul tells us in Titus 3:2-5 to "speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, . . ." After the law had failed to bring about a change in man's fallen nature, God so loved the world that He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins. Greater love hath no man than this. He loved us better than He loved His life. We are to have that same love in our hearts for one another and for those without. God can help us love when our

humanity may not be able to love of ourselves. For instance, when someone crushes and injures your spirit, or does something that harms someone dear to you, it would be difficult and sometimes impossible for you to show love on your own. But as you pray and seek God, He can help you show love to that person, no matter how evil and spiteful they might be. We must love not only in lips, but in deed and truth. Pretended or faked love is no good. Love must be demonstrated by our actions for it to be perfected. Oh, let us love one another and our fellow man, and above all, let us love our Creator and prove our love by obeying Him faithfully.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Volumes have been written about love. Men and women have striven to show love in an outward form. Love has been on exhibition in many ways but still there is only one kind of true love, and that is divine love. This love can't be manifested unless the person has been saved from their sins and forgiven by divine love. Love is what brought Jesus to this world to die on the cross and take our punishment. Love caused Him to love us more than His own life. Love caused God to be willing to let His innocent Son die and take our punishment. Love is what caused us to melt in humble admiration and bow at the feet of Jesus, who loved us and proved His love for us. Love drew us to Him. Today all saved men, women, boys and girls, are held close to Jesus because of His great love. We are "followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." Ephesians 5:1, 2.

We are taught to "follow after" love and to "have fervent charity." This is a command of God. We are to ask God to kindle this fire of love in our very souls. Study Christ's example and pattern after it. Meditate upon His love and keep your mind stayed upon Him. We will have the sweet influence of His presence with us, if we will learn of Him and do the things that divine love demands. Oh, the greatness of God's love! More like Him, our soul should cry. We should seek after that great love. Long for it to be manifested in your life. Think of every person as God thinks of them. See them as a soul that is headed for the judgment and our duty toward them as a soul. Love like God. God hates sin but He loves to cover that sin with a veil of forgiveness. God does everything He can,

while a person is in this life, to help them seek forgiveness of their sins. That is the veil we should use toward every soul. Love thinks no evil. On and on we could write about love, but words will not give us love, wishful thinking will not give us divine love, but true repentance, caused by seeing God's great love and being bathed in the love of God, is the only way we can obtain it.

—M. Miles
(Written in 1975)

June 8, 1986

ANGER AND WRATH

Prov. 12:16 A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame.

14:17 He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.

29 He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.

15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that takes a city.

19:11 The discretion [wise intelligence, surveying all points] of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

19 A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.

22:24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious [hot tempered] man thou shalt not go.

25:28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

27:3 A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.

4 Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

29:22 An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression.

Matthew 5:22a But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.

Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Ephesians 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

27 Neither give place to the devil.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Memory Verse: Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. Psalm 37:8

Central Thought: For the welfare of our eternal souls we must control our spirit in the times when we are angry or displeased, and not allow our anger or wrath to get out of hand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have included along with our Scriptures in Proverbs a few quotations from the New Testament, one of which is the sayings of our Lord Himself. Jesus knew that anger was one of man's most difficult emotions. Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 32:35 where God said, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence." He also quoted from Psalm 4:4 which in the Septuagint Greek translation says: "Be ye angry and sin not; feel compunction upon your beds for what ye say in your hearts." The word compunction means a questioning or an uneasiness of the rightness of one's actions or guilt of grieving or hurting any one. James joins in with the warning against anger and wrath, agreeing with the counsel in Proverbs to be slow to wrath. The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God. This is a critical point in everyone's life. If you are quick to get angry and react to things that displease you, you can be sure that you will make many a blunder and hurt many people. We are being warned in these Scriptures about this. We have many examples that show the folly and damage of anger. Cain was the first to let his anger get out of hand. We have the case of Jacob's two sons, Simeon and Levi, who became angry with the men of Shechem because of a certain trespass. They killed all the men in that city and took everything and everyone else captive. Jacob renounced them strongly and in his last words cursed their fierce anger and their cruel wrath. See Genesis 49:7. What a peaceful world this

