

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Volume 21, No. 3
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Theme For Third Quarter

From the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians we feel inspired to present a series of lessons for this quarter. In this first epistle to the Church at Corinth are found inspiring subjects of great and important value to us today. As was our last quarter's study of the book of Romans, this is not a complete verse-by-verse coverage of the epistle, but rather a collection of the various subjects and topics that Paul dwelt on in his effort to edify and comfort the believers. We would not be able to cover the entire epistle in this quarter's series of lessons, but have chosen those lessons that have been a great blessing and inspiration to our hearts. We have excluded chapters 8, 14 and 16. We enjoy the study of the sacred writings of the Holy Bible, and we surely trust that all who participate in this series of lessons will be richly edified as the Holy Spirit opens up the truth to a greater degree than ever before.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

July 2, 1989

THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD VERSUS THE WISDOM OF THIS PRESENT WORLD

I Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Memory Verse: For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. I Corinthians 1:18.

Central Thought: Because mankind has obtained a wisdom that is earthly and sinful, God has chosen to bring forth a plan of salvation that seems foolish and undesirable to those who follow their ways of error and wrong.

Word Definitions: *"Not with wisdom of words":* Not with eloquence or fine speaking. *"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect":* Lest the reproach of the cross be lost in the grandeur of human endeavor. *Stumblingblock:* The Greek word is "scandal" which means a cause for displeasure or contempt. The worldly wise finds occasion to take offense to the simplicity of Christ and His gospel. *"The foolishness of God is wiser than men":* What seems to man to be foolish and unworthy in the plan of God far surpasses in benefit and accomplishment what man could ever devise or imagine. *Christ "is made unto us wisdom, etc.":* The Greek word for "made" here means to cause to be, or to generate and bring into being. Christ produces and generates in the soul the wisdom that we as humans are void of.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the beginning of his letter to this Corinthian church, Paul had commended them as being in every thing "enriched by him [Christ], in all utterance, and in all knowledge," and went further to say that they came "behind in no gift." Yet, he also acknowledged that there were problems in their midst. There were contentions and elements of following men instead

of following Christ. This attachment to preachers was causing the group of believers to be in division and discord. It seems that some were holding high the minister who baptized them. Paul endeavors to steer their thoughts away from these ideas and attitudes. He belittled his own baptismal activities, not that he was excluding the practice of baptizing, but rather that he wanted these precious souls to focus their attention away from the human instrument that God chose to use and to behold the glorified Christ of the cross. The preaching of the gospel was the activity that counted most with Paul. And then he stressed that this proclaiming of the message of Christ was done in the most plain and simple manner possible, in order to eliminate the chance of the messenger being exalted in pride and vanity of worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom comes chiefly on the wings of admiration of men's persons and the cunning formation of words and enticing speech. For this, Paul issued these thoughts of God's wisdom as opposed to man's wisdom. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul not want the cross of Christ to be of none effect?
2. What kind of state can one get into if he loses sight of the cross of Christ?
3. What is the preaching of the cross to them that perish?
4. What is there about the preaching of the cross that seems foolish to the worldly wise?
5. Where does worldly wisdom come from?
6. How did God fulfill His promise to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent?
7. How did the world by wisdom know not God?
8. What did preaching Christ crucified become to the Jews and why?
9. What did Christ crucified become to the Greeks and why?
10. What did God choose to work through to bring about His plan of salvation and why?
11. How can we have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption?
12. Can you name some instances where worldly wisdom conflicts with the wisdom of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God's ways are above our ways, and His thoughts are far above the thoughts of men. Man looks at things strictly from a human aspect, from an earthly and material insight. This

mind and framework of judgment has led man astray from the true wisdom and knowledge of God. Man has devised and invented many things to his own spiritual detriment and destruction. Strip man of his inventions and devices and he is once more the helpless being that he was originally created to be. But it is not the invention that is to blame, but rather the disposition of the heart and mind that caused man to be dissatisfied with his state. Why should Eve have had any occasion to listen to Satan when he tempted her to partake of the forbidden fruit? It was because the forbidden item was given a desirable color of making one wise! This was one of the drawing cards of Satan. It is still that way today. The world offers its glittering gems of gain, prestige, honor and fame. It all shines in the glow of human endeavor and accomplishment, in the attraction of being smart and beautiful. This pursuit of vanity in things earthly and fleshly, all too soon to decay, ensnares the heart and desires, and men go blindly after those treasures that will mean their eternal doom. Christ came in simplicity and humility, two attributes that the proud and worldly wise disdain and count so lightly. Those who are used of Christ are of like character, lowly and simple. Their message is straightforward and simple. Their way of life is plain and modest and humble. They seek not the praise of men, and their sole aim is to glorify God and to promote His kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An incident is related in which a well known doctor asked a prominent surgeon how many times he had performed a particularly difficult surgery. The surgeon replied that he had performed thirteen of them. "Oh," exclaimed the doctor, "I have done 160 of them." The questioner then continued by asking, "How many of your patients were you able to save?" "I," came the answer, "saved eleven out of thirteen. How many out of 160 were you able to save?" "I lost all of mine, but they were all brilliant operations." A comparison may be drawn here. A message can be ever so brilliant with man's wisdom, but unless it feeds the soul of man, of what profit is it? The Apostle Paul realized that his divine calling did not consist only of much labour, but of letting Christ work through him in lifting up the cross to the people.

How easily a little self or human reasoning in a message can ruin the whole effect of the gospel being preached. There are many skeptics of religion in the first place. Paul found that the Jews stumbled at the gospel because in their human

wisdom they were looking for a literal king. The idea of Christ being crucified ruined the whole story for them. The Greeks in their intellectualism just considered the whole thing preposterous. But because of God's wisdom being preached by Paul and the other apostles, there were some of both Jews and Greeks saved. We are living in a skeptical world today and if we are to see souls saved we must be very careful that we do not mix our own ideas with God's. What we preach and teach must be grounded on the Bible. If it is not, it doesn't matter how brilliant the presentation, it will not accomplish anything of eternal value.

—Wayne Murphey

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July 9, 1989

**THE WISDOM OF GOD REVEALED ONLY
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

1 Corinthians 2:1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Memory Verse: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:14.

Central Thought: Man in his unsaved and sinful condition is not capable of perceiving and comprehending God and His wisdom, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus a way is made for us to be born again and enlightened by the Spirit of God so that we can experience the joys of communion and fellowship with God.

Word Definitions: *"Demonstration of the Spirit"*: Showing or manifestation of the Spirit. *"Wisdom among them that are perfect"*: The word "perfect" here means complete, mature, fully developed. *"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual"*: Conferring, discussing, explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons. *"Spiritually discerned"* and *"He that is spiritual judgeth all things"*: Both of these words "discern" and "judge" here are translated from the same Greek root word which means to examine, comprehend or understand. Verse 15 in the Greek reads: "But the spiritual man indeed examines all things, but he himself is examined (or understood) by no one."

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson Paul dealt with the fact that the wisdom of the world was foolishness with God. God frustrates and brings to nothing all of man's efforts and abilities so as to help man see his utter helplessness. He wants no flesh to glory in his presence. He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. This is a paraphrase of Jeremiah 9:23, 24 where the wise, mighty and rich are admonished to not glory in their own abilities, but rather glory in understanding and knowing the Lord. For this reason Paul's ministry was not filled with

fleshly endeavor or human strength. In weakness, in fear and in much trembling he had his access to souls. Not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God did he want their faith to stand. The wisdom of God showed itself in the meek and lowly Christ and His willing death upon the cross of Calvary. This kind of operation presented a great disappointment and offense to the proud and lofty heart of man. Even the disciples of Christ could not immediately see its value or importance. The reason why Christ was rejected of His generation and cut off out of the land of the living was because of His wisdom not finding praise and acceptance in the hearts of the princes of this present world. Had they known this true wisdom of God, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Paul quotes from Isaiah 64:4 as a declaration of the blindness and hardness of the heart of man to receive the blessings of the God of heaven. He states the problem: the blindness and hardness of carnal man. He proclaims the solution: "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." A parallel statement is found in verse 16. He states the problem: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?" This is a quotation from the Septuagint text of Isaiah 40:13, rendered by the Hebrew as "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" Who has known the mind of the Lord? Eye hath not seen nor ear heard. He proclaims the solution: "But we have the mind of Christ." The spiritual things of the wisdom of God that baffle and frustrate the carnal mind are opened up and easily understood by the person who lets Christ's mind be in him. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" Philippians 2:5. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Paul not seek to have excellency of speech or the enticing words of man's wisdom in His ministry?
2. What was so vital and important about Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?
3. How can the Spirit be demonstrated in human weakness, fear and trembling?
4. What kind of wisdom did Paul seek to express?
5. Why did he call it the "hidden wisdom?"
6. Why did the princes of this world crucify the Lord of glory?
7. What condition was the heart of man in, according to the prophecies quoted in our lesson?
8. How can this blind and ignorant condition of the soul be overcome?