would be if people would learn to control their anger! Look about you on every side and you can see this to be true. Look what the anger of Joseph's brothers caused them to do to him. Moses in his anger got ahead of God and killed the Egyptian. Baalam beat his donkey in anger, causing the dumb beast to speak like a man. It was anger that helped cause Saul, the first King of Israel to go off the beam. It was the anger of the chief priests and rulers that caused them to want to destroy Jesus. This is something we had best be sure to take heed to.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does God label a person who does not control his wrath?
2. Are we not to have any anger or wrath about us at all?
3. What should a person do if they are quite aware that they have a problem controlling their anger?
4. What can happen if anger gets out of hand?
5. What does a furious man abound in?
6. What is heavier than stone or sand?
7. If a hot-tempered man gets into trouble and you pay his fine, will that solve the problem?
8. What is a man who rules his spirit better than?
9. Why is it wisdom to not be quick to anger?
10. Is it our place to get even with people?
11. What danger is there of going with a furious man?
12. How can anger and wrath give place to the devil?
13. If a man will be swift to hear and slow to speak and to wrath, what will he save himself from?
14. Is it possible for us to control our anger?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Being soon angry is a mark on a man's character that is hard to get off. One can be found so foolish that way. One brother went to a merchant to see about an account that the Church had with this man. Somehow in the conversation the merchant became very angry and accused the Church before the brother of not paying a certain bill. He even called the Church obscene names. He was really heated up. The brother calmly pulled out a receipt that had been paid and marked "PAID" by that merchant himself. Oh, how ashamed he was! He humbled down and offered apology. This can happen so easily. One man in a bank told the teller that she had given

him \$20.00 too much in change. The teller became very angry that the man had questioned her accuracy. He saw that nothing could be accomplished, so he walked out with the money. The poor teller had to make it up at the end of the day when everything had to be balanced. Being quick to get angry is costly and disastrous. One man woke a mechanic up in the night and wanted him to put another generator on his car. The mechanic looked at the car and saw right away that his trouble was a loose wire and not a generator. When he tried to reason with the man, the man became very angry and demanded a new generator or "shut the hood!" The mechanic went ahead and put the \$80.00 generator on but did not connect the wire. When the man found that it still did not work he demanded a refund. By this time the mechanic was angry and refused to do anything about it. Uncontrolled anger gets people in trouble. We need to learn from these Scriptures that it is vital for us to control our anger to please God and in getting along with others. How much better it is to control our spirit than to "fly off the handle" and get ourselves in trouble.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Much of the trouble in today's world is created by the childish actions of grown people. Many grow up physically but never actually mature. Wrath and anger are stimulated by just this type of individual. Those who fly off the handle and act or speak irresponsibly, simply manifest a sign of immaturity. To the unbiased onlooker, the actions of one motivated by anger appear ridiculous. The individual who has behaved intolerably may himself feel sheepish and foolish, when made to face a situation in a more composed manner.

Wrath will cause one to throw across the room an object he is attempting to repair but cannot. Curse words flow swiftly from the person who has injured himself. I once saw a man who was angry at his wife, so he rammed his truck into her car. Another man became so angry at his wife that he pounded her washing machine with a hammer to such an extent that it could no longer be used. These are works of the flesh that the Christian must keep out of his life.

Even the godly should beware of anger. It can be generated by one ardently but unwisely upholding a truth that is clearly taught by the Word of God. We must be firm in standing for what is right, but it must be done in love and humility,

not with a harsh, legalistic spirit. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." II Timothy 2:24-26. —Wayne Murphey

June 15, 1986

TAKING HEED TO OUR WAY OF LIFE

Prov. 10:9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

29 The way of the Lord is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity.

11:5 The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are his delight. (Froward: opposite of toward, meaning against that which is right.)

12:26 The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour: but the way of the wicked seduceth them.

28 In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

13:6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

14:2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

15:24 The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

16:17 The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

25 There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

20:24 Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

21:2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

8 The way of man is froward and strange: but as for the pure, his work is right.

16 The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

28:10 Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once.