9. What is contained in the term "the spirit of the world?"
10. What do people receive and hold dear who receive the spirit of the world?
11. What are the things of God to the carnal and natural man?
12. How does having the mind of Christ enable us to understand the things of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Beholding conditions that prevail in our society just gives proof to the truth of our lesson today. People who are carnal natured and worldly minded have no place in their lives for the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness and boring to them. The natural man reaches for spectacular things that excite and stimulate the physical emotions and desires. The meek and quiet ways of the Lord do not appeal to them. To be weak and let others run over you is utter foolishness to their way of thinking. They would certainly not have taken the course that Christ took in His humiliation and suffering. The plainness and modesty of a godly and spiritual person looks queer and out of place to the proud and the scornful of this evil age. It is foolish and unbearable to the carnal person to take time to pray and be in communion with his Maker. To sing, worship and serve One whom he has not seen is utterly out of the question. They can cheer and laud sports figures and political figures and all of earth's commodities can they relish, but they are frustrated with matters of patience, hope and spiritual blessedness. There is a spirit of the world. It is a spirit that gets a hold of many souls. It causes them to enjoy the pleasures and treasures of this world, but it bars them out of fellowship with heaven. Anything that affords earthly gain or pleasure attracts their attention. They have an animal and beastly heart and nature. But those who seek the Lord will find a keen sense of reality in spiritual blessings and joys that excite and rapture the heart far more than the fleeting things of time and sense. Praise the Lord for the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ that enables us to behold the glory of the Lord in the countenance of Christ, our Lord and Friend!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I am sure that every minister has had the experience of sitting and listening to another preacher being used of God and having the feeling that they themselves could never preach so effectively, and that in comparison, their own ministry is insignificant. Perhaps this was the feeling that the

Pharisees had when Christ came upon the scene, for the scriptures tell of officers who went out to arrest Christ and they came back with the testimony that "Never man spake like this man." John 7:46. There was nothing outstanding about Christ's education or background to make Him an effective orator, but the secret of His success was found in His knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Just before the above quoted testimony of Christ, He said, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. . .)" John 7:38, 39. His success was not due to His background, but to His present condition of being filled with the Spirit and letting it flow out to others through His ministry.

Paul's testimony of himself would make him an unlikely candidate for the ministry, but he possessed something that opened him up to great wisdom. The deep spiritual things of God, as well as the natural things of this world, were enlightened to his mind. He gave all the credit for this to the Spirit of God.

God can use the most unlikely material to be a great blessing. It does not depend on a certain personality or how much education is possessed, but in being filled with the Spirit of the living God.

—Wayne Murphey

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July 16, 1989

GOD'S HUSBANDRY, OR GOD'S BUILDING

I Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me. as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation. and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold. silver. precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon. he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours;

23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Memory Verse: If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." I Corinthians 3:17.

Central Thought: God has given us in Christ a sure foundation upon which we can build a holy temple in our souls for the Lord to inhabit and work. We must take heed to not put in this structure any faulty or unapproved material, for it will all be tested for durability by the fire of the Holy Spirit now and by the judgment fires in the last great day.

Word Definitions: *Husbandry:* An area of cultivation, a farm. *Masterbuilder:* The Greek word for this is architect. *"Work shall be made manifest":* It shall be shown up for what it is. *"Yet so as by fire":* Not only will a man's work be tested by fire, he himself must also be tested and proved by fire. *"All things are yours":* All things are for your sake, or on your account, for your benefit. We have no excuse for not being successful in Christ.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the first part of this chapter Paul stated that he had not been able to speak unto the Corinthian brethren as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. He did not say that they were not saved and condemn them for having strife and divisions among them, walking as carnal men. He said that they were babes, not grown up to maturity in the Lord. The spirit of following after the man rather than the Spirit of God in the minister was very prevalent among them. There was Apollos who was followed after and upheld by some. Some esteemed Paul very highly and

followed him. This was a carnal element, an element that would hinder these brethren from obtaining the spiritual growth that they needed in their souls. Paul endeavored to explain to them that it was not the preacher that they were to praise and make over, but it was God who gave the increase. They were not Paul's husbandry or building, but rather they were the workmanship of God. Every man is responsible for this building of God in his soul and life. Christ was given to everyone of us for a foundation. Without a foundation to build on, all labor in the building would be lost. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. . . ." Psalm 127:1. The dire warning is that everyone of us should take heed how we build on this foundation. The material that we put into our building is essentially going to determine if our structure will stand or fall. The gold, silver and precious stones that are mentioned represent things that will withstand the fire. This means that we need to build into our lives holiness, purity, righteousness, honesty, faith, obedience to God, humility, love, kindness, patience, and every other attribute that will help conform us to the image of Christ and of God. Wood, hay and stubble are combustible materials, things that fire will consume. The fire of the Holy Spirit will help us to determine if any material in our life is not praise-worthy of God. This is a very serious thought. He mentions again the wisdom of this world and how we are to renounce it and be fools for Christ. He encourages us with the thought that God has given us everything that we need to help us to build a house that will stand for eternity.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is God desiring to do with every soul who comes to Christ?
2. What was the foundation that Paul had layed down for these brethren?
3. Why did he give caution concerning how we build on this foundation?
4. How is every man's work going to be proven?
5. What will happen to a man if his work is destroyed although he has striven to follow the Lord in his life?
6. Will the fire test the individual as well as his work?
7. What will happen to a person who defiles the temple of God?
8. What is the temple of God today?
9. What will worldly wisdom cause a man to do unto himself?
10. How can all things be ours and for our benefit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, if only people, and especially young people, could be aware how serious our mortal journey through this world really is! We are everyone builders for eternity. The house we build in this present world will be ours for eternity. We have been given the materials to build a sound, safe and durable dwelling for our never-dying souls. We have been given a good solid foundation. This foundation is Christ. He is ours to receive, love, follow, obey, worship, serve, enjoy, trust in and build upon. He is our Saviour and Friend. He is not only our foundation, but the supplier of all the material that we will ever need to build a temple that God will be pleased to inhabit. We must ever look to Him with a willingness to do and to be all that He is calling us to be. We must build into our house, our profession, our experience, only those things that are consistent with His holiness. The wisdom of the world we must deny and be on our guard against. Our mortal and natural desires must always be submissive and in accord with His blessed will. We are builders for eternity. Words, thoughts, deeds, attitudes, dispositions, feelings, purposes and activities gauge the kind of material that will go into this structure. Why must we take heed to the material that we use? Because it is going to be tested by fire. We must seek earnestly to keep the Holy Spirit ever burning its holy flame of love and holiness in our souls. He will monitor every bit of material that makes up our experience. May we listen and obey Him in everything. God lives in us through the Holy Spirit. He is here to prepare us for that meeting in glory. How sad it will be for any soul to have the house that he has spent His lifetime working on to come tumbling down around him at the time that he needs it the most! There is no need for it to be that way. We have the Bible, and all things will work together for our good. Life, death, the world, things present and things to come are all ours to turn for the best of our souls. We belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Let us be strong to succeed in the building that we are preparing for eternity.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As God's husbandry we have responsibilities. Just as a husband is relegated to the purpose of loving, caring for and protecting his wife, so each individual is held accountable to cherish his own soul in like manner. If a man contributes to the unhappiness of his wife, in the long run, he is heaping much grief upon himself. If we are so careless as to defile our

soul, it is to our own destruction. For our own well being, we must guard it jealously.

Christ has given us a strong foundation and substantial material with which to build our lives. In order for a person to meet the conditions for salvation, he must be humble, forgiving and contrite. These are admirable qualities and if they are continually incorporated into a life, it will be a life that will stand. After a person is saved, the devil attempts immediately to weazel these things away. He seeks to tarnish and eventually replace that humility with pride. He convinces one that there are reasons for not forgiving an unkindness, and as the Church at Ephesus, some simply lose their first love. The Corinthian Church experienced this very thing. They manifested carnality as they formed factions in following certain leaders, and begin using things in building their lives that would not stand the judgement fire of God.

—Wayne Murphey

ATHEISM IS BANKRUPT

*An Address Before Congress
By Representative George Christopher*

Until recent years I had thought the days of Christian martyrdom had passed. I never expected to live to read of Christians being compelled to face death and fates that are worse than death in defense of their faith. But since Communism has raised its ugly head, we seem to be returning to the Dark Ages.

"I have followed the trials of those accused of subversive activities but I am forced to the conclusion that while necessary to protect our Country from the ravages of spies, that these methods alone will never eradicate the disease. A man does not become a Communist over night. Communism in the individual is the result of wrong thinking, faulty or unwise education that probably begins in the home and the school.

"As practiced in Russia and her satellites, Communism is the most absolute dictatorship the world has ever known. It destroys not only freedom of speech, freedom of the press, but seeks to destroy the home and frankly states that it cannot live with the Christian religion. . .

"The training I received in my early youth made me so immune to Communism by the time I was twelve years of age that all the minions of hell could not change me. On our

center table at home lay a family Bible. It was there as early as I can recollect. As soon as I was old enough to understand, Mother read to me the story of creation as given by Moses in the book of Genesis.

"Later the twenty-third Psalm was read and explained to me and the Sermon on the Mount. In the middle of that old book, there were a number of ruled pages with two angels at the top of each page forming an arch. Written in faded ink were the records of the births and deaths of ancestors I have never seen. Births, deaths, and marriages were recorded there.

"We children were told that that Book was sacred and we should open it with care and reverence, because God had given it to us as a guide to right living and right thinking and that it contained all we needed to know in order to become good men and women and good citizens of our Country.

"Before I was five years of age, I became acquainted with both birth and death. My father was a Missouri farmer and Missouri farmers raise livestock. Because my father had learned that the hog market in August was higher than in December and January, he always planned to have the baby pigs come in early February. Early February in Missouri is seldom mild. Quite often the snow as fine salt rides on a forty-mile gale and seeks every crack and crevice.

"Many times I have gone with my father to bring the baby pigs in a cloth-lined basket to be dried by the stove so they would not freeze. The lambs had to be guarded from snows and cold rains and returned to their mothers. I was taught that it was my duty to save life, also that it was a privilege to help. My mother told me it was God's way. That He had so ordered it and that anything He ordered was well.