Memory Verse: Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Ps. 139:23, 24.

Central Thought: The way that a man is going determines what his end and destiny is going to be, and it is wisdom to take heed to our ways and make sure that we are taking God's way and not our own.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is interesting to note that in our lesson today we have a proverb spoken twice, an unusual occurrence in this book. Did you notice what Scripture this is? It is found in 14:12 and 16:25. And I am sure that the Lord had it this way for a reason. This is a most important statement for us to consider. Do you know what is the way that seemeth right and in the end proves to be the ways of death? (Notice the plural "ways") It is "my" way. Our own ways always seem to be right in our eyes, as we see another Scripture in our lesson declares. This is what makes this matter of taking heed to our ways so difficult and dangerous. The way that we are going determines where we will end up. Jesus spoke of the two ways in Matthew 7:13, 14. He spoke of the way that leads to destruction as being broad (accomodating, popular, easy), while the way that leads to life is narrow (difficult). There is no way that Jesus or anyone else can change that fact. To go God's way and escape eternal ruin we must go against the tide of human opinion and thought. The prophet in Isaiah 55:7-9 calls for the wicked to forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Oh, how we should all commit our memory verse really to memory and let

it be the sincere prayer of our hearts! Let us seek for the way everlasting. It is our ways that bring about the wall of separation between us and God. We could read 20:24 like this: The right way for a man to go is revealed by God, and there is no other way that man can see it. Oh, how important and serious is our lesson this day! Let us pray that we will be able to see God's way and walk therein always. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can a person always really hide his own way?
2. What do we see along the way of life that we need to take heed to?
3. How should we feel about God's ways?
4. How does God look on man's ways?
5. How can the way of a wicked man seduce someone else?
6. What will righteousness do for a man concerning the way?
7. Why does a man's way seem right in his eyes?
8. Why is the way of life above the ways of the world?
9. What are we wanting to escape?
10. Is there much danger in a person wandering out of the way?
11. What are some of the good things the upright have in possession on the way of life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many people today who never question the way that they are living. Their mode of life is so satisfying to their depraved and carnal mind that it is too painful to think of changing their ways. And yet it is plain according to our lesson that our ways will take us to eternal ruin. We need to scrutinize and examine our ways. I am really impressed with a statement that Psalms 119:59 expresses: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." We need to think on our ways. Consider well the course of life you are taking, the mode of life you are following, and the direction that your way is taking you. Instead of blaming your troubles on everyone else, why not take into consideration that your problems come from the way that you are taking? There was a family once who were travelling in the gospel work years ago. They stopped at a rest area to eat their breakfast and were just sitting down to enjoy a good meal when a terrible odor hit them. It was so bad that they gathered up their things and left. At the next place they met the same thing. It was so at the third place. It was then that they decided to do a little

investigating. Up under their house trailer, caught on the axle was a dead animal. So it is with us in life. The main problems that we have are not to be pinned on someone else. We are usually the culprit. It is our own ways that produce the bad odor. The way of Life is a high and holy way. It is above the ways of the world and the carnal minds of people. If we are to escape from hell beneath, we are going to have to take the way that is above. The downward way is dangerous, but the upward way is brighter all the time. As Lamentations 3:40 says, "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A verse with great truth is found in Job 34:33, "Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest." This was spoken by one of Job's comforters, who many times are held in light esteem. However, there is much wisdom in what was said.

It has been said that to get along with people, one should not mention politics or religion. The reason is because most everyone is strongly opinionated on these two subjects. In handling the gospel we must be careful about our opinions. There are those who think the gospel should be in accordance with their own reasoning. Think of what a mess the plan of salvation would be in if God altered it just a little to suit each individual. Since it is difficult to find even two people whose thoughts are exactly alike the result would be great confusion. Thus we must conclude that the gospel should not be "according to our mind."

The stark reality of the situation is, we can either accept or refuse God's ways, and we will answer to Him and not to man. Let us all speak what we know; or "thus saith the Lord." To be right with God we must learn how to submit our ways and follow the Lord's ways. In this lies the assurance of salvation.
—Wayne Murphey



June 22, 1986

THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF FAITHFULNESS

Prov. 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

12:22 Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight.

13:17 A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.

14:5 A faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies.

20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

25:13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

28:20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.

29:14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

Revelation 2:10b Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Memory Verse: Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find? Proverbs 20:6.

Central Thought: What God is looking for is a true, faithful, honest, dependable, trustworthy soul who will be steady under pressure, unmoved in temptation, and dutiful to responsibility in service for His cause and obedience to His perfect will.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Ever since God created man in the beginning He has wanted him to be faithful and true. He wanted Adam and Eve to be faithful, but tested their faithfulness by allowing them to be tempted of the devil. Not aware of the danger and consequence, they yielded to temptation and were counted unfit for the garden of Eden and the tree of life. Life is responsibility, responsibility to God and to others. God not only wants man to be good, He also wants man to be faithful in his goodness. A man may have a lot of goodness about him, and yet be an unfaithful man. A man might be faithful when there is not burdens to bear, not any temptations to overcome, or attractions to shun. The real faithful man is the one who is straight and true regardless of the circumstance. This word faithful is a challenging word. A man can live up to certain codes and laws and still not be faithful. The law given by Moses showed the real need of faithfulness in a man's life. And the saying in Habakkuk 2:4 shows what God is looking for. "The just shall live by his faith." This Scripture is quoted in the New Testament probably as many times as any other Scripture in the Old Testament. The word faith here is the same word as translated "faithfulness" in other places. It is also from the same root word that is translated "truth" in other places. Faithfulness and truth go together. Along with our Scriptures in Proverbs we have brought in several statements from the New Testament, one of which comes from the Lord Jesus Himself. He spoke these words at the end of His parable about the steward who, after receiving notice of being removed from his position, used the means that was in his position to secure shelter after being put out. Jesus implies in this parable that we are to be faithful to use this money down here in this world faithfully for the good of His cause and the welfare of others. If we are faithful in the least, (money) we will be faithful in much (spiritual things that Paul states we are stewards over). It is also brought out how faithful Moses and Christ were as a pattern for us to follow.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some matters that a faithful spirit will seek to conceal?
2. What does being faithful in responsibility do for your employer? What does it mean to him?
3. What is God looking for in humanity?
4. Why is goodness not enough?
5. Have you ever had a broken tooth? A foot out of joint? How can an unfaithful man be like these things?
6. What will be the state of a faithful man?
7. What do we prove our faithfulness in?
8. What does a faithful disposition guard a man from?
9. Who can really hope for a crown of life?
10. How does God feel about a person who is faithful to Him regardless of temptation or trial?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How beautiful and inspiring is that of a faithful spirit. We have heard of the faithfulness of a dog to his master. There is the story of Greyfriars Bobby, who lingered faithfully near the grave of his master, Jock, for over 10 years until he died. There is no attribute that wins God's approval and favor more than that of being faithful. He set up the plan of salvation on that score. It takes a faithful spirit to believe in Christ (Whom he has never seen) and obey His teachings, following His example all the way through life's journey. When he said, "The just shall live by faith," his faith (personal), he is saying, "The just shall live in God's favor by his faithfulness." It is required in stewardship, the matter of keeping and handling another's goods, that a man be found faithful. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God. We are responsible to make use of His truth and grace by sharing it with others and being faithful to hold high the standard of His Word. Moses was faithful. Moses grieved the Lord and disqualified himself for a berth in Caanan, but God was not unrighteous to cast Moses away because He knew that Moses' failing was because of his anger and disgust at the unfaithfulness of Israel. Basically Moses was a faithful man. Jesus Christ was the faithful witness and was faithful in all His duties and responsibilities before God. He obeyed at the price of His life. May God help us to be likewise faithful. To really be faithful is much more than proclaiming one's goodness to win the favor and admiration of man. In the tests and trials of life let us be

aware that the purpose of these things is to prove our faithfulness. And in proving our faithfulness we are being made fit for greater service and responsibility. —Leslie C. Busbee

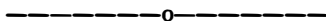
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A friend who will stand by you in both good and bad times is of great worth. One who fails to is likened in our lesson to a broken tooth or a foot out of joint. A brother or sister in the Lord should especially be a faithful friend. However, the devil often works through those who are weak in the things of God to be a talebearer and air the faults of other Christians. The Bible says to mark that one who is causing division. (Rom. 16:17). This would be the one who maliciously delights in the discovery and disclosure of other's faults, and who is not faithful to his brother nor to the cause of God.