"When I was ten years old I got my first geography. On the second page was a chart covering the full page. In the upper left-hand corner of that page was a picture of a man wearing a loin cloth. On his left stood an orangutan, next to him a horse, then an elephant, then a giraffe, and so on back and forth across that page through the entire gamut of creation until at last in the lower right-hand corner there appeared a jelly-like spot, large at both ends and small in the center. This, the chart said was an amoeba, a form of life so low that the probabilities were it had been spontaneously generated. I took this chart to my mother. It had created in my mind my first doubt.

"Mother told me not to quarrel with my teacher about it but that I did not have to believe such things. I know what it is to doubt. I know what it is to have all the darkness of a

thousand nights poured into one hour. But my home training and the Book of Books has conquered those doubts and have driven them away. The place to fight Communism is in the home and in the school. A philosopher has said God realized He could not be with all of the children, all of the time, so He created Christian mothers.

"I remember my first serious illness. How my mother sat at my bedside night after night; how she turned the pillow when it was hot, . . . and soothed my pains with that voice that I will never hear again until by Christian faith and the grace of God I meet her in a better country.

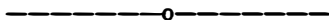
"What does atheism have to offer? Atheism is the handmaiden of Communism. Any body that would take away from people in this old world of toil and strife their Christian faith, and offer nothing in its place, is too detestable for description. A man who would seek to destroy your faith in Christ is meaner than a man who would steal a cripple's crutch or take pennies out of a blind beggar's cup. On your sick bed, what does the atheist have to offer? He says, no use to pray, let the pain stab, let the fever burn, curse it and die.

"When we reach the end of life's journey as we all soon must do; . . . and the spirit is breaking away from the body, the atheist says the Bible is a myth, there is no God.

"My friends, I am not willing to adopt such a dismal theory. I am not willing to admit that my grandfather, a million times removed, was a water moccasin . . . or my grandmother might have been a mud turtle. With all my weakness I still claim a nobler heritage. I still maintain that I am a son of God created in His image. . .

"How the atheist must enjoy going to the young mother and saying to her: 'The baby that has just been lowered into the grave, you will never see again, there is no resurrection.'

"I tell you, friends, the places to fight Communism and atheism are in the home, school and church. 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.' "



July 23, 1989

BEING FOOLS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

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.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

Memory Verse: Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. I Corinthians 4:5.

Central Thought: Even though we are counted as fools, we must hold fast to the Lord, who will come and bring to light how things really are and reward those who have suffered for His cause and His kingdom.

Word Definitions: *Steward*: One intrusted with the safe-keeping and management of another man's goods or property. "*I know nothing by myself*": For I am conscious of nothing (wrong) in myself. *Spectacle*: A gazingstock. The Greek word is the word "theatre." We are presented to the world, to angels and to men to be looked at. *Buffeted*: Beaten. *Entreat*: Pray.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul had mentioned in chapter 3 about Apollos and him being ministers by whom they, the saints, had believed, as the Lord gave to every man. He now states that they are to be accounted as stewards of the mysteries of God. The thought of stewardship is the thought of responsibility. Realizing that such responsibility can incur scrutiny and criticism, he stated that the passing of judgment on him by a mere man was a very small thing, and that he did not try to even judge himself. He did not feel any condemnation concerning himself, but did not count himself justified by this, but looked to God as a means of judgment for the good of his own soul. He had confidence in the righteous judgment of God who not only judged a man's deeds, but the motive behind the deed. In being stewards of the grace of God, we are going to pass into the arena or theatre of life. We are going to be seen of the world. People are going to look at us. What will they see? Will they see Christ, His faith, love and holiness? Angels are beholding us. They desire to look into the hearts and lives of God's people. They see what we suffer in the Christian way and are ever near to help us. God's people and His ministers have suffered many hard things along the way of life. They have been mocked and looked down upon. The spirit of this present evil world prevailed to have Christ crucified. It has also prevailed to persecute the precious saints in every generation since. Let us not draw back from the conflict. Though we suffer as a Christian, He will reward us over there. The kingdom that we have received in the grace of God is a triumphant kingdom of power. We will conquer though we die. We that are fools for Christ will stand alongside Him in that day, victorious forever. Let us be strong to endure the reproaches of His blessed cross. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul say that a man should account of him to be?
2. What is required of stewards?
3. How did Paul feel about the judgment of a man?

4. How did Paul feel about judging himself?
5. What will the Lord do in His judgment of a matter?
6. What did Paul say that they were made?
7. In what way is a true child of God a fool?
8. How are we to take being reviled and persecuted?
9. How did Paul express himself toward these Corinthian brethren in his warning?
10. What difference is there in an instructor and in a father?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A life of a servant of God is not a bed of roses. In some way, God is going to give us a taste of being fools for Christ. He will let us be humiliated and things will happen that we never thought would ever come our way. But we are stewards, and he wants us to be faithful in the places He wants us to fill and the work He is calling us to accomplish. No matter what we may suffer for His sake, we know that we are not fools in His sight. We are to accept each trial and hardship as tokens of His special favor. Men may judge us and condemn us, but God is looking on the heart. All things are naked and open to His all-seeing eyes. No sorrow or burden that we might endure for His sake and for the sake of our faith and decision for Him will be overlooked. We will be ridiculed and defamed for the way we endeavor to dress modestly, not catering to the ungodly styles and fads of the world. In our efforts and desire to maintain faith in God, trusting Him for soul and body, we will meet with opposition and ridicule. There will be times when we will have to suffer loss and injury rather than fight back and retaliate. We will be scorned because we do not go with the crowd in their vain pursuit of pleasure. There is a reproach to be borne in living the real Christian life. Someday we will leave this world as all men will, but there is a God and a righteous judge who waits at the end of life's way. He will reward us rightly. If we let the kingdom rule in our hearts and lives now, and live in hope and expectation of the kingdom's final ultimate triumph, it will be worth it all to have been fools for Him in the face of this evil generation.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The title of our lesson is very specific. We are to be fools for Christ's sake. It is very possible to make a fool of yourself, which in the eyes of the world, makes a fool of Christ. We are not commanded in the Holy Scriptures to make fools of ourselves. In fact all of our energies should be directed toward

making attractive the way. We should make sure that any reproaches that are brought upon us are entirely due to a close walk with Christ.

There are some things that we should suffer in silence and not glory in. An example of this would be how the Apostle Paul, when he was first saved, suffered the humiliation of being held at arm's length by the saints, knowing full well he was reaping the harvest of his own doing. When we, through our own ignorance, bring problems upon ourselves, let us endure. There will be plenty of occasions to suffer for Christ without our manufacturing them.

If you think that being a fool for Christ is hard, consider what the scriptures declare about sinners. "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools." Prov. 3:35. "A fools mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul." Prov. 18:7. "Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted." Psa. 107:17. "Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools." Prov. 19:29. It is much better to be counted a fool for Christ than suffer the penalties reserved for those who are fools because of sin. —Wayne Murphey

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July 30, 1989

SERVING CHRIST IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Memory Verse: . . . Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I Corinthians 5:8.

Central Thought: It is not good to tolerate individuals guilty of immoral practices and have them in fellowship in the congregation. Their influence can spread like leaven throughout the whole Church with very grievous results. Such should be admonished in love, and, if they refuse to repent and come clear, they must be publicly renounced and severed from fellowship with the saints.

Word Definitions: "*Ye are puffed up*": They had been so taken up with lifting each other up that they had failed to keep the proper discipline in the church. "*To deliver such an one unto Satan*": Christ gives power and authority to His ministers to pronounce judgment and even woe upon transgressors for the good of their souls. *Sincerity*: Genuineness, clearness, purity. "*Not to company with fornicators*": They could not completely separate themselves from this sort of people, because such practices were so prevalent in that society. Very few communities there are but what have some or all of these evils at hand, being people that we have to do business with, etc. "*But if any man that is called [named or professed to be] a brother be a fornicator*": If any man professes to be a Christian and is engaged in forni-

cation or any other immoral practice, we must not fellowship him as a Christian for the sake of the influence that such would have toward the world with regard to the testimony and standard of the truth. *"With such an one no not to eat"*: With such a one not even to eat.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Right while the Corinthian brethren were being exalted in pride concerning one another, they were letting things go on in their midst that were so shameful and reproachful to the cause of holiness and purity. Someone among them had unlawful relations with his father's wife, probably his step-mother. It is very easy to fail to have the right kind of discipline and judgment in such matters concerning someone close to us like this. But Paul, although he was not in their immediate presence, had already discerned the situation and sought their cooperation in renouncing that individual and helping him to be aware of the danger that he was in and what a severe hindrance he was being to the cause of Christ. God wants us to stand against wrong and sin and hold high a standard of love and purity before the world. He wants the leaven of malice and wickedness purged out of our lives and out of the assemblies of the saints. Any kind of tolerated evil or pride in a congregation will hinder the working of the Holy Spirit and His blessing upon the congregation as a whole just that much. God wants to bless individuals, but He also wants to bless congregations as well. We must commit some things and the world without to God, but if there are those in our midst who are purposely and privily carrying on with evil in their lives, such should be exposed and reproved, given a chance to repent and straighten up, and, if they persist in their evil ways, they should be renounced and made known to all as severed from the fellowship of the Church. That this discipline was practiced is recorded many times in Church history.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Paul want these brethren to feel concerning the evil reported commonly among them?
2. What kind of influence is exerted by a person who is guilty of transgressing God's law being held in fellowship of the congregation before the world?
3. If God brings such a one into judgment and affliction, what is the purpose for it all?