Consider this story of a blacksmith and let it be of profit to each one. The blacksmith always harped about Christians, especially when he could get another Christian to talk to, or knew there was one near enough to overhear him. Some choice morsel of scandal was sure to be served up about the faults of a minister or Sunday-school superintendent. One day he was speaking with uncommon relish on his favorite theme to a venerable elder, who stopped to have his horse shod. The good old man bore it quietly for awhile, and then he said, "Did you ever hear the story of the rich man and Lazarus?" "Yes, of course I have." "Remember about the dogs at the gate there, how they licked Lazarus' sores?" "Yes. Why?" "Well, you remind me of those dogs; always licking sores. All you notice in Christians is their faults."

If we are not faithful in these things, in that which is least, God cannot commit to our trust the true riches of salvation.

—Wayne Murphey



June 29, 1986

WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WOMAN?

Prov. 11:16 A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches.

12:4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

18:22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.

19:14 House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord.

21:9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the house top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.

31:10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

I Timothy 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and

sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold or pearls, or costly array;

10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.

Memory Verse: A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. Proverbs 12:4.

Central Thought: A woman that fears and trusts the Lord portrays the beauty and virtue of Christ in every aspect of her natural, domestic, and spiritual life. Sad to say, women like this are of a minority.

Word Definitions: *Spindle and distaff:* These were the instruments of spinning yarn out of wool, flax, or other fibers. The unspun fabrics were wrapped around the distaff which was held in the left hand usually, or under the left arm, while the fibers were drawn from the distaff and twisted into yarn which was wound onto the spindle. *Shamefacedness:* Bashfulness stemming from modesty and reverence. *Sobriety:* Soundness of mind, soberness, self control.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Scattered through Proverbs are allusions to women, bad and good. We have drawn some of both from these various Scriptures and with the words of King Lemuel from his mother's counsel concerning a virtuous woman we have a beautiful and challenging pattern of a godly woman. Just who this King Lemuel was we do not know, but the words of this part of the book of Proverbs have inspired God's people through the ages. The woman was created for the benefit of the man. She was to be a helpmeet, one answering to the man's need. She was to be lovely, attractive, helpful, energetic, and companionable. And what a great blessing she has been to her husband in the history of the world, that is, she who has been godly and with the fear of the Lord upon her. Behind every great and beneficial man has been the sweet and gracious influence of a godly woman, whether wife or mother, and many times, both. Along with the Scriptures included in Paul's writings from the New Testament, and other inspired expressions of the plan of God for woman, we have a challenging ideal here that every young girl would do well to hold in view. Satan has cross-currented and attacked this intended blessing that woman was created for, and the fruit of his work

has been women of evil, lust, strife, and corruption. A carnal minded woman, regardless of her beauty and talent, is a curse to mankind. Many men have been seduced by women and ruled by their pernicious and silly ways. God has a wonderful plan for womankind. Look at the place they can play in a man's life in the will of God. In our lesson today the golden opportunity of being a godly woman shines forth, and we trust it will allure many hearts to its blessed challenge.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does a husband benefit from a virtuous woman?
2. Can you think of any incident that portrays a gracious woman keeping her honour?
3. Where does a good wife come from?
4. Why would a man be better off single and unmarried rather than be married to a carnal selfish wife?
5. What trust does a man place in his wife?
6. What is the price of obtaining a virtuous woman? How can one be assured of getting one?
7. What are some of the duties of a godly housewife?
8. Why can her husband be free to be involved in civil and important matters of leadership?
9. What would be your definition of the "bread of idleness"?
10. How do the children and husband of a godly woman feel about her?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The basic duties of a holy and righteous woman in her role as a wife and mother are clearly seen here in our lesson. It is a wonderful blessing to have a wife that can be fully trusted to care for matters at home, using the means that the husband provides, to where he can work honestly and honorably before his fellowman. She remembers that her purpose in life is to serve God and her husband. To satisfy his natural desire for love and companionship and to make home attractive and comfortable is an important role that God designed for her. Caring for her children, reaching out to help others, sewing, mending, washing, cleaning, cooking, being economical and saving, being kind and submissive—all these things make a woman's job a full-time occupation. Women that get their eye on fashion, money, pre-eminence, popularity, praise of the world, and getting ahead in carnal things will fail in

the responsibilities that God has given to them. The beauty of a virtuous woman is not her outward form or adorning. It is that inward spirit of humility and meekness, in the sight of God of great price. I Peter 3:3, 4. Oh, what a blessing to have a wife like this! Where is God going to find a woman to give to the man who is after this sort? He will find it in the heart of a maiden who believes the gospel of Christ and embraces the love and fear of God. Every young girl should have a desire to make of herself, by the grace of God, a kind of woman that a man would be well-pleased with. God needs holy and pure women today to be wives and mothers who will crown their husbands and children with loving service and faithful blessings. Outward beauty and the favour and popularity of this world will lead you astray. It is all vanity. But a woman who serves the Lord and seeks to please Him will come forth of them all, and will be remembered long after she has passed from labour to reward.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“There is nothing by which I have through life more profited, than by the just observations, the good opinions, and sincere and gentle encouragement of amiable and sensible women.”

—Samuel Romilly

“Christianity has lifted woman to a new place in the world. And just in proportion as Christianity has sway, will she rise to a higher dignity in human life . . . What she has now, and all she shall have of privileges and true honor, she owes to that gospel which took those qualities which had been counted weak and unworthy, and gave them a divine glory in Christ.”

—Herrick Johnson

“There can be no higher ambition for a Christian woman than to be a faithful wife and a happy and influential mother. It is the place which God has given woman, and she who fills it well is as honorable and honored as the most illustrious man can be.”

—Charles Stoddard

“Woman was taken out of man; not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled underfoot; but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his side to be loved.”

—Matthew Henry

“’Tis beauty, that doth oft make women proud; ’tis virtue, that doth make them most admired; ’tis modesty, that makes them seem divine.”

—William Shakespeare

“It is the law of eternal justice that man cannot degrade

women without himself falling into degradation; and he cannot raise them without himself becoming better.”

—A. Marten

“Purity of heart is the noblest inheritance, and love the fairest ornament of women.”

—Marcus Claudius

o

HOW JESUS CHANGED MY LIFE



The miracles that took place in the Bible are wonderful, but the one that means the most to me is the story of how Jesus miraculously changed my life!

I, like everyone else who hasn't been born again, had a craving that kept me searching for something that would satisfy. I tried a lot of things that the world had to offer, from amphetamines to hard drugs; but there is one thing for sure, the things of this world will not satisfy the longing within.

Although I had a wife and two dear little girls, I was never around my family much. I was too busy running around.

My wife found out I was taking drugs and we had an argument about it, but a couple of days later she decided she would like to try some, too, so I bought a bag of marijuana. After that we went to the bottom in sin.

In three months' time our marriage was at an end. We had already spent about \$700.00 on divorce proceedings, but we never went through with them. We started taking more drugs, and a lot of "speed." My wife could no longer cope with the life we were living. One night I came home and found her lying on the floor unconscious from an overdose of drugs. An ambulance sped her to the hospital where they admitted her and pumped her stomach, but they couldn't do anything with her. As she was coming to consciousness she cursed the nurses and repeatedly took the intravenous tube out of her arm. Finally, they gave up and called me at work to come and get her. I took her home, but as soon as my back was turned, she took another overdose. This time I found her lying on the kitchen floor with the telephone in her hand. I threw her over my shoulder (she wasn't totally unconscious this time) and told her I was taking her to the hospital. She really fought me then, but I finally got her to the hospital. As soon as they had pumped her stomach, she started a fight with the nurse, so I got her out of there and took her home. I had to babysit with