4. What should we have in mind in all of our dealings with people?
5. How is condoned and justified sin in a congregation like leaven?
6. What kind of leaven must we as Christians be sure that we purge out of our lives?
7. What is the unleavened bread that we must keep the feast with today?
8. Why is it impossible for us to keep ourselves altogether from the sinful people of the world?
9. What are the steps that should be taken when a person is known to be walking disorderly in a congregation?
10. What guidance and counsel should we seek in carrying out such matters?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

On the night that Israel was to escape from the hand of Pharaoh and Egypt, they were to kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood thereof on the door posts of their dwellings. They were to eat the flesh of the lamb that night roasted with fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The death angel passed through the land that night and destroyed the firstborn of every family who did not have the blood upon the door posts. This final plague was the finishing of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and their woeful bondage. They escaped that night from the hand of Pharaoh and started their long journey toward Canaan. They were instructed of God to rehearse this deliverance in a yearly feast which was called the Feast of the Passover. This was all a type of the Lord Jesus shedding His blood for our souls' salvation. Paul uses the thought here concerning the unleavened bread, and how it typifies the pure and sinless lives that we are to maintain as Christians and followers of Christ, who is our passover, sacrificed for us. Leaven typifies pride, which is the taproot of sin and disobedience. We are not to tolerate sin in our lives and in the fellowship of the Church. We are to bear with people and be patient with their spiritual progress, but there comes a time when the Spirit of the Lord will direct in dealing with transgressors to bring them to repentance and keep the work of the Lord clean and pure. God is working to save the lost, and if error or wrong in a congregation hinders the work of salvation for souls, the Spirit of the Lord will move to have the problem corrected or the offender moved out of the way. As long as a person feels justified and accepted by everyone, there will be great excuse for a continuation in his wrong. But if the Church, as a whole, will stand together against them in their

error, it will help to either bring them to repentance or to cause them to be moved out of the way. As in our lesson, there may come times when an offender must be avoided and kept apart from, in order to show that we have no fellowship with such. In all of this we need the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit that it might be carried out rightfully.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When a person becomes proud and defiant in the sinful things he does, then he is surely in trouble before God. The Apostle Paul is also pointing out that this is something that the Church should take a stand against. The scriptures are full of assurances pertaining to God's longsuffering and mercy toward those who are weak and have failures in their lives. The Church is explicitly exhorted to restore the fallen and encourage the downtrodden. But the picture changes when the transgressor takes pleasure in his sin. God knows the power of the enemy to trip up the Christian, therefore He is looking at the sincerity of the heart. Christ was concerned about the restoration of Peter after he denied Him, because He knew that Peter had a desire to do right. But judgment instantly fell upon Ananias and Sapphira when they sinned because theirs was a premeditated transgression for which they had no remorse.

An account is told of a man who attended a revival out of curiosity. When the altar call was given, a gospel worker asked him if his sins were forgiven. The man replied in the negative. The gospel worker asked him if he would like to have them forgiven. The answer was, "No, I like my sins." This is a dangerous attitude to possess. To be in a similar state as those at Corinth and refuse to mourn our sins, but to continue in them, sends the message to God of open rebellion.

This verse by Friedrich Logan expresses truths worth considering.

Manlike is it to fall into sin,
Fiendlike is it to dwell therein,
Christlike is it for sin to grieve,
Godlike is it all sin to leave.

—Wayne Murphey



August 6, 1989

AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND MEMBERS OF CHRIST

1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren.

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.

10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Memory Verse: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. I Corinthians 6:20.

Central Thought: Being members of Christ's body, and being led by His Holy Spirit who abides in us, we need not go

to law before the unjust to settle problems that arise in our midst. We must keep our bodies and our spirits pure as the temple of God, for we are not our own.

Word Definitions: *Defrauded:* Deprived or treated unjustly. *Effeminate* and *"Abusers of themselves with mankind"*: Perverts and homosexuals. *Extortioner:* One who practices the taking or obtaining of anything from another person by unlawful use of fear, force, threats, or any other undue exercise of power.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The ways of Christ and His nature of meekness and gentleness are certainly far different than the way of carnal minded people. It takes time for souls who come out of the world and embrace the Christian hope and faith to unlearn the ignorant ways that they have been used to following while they were in sin. Many times our ignorance causes problems, but as we keep an open mind and heart toward the Lord, we can learn more and more how to follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God. Paul deals with a problem in our lesson today of brethren going to law against other brethren in the Church. He reproved them for doing that because of the bad influence such conduct would have before sinners, and because they were forgetting that the children of God who are enlightened from on high by the Spirit of God are much more capable of counseling and solving disputes than were the carnal and unjust courts and judges. He also admonishes them to rather allow themselves to be defrauded without retaliation in the meekness of Christ. In striving not to be defrauded, they were doing wrong and defrauding their brethren by taking them to court. He reminded them that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God and listed some of the kinds of people who fall in that category. Such were some of these people before they were washed in the blood of Jesus and he warns them not to be caught in the trap that they had been rescued out of by the grace of God. He also warns them against the snare of fornication. It is very evident and according to history that these societies long ago, before the gospel came and changed many of their lives, were full of fornication and immoral behavior. This was because these people were in darkness and did not know how to restrain and control the appetites of their bodies. We live in a society today that is overrun with this same vice and wickedness. It is a truth that he who commits fornication sins against his own body. The

Lord wants our bodies to be sacred to Him as we are joined unto Him in one spirit. Therefore we are to flee these immoral ways and be joined unto the Lord in one spirit. With the Holy Spirit inhabiting our mortal bodies as His sacred temple we must govern our lives with godly fear, always remembering that we have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and that we are not our own to indulge in the lusts of the body unsanctioned and ungoverned by the Spirit of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Paul reprove the brethren for in the first part of our lesson?
2. In doing this thing, what were these brethren overlooking?
3. In what way will the saints be able to judge the world and the angels?
4. What did Paul say that they should have done instead of taking each other to court?
5. What are some of the sins Paul mentioned here that are prevalent in our world today?
6. Why was the Corinthian church not that sort of people any more?
7. What are our bodies members of?
8. How are we joined unto the Lord?
9. Because we are bought with the price of the blood of Christ, what should we do with our bodies, which are God's?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When a person is saved from their sins and begins the new life in Christ, he or she must be very diligent to learn of Christ and His meek and lowly ways. His way is so much better than the ways of the world and is very different, too. Many problems arise when people ignorantly seek to continue the old ways of life while they are professing the new. Jesus said in Matthew 11:29 to take His yoke upon us and learn of Him. He said that He was meek and lowly in heart. It takes a lot of listening to Christ and diligently seeking Him to unlearn our sinful ways and take upon ourselves His gracious ways. But if we are teachable and willing, He is faithful to convey the knowledge of His blessed way of life to us. These Corinthian brethren were newly come to the knowledge of the Lord. They had not learned of His meekness as much as they really needed to. Like many of our day, they were used to running to the courts of law when they had a matter against anyone.

Paul is instructing them that this was not good practice as professed Christians. It was better for them to bring their problems before the saints who were enlightened from on high by the wisdom of God. And they were also to learn that, many times, there was no need to do even that. Instead, they could just take the matter meekly to God in prayer and wait on Him to work it all out. But in trying to keep from being defrauded, they were being guilty of defrauding the brethren. They had been saved from such awful ways of life. They had been washed and justified by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Their bodies were no longer their own property to do with as their own desires dictated. Their bodies were the temple of the Holy Spirit. They were united to the Lord in one spirit, and their bodies were to be kept holy as a sacred temple to the Lord. It is the same with us today. Christ purchased us with His own blood. We are not our own. We are to glorify God in our bodies and spirits. How much happier and blessed for us to live according to His rule and not to our own fleshly and selfish way that before we found so inconvenient!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If there are any who have wisdom and insight into how to make a righteous judgment, it should be the children of God. In one of Jesus' parables, He indicated that in some ways the children of the world were wiser than those of that time who had a high religious profession. (Luke 16:8). Paul found the brethren in the Corinthian church depending on the courts to settle their disagreements and he reproved them for it. It was not much of a testimony for the Church to air its grievances against one another before the whole community. It is unlikely that anyone, no matter how long they have been living for the Lord, possess the wisdom to settle every dispute that might arise, but we do have the promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5.

Since we are bought with a price we should be careful not to bring a reproach upon the One who loved us enough to pay that price. The story is told of a well known reformer who interested himself in behalf of a condemned criminal, and at length succeeded in obtaining his pardon. When the criminal heard the joyful news of his release, he prostrated himself at the reformer's feet and exclaimed, "Oh, sir, every drop of my blood thanks you, for you have had mercy on every drop of it! Wherever you go, I will be yours!" With even greater cause

may the Christian prostrate himself at the feet of Christ, and make a grateful commitment of allegiance.

—Wayne Murphey

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THE MOST INTERESTING STORY I EVER HEARD

(From the American Civil War)

The most interesting story I ever heard was told me years ago by a man over eighty years of age. We were sitting together on a projecting rock of a mountain-side in Arkansas. He said:

"I was down in this country during the Civil War. Across on the other side yonder there were hundreds of tents where our soldiers were encamped. Measles broke out and many of our brave lads died. The epidemic got so bad we stretched some tents farther down the valley and moved all the measles patients into these tents. This, of course, was done to protect as far as possible the health of well soldiers. I was wardmaster in charge of these tents.

"One night while I was on the ward, I passed a bunk where there was a very sick soldier who looked at me with a pathetic expression and said, 'Wardmaster, I believe I am going to die. I am not a Christian. I never had any Christian training. My father isn't a Christian. I never had any Christian training. I never did attend church. I did go with a boy friend to Sunday school class. The teacher seemed to be such a good woman. She read us something out of the Bible about a man—I think his name was Nicodemus. Anyway, it was about a man who went to see Jesus one night. Jesus told this man he must be born again. The teacher said all people must be born again in order to go to heaven when they die. I have never been born again, and I don't want to die like this. Won't you please get the chaplain so he can tell me how to be born again?' "

The old man hesitated for a moment. "You know, in those days I was an agnostic—at least, that is what I called myself. As a matter of fact, I wasn't anything but an old sinner. So I told the boy, 'You don't need a chaplain. Just be quiet now. Don't worry, you'll be all right.' I went on around the ward and in about an hour I came back to the boy's bed. He looked at me out of such sad, staring eyes as he said, 'Wardmaster, if you won't get me the chaplain, please get me the doctor. I am choking to death.' 'All right, my son, I'll get you the doctor,' I said. So I went off and found the doctor and he came, mopped

out the throat of the lad so he could breathe just a little easier. I knew the boy was going to die. I had seen many other cases just like his. The boy was so sweet he literally climbed into my heart. He thanked me for my kindness. He thanked the doctor for being so good to him. The doctor and I left him.

"In about an hour I came back expecting to find the boy dead, but he was still struggling. He looked up out of his eyes of death and said, 'There is no use, Wardmaster. I have got to die, and I haven't been born again. Whether you believe in it or not, won't you find the chaplain and let him tell me how to be born again?' I looked at him for a moment and thought about how helpless he was in the grip of death. So I said, 'all right, my son, I will get you the chaplain.'

I walked away a few paces and then turned and went back to the boy's bedside. I said, 'My boy, I am not going to get you the chaplain. I am going to tell you what to do myself. Now understand, I am an agnostic. I don't know whether there is any God, any heaven, or any hell, but I know one thing, my mother was a good woman. I know if there is a God my mother knew Him. If there is a heaven, I know she is there. So, I will tell you what my mother told me. You can try it and see if it works. It is in John 3:16. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' My mother said that I cannot save myself, but if I will believe in Jesus, He will save me.

"I asked the boy to say the verse with me. I started and he followed with a weak, shaky voice slowly: 'For God so loved the world,' 'For God so loved the world,' 'that he gave his only begotten Son,' etc. Now, my boy, my mother said if a person will trust Jesus he will not perish but have everlasting life.

"I referred the lad to another verse my mother taught me, but he closed his eyes, stretched his hands across his breast and in a whisper he quoted slowly, repeating some of the words several times, 'For God so loved the world . . . that he gave his only begotten Son . . . that whosoever, whosoever . . . whosoever believeth, believeth in Him. BELIEVETH in HIM.' Then he stopped and said with a clear voice, 'Praise God, Wardmaster, it works. I believe in Him! I shall not perish! I have everlasting life! I have been born again! Wardmaster, your mother was right. Why don't you try it? Do what your mother said. It works, Wardmaster. This thing works! Wardmaster, before I go I want to ask you to do something for me. Take a kiss to my mother and tell her what you told me, and tell her that her dying son said, "It works." ' I leaned over and kissed him and then as he drew his last breath he said, 'It works.' "

The old man, wiping tears out of his eyes and out of the wrinkles of his face, said, "The lad was right. **It does work.** Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but has now everlasting life. **It works. I know it works!**"

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23.

—B. Jones, Sr.

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August 13, 1989

FAITHFULNESS TO GOD AND TO ONE'S SPOUSE

I Corinthians 7:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;

30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;

31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

Memory Verse: The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.
I Corinthians 7:39.

Central Thought: Although it would be good for a man to keep himself unmarried and avoid the problems that accom-

pany being married, yet we know that marriage is a divine institution of God and has its rightful and beneficial purpose if carried out according to the will of God and His initial plan.

Word Definitions: *"It is good for a man not to touch a woman"*: The word "touch" here means to fasten or attach one's self to. In other words, it would be good if a man would not get involved in marriage with a woman. But on account of temptation and the traps of fornication, it is also good for every man to have his own wife, and for every woman to have her own husband. *"Due benevolence"*: The love, kindness, and disposition to do good which one owes to his or her spouse. *"It remaineth"*: After everything is said and done. *"Use this world, as not abusing it"*: Use the things of this world only as the Spirit of God will give His sanction, and not over-using.

LESSON BACKGROUND

One of the greatest detriments that was the result of man's fall into sin was the corruption of the marriage covenant and the function of man and woman to each other. Broken homes and frustrated, defeated marriages are the tragic consequences of man's departure from His Maker. There were problems along this line in the Corinthian church, just as there are great and sore problems in our society today concerning marriage. It is very evident that Paul could have had a lawfully wedded wife if he had so chosen. But for the sake of his calling as a minister of the gospel of Christ, Paul chose to remain unmarried, thus eliminating the solicitations that marriage would have imposed upon him. In all the counsel that he gave the Church in this chapter, he still was of the opinion that he had chosen the best route. The frontage road that lies alongside the interstate highway or the business route may take a person to the same place, but there will be more traffic and interruptions and jams with which to contend. If a man would stay out of marriage and live faithful to God, he would be spared a lot of trouble. But there are advantages and blessings in marriage that God ordained for a man to have and enjoy. There are absolute laws that God has laid down, and there are laws of expediency. But let us remember that the married man, though he is weighed down with the responsibilities of a wife and a home, must maintain his faithfulness to God just as if he had no wife. This can be done with the Lord's help.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What had Paul found out and concluded about marriage concerning his own life?
2. What is the only wife that a man can lawfully have?
3. What are some of the benevolent duties that a man has towards his wife, or a wife towards her husband?
4. What does the Lord say about a wife departing from her husband?
5. When Paul had no commandment to give from the Lord in a matter, what did he give?
6. In counseling someone to remain unmarried, what was Paul trying to spare them?
7. Because of the nearness of eternity, what did Paul say that they who have wives should be as?
8. How can those who weep be as though they wept not, or those who rejoice as though they rejoice not?
9. How can they that buy be as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it.
10. How long is a person bound by the law to their companion?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When God made man and placed him in the midst of His beautiful creation, there was a space of time, it seemed, that man felt an emptiness and a need of a help-meet. What a blessing it was when God brought to the man the woman that He had formed from the rib taken from his side! Proverbs 18:22 declares, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." Marriage was meant for a blessing. That is what God originally planned and purposed that it would be. But sin has wrought great woes and problems in the function of marriage and the relationship between man and woman. We have only to look around us to verify this truth. But regardless of how many woes and problems come through the marriage state, it is still possible for a person to have and maintain a happy and successful married life. If we will give God the reins of our lives, and give Him a chance to lead and guide our footsteps along the way, He will guide us into a happy marriage. A Christian home with a happily married couple and precious well-controlled children is a beautiful and blessed state to be in. It is wise for a young person to start early to seek the guidance and the blessing of the Lord in their life. Marriage is one of life's greatest challenges and opportunities. Next to salvation, it is the most serious step you will ever take in life. People take it so lightly, but it is serious. What sad and bitter tragedies we see all around us today! Almost every family is affected more or less by double and triple marriages. It is a curse of our society. It

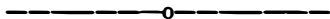
does not need to be that way. If we will take the guidelines and the counsel laid down for us in the Bible and earnestly seek God for His will to be done, God will reward us and work out for us the blessedness of a happy home and marriage according to His great love and goodness that He has for man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The first year or two of married life could well be, and quite often is, the footing upon which the union stands or falls. Two people from different backgrounds, different families, different habits, different patterns of thinking, in fact, two almost strangers suddenly take up residence together and begin to share their twain lives as one. No matter how well folks may feel they know each other before marriage, they will soon discover that they actually were pretty much strangers when they began the business of living together. How thoughtful of the Lord to arrange it so this would be the time when all the healing balm of love would be so prominent. More adjustments will need to be made more quickly than perhaps at any other one time in all the adventure of life. This is the time to learn a great deal about your lifetime companion—likes and dislikes, habits, traits, dispositions and a multitude of other things. These are definitely times when the newly-weds need to be alone together. Learn to make decisions together, to counsel together, to work together and play together, to learn to be at ease and comfortable together. This is where, from two entirely different backgrounds and cultures, there begins to emerge from the blending of the two the setting that will surround a succeeding generation. Newly married folks need and must learn how to work all these out for themselves, between themselves. Failure to do that could very well lead to trouble.

—Bro. Clifford Wilson
(Written in 1969.)



August 20, 1989

STRIVING FOR SUCCESS IN THE MINISTRY

I Corinthians 9:7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not the milk of the flock?

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, as not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:

lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Memory Verse: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. I Corinthians 9:27.

Central Thought: The Scriptures teach that it is the plan of God for those who preach the gospel to have their means supplied by those who are benefited thereby. But Paul would not enforce this or use it for his advantage, choosing rather to trust in God, lest he should fail in his ministry and life for God.