her because she told me to let her die. I knew she meant business, so I watched her everywhere she went to be certain she didn't take anything, but she soon took another overdose. Again I threw her over my shoulder and took her to General Medical Center. After they pumped her stomach, the doctor told me he wanted to commit her to the psychiatric ward. He said that if they had to pump her stomach one more time it would kill her. She stayed in the hospital about two weeks, but when she came home nothing had changed. Things only got worse. We were taking more drugs and drinking on top of that. We prepared a room in our home and hired a girl to move in as babysitter so my wife and I could come and go as we pleased, without worrying about the children. Our running around increased and we tried new types of drugs. Finally, we made the babysitter leave because she wasn't there when we needed her. She was taking drugs, too, and even had an abortion while living with us.

One night soon afterward, I hit a telephone pole. I was so messed up on drugs I didn't know anything until I woke up in General Medical Center's psychiatric ward.

Our children were a mess. They had no attention, no love, and really no one to turn to. My wife and I were just trying to find something that would satisfy the emptiness within—not knowing that Jesus Christ was the answer to our longing.

One night I came home from work and found my wife in tears. She told me she wasn't going to live like this anymore. She was going to start taking the children to church and get saved. I really didn't know what to think. I was sure I couldn't live like that. In fact, I didn't want to. I wanted to keep on taking drugs and running around. I knew what I was doing was wrong and that eventually it would cost me my wife, my two children and our home. I had a very good job, but was missing work so frequently (often working only two or three days a week), that I knew I would soon lose that, too. When my wife told me she was going to get saved, I moved out.

One night soon afterward, I hit a telephone pole. I was so messed up on drugs I didn't know anything until I woke up in General Medical Center's psychiatric ward. They called my

wife and she told them to commit me so I could stay away from drugs. While I was in the hospital, my wife's pastor visited me and talked to me about my soul. I didn't want to be bothered, but somehow we ended up praying in my hospital room. I told my wife I was saved, but I wasn't really.

During all this time, a man with whom I was working kept telling me that he was praying for me and my family. I knew that God was hearing his prayers and it scared me. I had a talk with the psychiatrist and asked him if I could be released. I promised him I wouldn't take anymore drugs, so he released me. About two days later I found some "speed" in a hole in my coat pocket and just couldn't seem to throw it away, so I took it. Afterward, I felt terrible, because I knew my wife was really trying to do right and show the children a better way. They were going to church and seemed so happy just being together. The home atmosphere wasn't the same. My children were even different, and I wanted what they had.

I never before had such peace in my heart! I was able to look my family in the face and tell them I loved them and really mean it.

One night my wife left for work, and while she was gone I fell on my knees. I didn't know how to pray, so I just asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and clean up my life. I did feel the warmth of His love, and I put my trust in Him. When my wife came home in the morning, I told her that I had asked Jesus to come into my heart. I even threw my cigarettes away and asked the Lord to deliver me from them. I never before had such peace in my heart! I was able to look my family in the face and tell them I loved them and really mean it. I knew that Jesus had forgiven me of my sins and that I was born again of the Spirit of God. In St. John 3:3 Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." After my new birth my life became a living witness to the truth of the Apostle Paul's words in II Cor. 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

I am not proud of my past life. Not only have I asked Jesus to forgive me, but I also have asked my children to forgive me for not bringing them up in a Christian atmos-

phere where there was love one for another. I am ashamed of my sinful past, but I know the Lord has forgiven me. I now have a desire to please God and to be what He wants me to be.

The happiest day of my life was when I invited Jesus to come into my life. My wife and I can testify from the depths of our hearts that Jesus gave us something worth living for. He satisfied that longing in our souls that caused us so much sorrow and almost sent my wife to a burning hell.

“As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.”

Praise the Lord! May His name be glorified!

—John Martin

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