Word Definitions: *"At his own charges"*: At his own expense. *"Not muzzle the mouth of the ox"*: While the ox was doing service in threshing out the grain, he was not to be hindered from reaching down and taking some of the corn to eat. *"Carnal things"*: Money, goods, or any material blessing. *"Dispensation of the gospel"*: The word "dispensation" is from the same word as stewardship, translated from the Greek word "oikonomea," the source of our word "economy." *"Striveth for the mastery"*: Contends and participates in the sports. *"I keep under my body"*: The Greek term here means to browbeat or hit in the eyes. It refers to the strict discipline that we must give to the appetites and desires of our mortal flesh. *Temperate*: Having self-control.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul, in chapter 8, had counselled and cautioned the brethren to be careful not to use their liberty in Christ in such a way that would cause someone's weaker conscience to be defiled and discourage that soul from the way of Christ. He ended up by making this statement in verse 13, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." This set the stage for his discourse in chapter 9. In the first 6 verses he made it plain that he was free, he had power to eat and to drink, and he also had scriptural authority and right not to work, that is, with respect to his call as a minister to labor for Christ and reap the material blessings of those he preached to. In our lesson today he gives several illustrations, and some from the Scriptures, that proves his point about expecting support from those who reap the benefits from his ministry in the Lord. The soldier, the one who plants a vineyard, the shepherd, the ox who treads out the corn, the plowman, and those who ministered in the temple, all these, proves his point that he was free not to be involved in manual labor, but rather to trust in the Lord to supply his needs. But he said that he used none of these things and did not press them down upon

the people, because he did not want to make the gospel to be anything but free and accessible to all. He preached the Word, not because of the support provided, but he preached because he had been made a steward with a responsibility to God. He compared himself as one being trained to run or fight in the games. He didn't want to fail in his pursuit of the crown of life that Christ has promised to all who are faithful.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were some of the things that Paul compared himself to in the gospel?
2. Why was the mouth of the ox not to be muzzled while he tread out the corn?
3. Why did Paul not use this liberty and power to demand that people support him?
4. Is this the attitude that many sectarian preachers have today?
5. What would Paul rather happen to him than for anyone to make his glorying void?
6. How serious did he count his call as a gospel preacher?
7. What did he say was committed unto him?
8. How could he have abused his power in the gospel?
9. What did Paul liken his striving for success in the ministry to?
10. What is there about our mortal bodies that have to be subdued and kept under?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Paul had certain rights and privileges as a minister. He had a Bible right to expect those to whom he preached and labored for in the gospel to give to him and to support him in his labors. But he drew a line and refused to exercise the full right that he had. He would not stress or demand that people cooperate with him in this matter. He sacrificed many things because he did not want the gospel to have any kind of charge or fee attached, even if it seemed justifiable for him to hold this on the people. Oh, if the preachers of this day could but see this! There is such a covetous spirit that is dominating many preachers. They come right out in the open with their pleas for money and support. It is a shame that such who preach should do this and cast such a reflection on the gospel. This was not the spirit of our Brother Paul. He was certainly not in it for the financial gain. He was, as he expressed in other places, willing to work with his hands to supply his needs rather than have it seem that he was in it for gain. The burden of proclaiming the gospel rested heavily upon his

heart. "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" was the cry of his soul. He had a stewardship invested in him of the Lord. He had an economy to take care of and work out. He wanted the gospel to be without charge. He would not yield to the temptation to make gain for himself. He realized that if he gave way to these temptations of the flesh, he would lose his soul and the crown of success. He wanted to run and fight efficiently and not miss that incorruptible crown. This attitude and pure decision is for us today. There are many things that will allure our souls away from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. May we be strong and faithful to hold fast to the true way that leads to the crown of life.—Leslie C. Busbee

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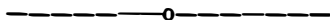
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the biggest contributing factors to the down fall of a minister is the abuse of power. When Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, all of the temptations were related to misappropriating or abusing the power invested in Him. The first temptation was to turn stones into bread. Christ viewed this as using a divine ability for the gain of fleshly desire. The next temptation involved casting Himself from the temple and letting the angels bear Him up. Finally the devil offered to put all the kingdoms in Christ's control if He would only fall down and worship him. Satan works in a similar manner today. He likes nothing better than to guide a minister into the covetous act of spreading the gospel for the gratification of fleshly desires and material gain.

Those who operate in this manner receive all the reward they will ever receive for any sacrifice made. Paul received a blessing because he could make the gospel of Christ without charge. When his life was drawing to a close, he testified that there was a crown of righteousness laid up for him. His eternal reward far outweighed any pleasure he could have attained by usurping power to receive material gain.

On the other hand however, since God has not ordained the ministry to dictate the giving of offerings, He expects the saints to be willing to freely give when He lays a burden upon them to do so. Just as a minister will lose a blessing by abusing his office, the layman will lose his blessing by not fulfilling the duty appointed unto him.

—Wayne Murphey



August 27, 1989

WARNINGS AGAINST FALLING AWAY

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of the serpents.

10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Memory Verse: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. **1 Corinthians 10:13.**

Central Thought: It is possible and there is a danger for a person, after they have been saved from sin, to fall away from the blessings and favor of God. If we watch and pray and trust fully in God's promise to keep us, we can overcome all temptation and abide faithful to Him.

Word Definition: *Ensamples:* Types and examples.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we finished with the thought of keeping under our bodies and bringing them into subjection, lest we be castaways. Paul continues with this thought in our lesson today, bringing in the lessons given in the history of Israel and their fall from the favor of God after they had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. There is a teaching abroad in our world that would have us to believe that once a person is saved, there is no way for them to ever be lost. They maintain that once we are in grace, we are always in grace, no matter what comes or goes. But in the light of these Scriptures and many more we know that this doctrine is incorrect. We always have the flesh to subdue and to guard against. It is the responsibility of the child of God to deny the flesh and keep it in proper bounds. To fail to do that is to invite spiritual defeat and disaster. These proponents of "once saved, always saved," do not relate the failures of those in the Old Testament to us, for they say that we are in a different dispensation now, and what we have is that which we cannot fall from. But Paul did not look at it in this manner. In our lesson today, he draws from the happenings to Israel and their calamities that befell them because of their failings as warnings and types of our temptations today. He wanted us to be aware that the Israelites were under the cloud, and passed through the sea, being thereby baptized in the cloud and the sea, which was a type of our justification and baptism. They ate spiritual meat, that is, they partook of the manna which fell down from God by His miraculous power. They all drank of that spiritual drink from that spiritual Rock, which was Christ. This is the indication of God's special favor to them. But then he brought out how God's anger fell on them later in the wilderness because of their yieldings to the flesh. This is dire warnings to us today. The flesh has overpowered many who at one time were very useful to the Lord. God is faithful, but we are going to have to be diligent and watchful and resist any attempt of the devil to allure us into the ways of sin.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the great blessings that Paul related from Israel's past that showed God's favor?
2. What was Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage a type of?
3. In relating their overthrow in the wilderness, what is Paul trying to show us?

4. Name the things that we are to avoid to keep from following their example.
5. What were these things written for?
6. What does all of this tell us that we should take heed about?
7. What is the encouraging truth that Paul gives us concerning the temptations that will come our way?
8. Can you think of and name some places along the journey of life where we will be tempted by some of these things?
9. What about people who think that there is no way they can ever be lost if they have accepted Christ?
10. Why does God allow us to be tempted?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is always a potential for failure and losing out along life's way to the Christian. Satan has introduced the doctrine in many people's minds that this is not so. But the Scriptures clearly state the possibility for one to fall from the saving grace of God. It is not God's plan for one to do so, and He has provided a way that we can escape this terrible fate, but we must do our part and work with God so that we can overcome. There are evil things that our flesh will be tempted to lust after. The world is always offering to us her wares of pride and vanity. Ungodly styles and fads will look desirable to the fleshly mind. Idolatry is not a thing of the past. We have idolatry in the world around us today. In the Scriptures covetousness is classed as idolatry. (Colossians 3:5.) Yes, covetousness, which is the love of money, is as bad or worse than making images and bowing down to them. People would not allow themselves to bow down to images and worship them, but they will enslave themselves to the obtaining of the wealth of money and these material values, neglecting the true riches. This is idolatry. "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." We live in a play age, when people are just given over to ease and luxury, shifting responsibility off of their minds. Fornication, as we brought out in a previous lesson, is rampant in our society today. The morals are eaten away from the structure of our nation and world. The opportunity is always there. Young people cannot get along nowadays without some kind of illicit sexual activity. It is a terrible thing to behold. This was one of the downfalls of Israel in Egypt. Then we have murmuring, also. When things do not go just like we want them to go, look out! There will be a temptation to murmur and complain. Let us be on our guard. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall a

prey to the devices of Satan and end up being a castaway at the end of the journey.

—Leslie C. Busbee

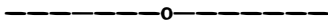
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed by the destroyer.” When a person begins complaining and murmuring, he is headed in the wrong direction. To do so takes the joy out of the service of the Lord, and it is this joy which keeps us encouraged in our work for God. In one book that was written, the author portrayed one of the characters as a “grumpy saint.” One day, meeting a poor woman with a heavy burden, he took the burden upon his own back but scolded her for carrying so much. Another time he met a lost child, He carried the child back through the snow to his home but scolded him for being lost. This kind of service takes the joy out of the good that was done.

There is a spirit that goes with murmuring. When it possesses people, they can find fault with everything. There are even some extreme cases in which an individual is convinced that everything is bad and everyone is against him, and is insulted when you even hint that this may not be so.

The children of Israel were able to find fault with that which was sent directly from heaven. After God miraculously provided bread for them, they said, “. . . our soul loatheth this light bread.” Paul verifies in our lesson that they were destroyed because of this attitude. He went on to say these things happened unto them for ensamples and are written for our admonition. We would do well to take heed. It could very well determine the destination of our soul.

—Wayne Murphey



September 3, 1989

MAN AND WOMAN BEFORE GOD

I Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God.

13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?

14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?

15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

Memory Verse: . . . The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.
I Corinthians 11:3.

Central Thought: Christ is the head of man to direct and sustain him in this world unto eternal life. Man is the head of his wife to provide, protect, nourish, love and guide her for the glory of God and her welfare. One of the many ways of honoring her head is for the woman to have her head covered when she prays while the man is to have his head uncovered.

The hair is given to the woman for a covering, and long hair is a glory for the woman to have.

Word Definitions: *Head:* As the head of the human body is the source of government, direction, sense and intelligence, even so Christ being the head of the man is his source of government and guidance and support. As Christ is to the man, so is the man to the woman. *"Power on her head because of the angels":* A woman's hair allowed to be long stands for the authority that she attributes to her head, her husband. This is to be done with respect to the angelic host that is beholding the order in God's wonderful creation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the latter part of chapter 10 Paul instructed us: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." He set a good example for us to follow. He deals with the relationship of man to Christ, woman to man, and Christ to God. In his remarks he specifies the attitude of man and woman taking expression in how the head of the woman is covered, and how the head of the man is uncovered. A man who covers his head while praying or prophesying dishonors his head, Christ. A woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, the man. The expressions in verses 5 and 6 are somewhat obscure, but I believe that we can get the apostle's real meaning when we consider his closing remarks on the subject in verses 14 and 15. There he states that nature itself teaches us that if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him, and, that if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering. We conclude from this that it pleases God for a man to keep his hair trimmed, not allowing it to grow long and excessively, and that the woman should not cut her hair, for it is the covering that God has given her. When a woman cuts her hair, she is dishonoring her husband. To dishonor her husband is to dishonor and grieve Christ.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How would you explain in more definite language the expression "the head of every man is Christ?"
2. What responsibility does a person have in being the head?
3. What duties are involved?
4. What are some of the benefits that we have in having Christ as our head?

5. What are some of the responsibilities that we have upon us as having Christ as our head?
6. What are the responsibilities of a man being the head of his wife?
7. What are the wife's responsibilities in having a husband as her head?
8. Why is the head and its covering such an important issue in this lesson concerning respect to the head?
9. What does a man do when he prays with his head covered?
10. What is long hair to a woman and why has God given it to her?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The head of every man is Christ. Christ Jesus provides for, saves, leads, guides, sustains, nourishes, guards, protects, keeps, comforts, cares for, loves, cherishes, preserves, heals, blesses and befriends man. He is the head and man is likened unto His body. Man loves, worships, honors, praises, serves, obeys, respects, reverences, esteems, follows, yields to and does all in his power to please Christ, his head. Whatever he does he wants to do to glorify and honor his head. The head of the woman is the man, her husband. He loves, cherishes, protects, nourishes, provides for, comforts, shields, sustains, blesses and befriends the woman, his wife. The woman loves, honors, obeys, assists, follows, respects, serves, reverences, esteems and befriends the man, her husband. What a beautiful state this all is when it is a true condition of man, woman, and Christ! We know that Christ is true in His position as head of the man, and that His great love and goodness constrains man to love, honor and worship Him. By the grace of God and Christ, man can have the ability to be the proper head to his wife. Sad to say, in our wicked world today we do not find man honoring his head as he should, and also he is miserably failing to be the proper husband to his wife that he ought to be. And, it follows, that the woman today falls far short of the role she should be playing as helpmeet and wife. Let us take heed to these truths and pray God to help us all to be what we ought to be to our head.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

History lets us know that "the Hebrew women veiled themselves in presence of the men in token of their being under their power or authority." (Wilson Diaglott). We also know that Rebekah veiled herself when she saw Isaac coming, the man she was to marry. Now the question has arisen in the Corinth church, as to whether the Gentile converts were to veil

themselves as the Jewish women did. So to settle this question Paul writes, "If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom (namely, of wearing a veil other than her hair) neither the churches of God." verse 15, 16. So in the Christian church, the women do not wear a veil, to show that they are under the authority of their head, which is their husband and Christ, but have long hair. The man has short hair to show that he is under the authority of Christ, who is his head. "Every man praying or prophesying, having his (own) head covered, dishonoreth his head." (Christ).

Some want to say that the woman must wear a little cap to be covered when she prays or preaches. But one sister said the Lord showed her this error when she was in her garden. She felt a real urge to pray, but she had been taught she should wear the cap. She thought about it and then she pondered on the fact that God laid a burden on her to pray when He knew she didn't have her cap on; God opened up to her the truth on this matter and from that time on she laid off the cap. She knew her long hair was her covering. Praise God, for the way He leads honest hearts into all of the truth!

—Marie Miles
(Written in 1975.)

JAKE FINDS PEACE

Jake was big hearted, if he was a sinner. "Sure, I'll keep ye, think I'd turn anybody out in these woods at night? Not me. I've kept preachers all my life, but I confess I never kept sanctified ones before."

The three men went up the hill to Jake's cabin, and the two ministers busied themselves writing letters while Jake prepared the evening meal from his scant pantry. When they had gathered around the large goods-box that served as a dining table, one of the preachers thanked God for the food and asked His blessings upon it. When the evening meal was finished, the three men sat in front of Jake's cabin until a late hour. The preachers expounded the scriptures to poor, ignorant Jake and told him of the wonders of God's grace. Finally when the big silvery moon stood in mid-heaven and the sound of cowbells on the hill had died away, Jake suggested that they retire for the night. By the light of the moon one of the ministers read his Bible. It so happened that he opened it at

the 12th chapter of Hebrews. These words as they fell from this man's pious lips affected Jake deeply. He surely had read that same chapter himself many times, and doubtless during the twenty-seven years he had been a member of Mount Olivet church he had heard his pastor read it. But there was one verse that sank right to the center of Jake's heart. It was the 14th: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Jake had always had a hope in his breast that he should some day see the Lord. He had had more than his allotted share of troubles in life, and deep in his heart he had a longing to go where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest."

Soon all was silent in the cabin attic, where the three men lay. The restless surgings of man's inner soul are invisible to all eyes, save God's, and silence is not always a proof that everyone is asleep. Jake lay on a bag of dried leaves, having given his own bunk to his guests, but his eyes refused sleep. The music of the katydids had lost its power to soothe his trouble breast and bring him sweet repose. His mind took a voyage over the past. Memory, according to wonted ways, carried him again to his mother's knee. He recalled the sound of her voice as she sang, "When I shall see Him face to face and tell the story saved by grace," But that Scripture, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," took the sweetness out of that long remembered son. Jake knew he was not holy. His heart was defiled by sin. His lips were unclean with blaspheming God's name. He remembered all the good resolutions he had made and broken the past quarter of a century. During these midnight musings he seemed to see two lily-white hands beckoning him to come somewhere, he knew not where. These hands he readily recognized as the hands of his own baby Rose, who had gone from him one day near the close of her fifth summer. Mentally he found himself again at the bedside of his darling Rose. He saw again her ruddy cheeks glow with fever and heard the tremble of her voice as she said, "Daddy's Rose is going to heaven. Daddy come some day." Again he saw the death-glare in the sky-blue eyes when the little soul flitted away. He saw himself again as he sat and looked into the sweet and lifeless face of his darling girl, and he remembered how he resolved on that day to live in such a way as to be reunited with his child. His resolves had all been unfilled, and he saw the path of his past strewn with broken vows. In reality, God was speaking to the man's soul. Jake saw himself in his true condition, a lost sinner. His sins seemed like horrid black mountains rearing themselves eternally between him and his child. His profession of religion

and his church membership seemed to mock him rather than to comfort him.

Jake was silent. He said not a word with his lips; but how his bleeding heart did talk to God. Hot tears flowed from his sleepless eyes and dampened the dry leaves that formed his pillow. He supposed the two ministers were asleep. Their opinion of him was the same. Finally Jake was astonished to see, in the glimmering light of the moon that stole through the cracks in the clapboard roof, the two preachers slip from their bed, and kneel on the floor. His ear caught their whispering prayers that were heard in heaven. As nearly as he could hear, the prayers ran something like this: "O Lord, thou didst have a purpose in sending us through these wooded hills. May we be instrumental in bringing light and salvation to this lonely cabin. Lord, talk to the heart of Mr. Benton, who sleeps on his bag of leaves. Bring something before his mind that will break up his heart; disturb him even in his sleep, Lord."

Jake's emotions overwhelmed him and he could keep silent no longer. He bounded from his bed, crying, "O my God, save me, save me, save me! Oh, do pray for me now! I am lost! lost! lost!"

Needless to say, the preachers were somewhat shocked, as people often are when their prayers are answered sooner than they expect. The convicted herdsman prostrated himself on the floor before the preachers and poured out bitter tears of repentance. He wept, groaned and begged God to save him. But he seemed slow to grasp God's promises. He prayed until the morning dawned. The preachers prayed with him. Finally, just as the first grey streaks of the new day began to creep between the logs, Jake's faith was anchored in God's promises, and the glory of heaven flooded his soul. In the twinkling of an eye he was made a new man. His joy knew no bounds. He leaped and shouted, sang and whistled, and laughed and cried, all for the joy of his new-found treasure.

When breakfast was over and the two ministers had bidden their new convert a happy farewell, Jake sat down to read his Bible, which the preachers had given him. His eyes fell upon these words, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm 30:5).

—*The Deacon of Dobbinsville*

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September 10, 1989

**THE BODY OF CHRIST AND
ITS PARTICULAR MEMBERS**

I Corinthians 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member but many.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles. secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles. then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Memory Verse: But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

I Corinthians 12:18.

Central Thought: The Church is the body of Christ to operate and function in this world. It has many members and functions much like the human body and all its various members.

Word Definitions: *"Differences of administrations"*: Different kinds of services. *"Diversities of operations"*: Varieties of in-workings. *"Dividing to every man severally"*: Distributing to every man individually. *"Members in particular"*: Each member is but a part of the whole.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul's instructions in this chapter help us to see the various members of Christ's body, the Church of God, and their function as an organization in this world for the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. He stresses the point that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to give the various gifts and workings, and that their function is through the grace and power that He gives. He even states in verse 3 of this chapter that without the Holy Spirit there can be no real effective confession of the Lord Jesus. We need the Holy Spirit all along the way. The real outstanding feature of the body of Christ and its members is their differences and their harmonious function in unity together as the Church that Jesus purchased with His own blood. To be different in appearance, function or size and yet to work together is the miracle of unity. Everyone doing his individual work with respect to the welfare and benefit of everyone else sums up the cause of success. The main object lesson that he uses as a picture of this is the various members of the human body. The ear, the eye, the hand, and the foot, along with the nose, the tongue and every other organ and part of the human body, though they be different in appearance, position, function and size, all work harmoniously together for the successful function of the body; so is the Church of God, the body of Christ. All the souls who are redeemed and united with Christ make up His body, and He wills that they all work together as a unit for His glory and the benefit of mankind.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the workings of the various members of the Church of God likened unto?
2. How must we feel about another brother who does not have the same calling or burden that we have?
3. What is the manifestation of the Spirit given to every man for?

4. Name the various gifts and workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church.
5. Who decides on who gets what gift?
6. If the members are all different, what is the uniting factor?
7. How are the various members made one?
8. Is it very likely that one man could have all the gifts?
9. Do all the members have the same gifts?
10. Is it wrong to desire the best gifts?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God, the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the precious Holy Spirit work together to direct the Church of God in this world. The Holy Spirit grants to each member, individually as He wills, the gift or function that He judges that soul can handle. The Lord Jesus inspires and directs the ministry of that gift. God the Father (over all, through all, and in all) directs the various operations and fulfillments of His Church. How wonderful that we can be part of such a wonderful Church that moves and operates in this world to the glory of God and the welfare of precious souls. All the gifts and functions of the body of Christ are to bless and profit all the others in the Church. In the human body, all the members work in their various functions harmoniously and for the good of the other members. When the back needs scratching, the hand reaches around. When the person needs to move, the legs and the feet go into action. Even the toes play a part in balance and walking. All the fingers are important—lose one finger and you will surely miss it. God has so designed the Church to operate with many different members, working together to effect His great cause. One member cannot do it all, and no one person has all the gifts. We need each other to help counterbalance and sustain the work that we are in. How sad when members begin to pull apart. The human body will not do that. But we are rational human beings, not like the members of the natural body doing their function with no exercise of the will. We must yield to God, learn of His ways and cooperate with Him by an act of our own will for His body to function. We must work as the members of Christ's body by understanding and choice. Let us love, respect, honor and assist one another in the great Church of God, the body of Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When Christ was here on earth, He was in one body. His work was limited. Now that He has gone away, He has sent

His Spirit into the body of those who are "born again," and they are filled with His Spirit. There are many members but all are, or compose, one body. Each member is working in the place which Christ has set him in. It is God's doings and not ours. Our part is to be willing to labor in any capacity that is needed. What a precious thought of being "baptized into one body;" immersed into Christ, losing our identity and just being moved by the Spirit of God! It's not us but the Spirit of God working through us. We have nothing to boast of. It's God and His Spirit that inspires and moves upon each heart to do what God wants done. Our part is to live in the Spirit and yield to the Spirit so He can work through us to the glory of God.

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." There is nothing that is done that is prompted by the Spirit unless it is profitable. We might not know all the good that is done because many times God hides that fact from us. But we can be assured that God's Spirit will never lead us astray. The Spirit will agree with the Word of God. Anything that comes forth or anything that might be brought to us, that does not agree with the Word of God, is not from the Spirit of God. The Word and the Spirit working together will bring profit.

—Marie Miles
(Written in 1981.)

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September 17, 1989

**THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY:
THE LOVE OF GOD IN ACTION**

I Corinthians 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Memory Verse: And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

I Corinthians 13:13.

Central Thought: To have charity, which is the love of God, working in the body of Christ is more important for the success of the Church and its work in this world than all the spiritual gifts combined.

Word Definitions: *Charity:* The Greek word is "agape" which is defined as divine love, the love of God. "*Vaunteth not itself*": Does not push itself forward. "*Thinketh no evil*": Is not quick or ready to suspect evil. "*We know in part, and we prophesy in part*": We cannot know it all and we cannot preach it all, but we can have perfect love.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The last thing spoken in chapter 12 was to covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet he wanted to show unto us a more excellent way. In this chapter we see clearly set forth the more excellent way, the way of love. Pure, holy, divine love and affection in the heart of man is the number one and most essential quality of life. Much is said of faith, of preaching, of knowledge and of doing good to others, but one can have all these things and be deficient in the most important ingredient, and that is love. People can divide over scruples of faith and doctrine and knowledge, but possessors of divine love never part from one another. The love of God shed abroad in the heart is the only real uniting factor for the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit's main work is to fill the heart with burning love for God and man, and sustain that tender and warm

affection flowing in the soul. A person can experience a wonderful act of faith and be rejoicing in it, but before the day is over, if he is not very careful, he can come up short of divine love. His lack of divine love makes his faith experience of little value. We have in our lesson the attributes and qualities listed that make up the components of love. Patience, kindness, forbearance, contentment, humility, good behavior and all the other beautiful qualities of Jesus Christ come forth as fruit on the vine from a heart filled with divine love. It is something that we dare not take for granted of having. It is something that we should often take inventory of, and seek to be sure that love reigns in our hearts. It should be a daily matter of prayer that God will help us to keep filled and fervent with love. Remember, it is the most important quality that we must have in our Christian experience. Seek for it and keep working at it as long as you live in this world, and the reward of the love of God will shine for eternity. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is eloquence and capable speaking without the love of God in the heart?
2. Is it possible to have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and at the same time not have love?
3. Is it possible to have faith that would move mountains and at the same time not have love?
4. For what other reasons besides love would a person be willing to give his body to be burned?
5. With what kind of attitude does love suffer long?
6. Look at the things that love will stop or overcome. What does the presence of these things in our lives indicate?
7. How perfect and complete can we be in doctrine, in knowledge or in words?
8. What is the one thing that we can be made perfect in?
9. When will that which is in part be done away?
10. How does love far exceed faith and hope?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

All the spiritual gifts mentioned in chapter 12 are greatly valuable and important. But without the love of God working in the midst of all these gifts, they quickly lose their value. And which do we obtain first, the love of God or the gifts? The love of God comes first. It is the most important gift, and it is a gift that we can ALL have. Every child of God must have the love of God filling his heart if he is to succeed in the

Christian life at all, let alone being a help to his fellow man and to the brethren in Christ. Much is said about prophecy. It seems to be the thrust of many people's religious activity today. Prophecy is important. To know about God and His wondrous Word is good also, and it is a great blessing to have faith that will move mountains. But to be able to love your brother and to love your enemies and to love all men with fervency and warmth is far more an important aspect of the Christian faith. Not that we can do without faith, knowledge, prophecy and all of these things, but it is possible to have these things and to neglect love. It is love—tender, warm and holy pure affection—that gets the job done. God is love. He is ALL powerful and holy, but He is still love. This attribute of love in God is what caused Him to offer His precious Son as a sacrifice and an atonement for our sins. This same love is indispensable as a reality in us. No other attribute or quality of heart and life is as vital for the success and happiness of the human soul. To lack love is to cancel the value of every other good quality that one might possess. Better to have no spiritual gift and to be filled with love than to have them all and be destitute of the love of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

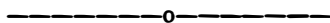
It was quite a statement Paul made when he said that we could have the gift of prophecy, understand all mysteries, have all knowledge and great faith, and yet if charity is not a part of it, it is all of no value. But such is true. In fact it is plainly recognized that not only is this type of labor of no profit, many times it is a hindrance to the gospel. In II Cor. 3:6, Paul wrote, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." If we are filled with the Spirit we will have love, for "God is love." He and His Spirit are the epitome of all that love stands for. Rom. 13:10 expresses the principle of love in its relationship to the law. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

Two ministers were discussing the sermons that they had preached the Sunday before. One minister said he used the text, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." The other minister asked, "Were you able to preach it with tenderness?" It doesn't matter how hard we work for God's cause, if we do not possess charity we will not see the desired effect.

The ability to move mountains would be a great achievement in the eyes of man. One with this gift would be in great

demand. Yet God puts more value on the humble saint whose heart is filled with love. There will be those at the judgment who have done many wonderful works whom God will not acknowledge. (Matt. 7:22, 23). If our service to God is rendered from a heart of love we have a sure passport into heaven.

—Wayne Murphey



September 24, 1989

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD A CERTAINTY

I Corinthians 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

35 But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:

38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

55 O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. I Corinthians 15:58.

Central Thought: If there will be no final resurrection then it is useless and vain to believe in Jesus Christ, for the hope of our resurrection is the fulfillment of all that He came to bring mankind.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Paul reminded the brethren of the gospel that he had preached to them, concerning Jesus who had died for their sins according to the Scriptures; and how He was buried, and how He had arisen from the dead on the third day. He mentioned those whom Jesus had appeared to after His resurrection, and that last of all He had appeared unto Paul, as one who was born out of due time. These people had believed what had been preached unto them concerning these things. But it seemed that there were some among these Corinthian brethren who had the idea that there would be no resurrection of the dead. Just how this kind of belief had gotten into the Christian Church realm is a mystery, but Satan is the author of all such persuasions. Just as Paul had sought to correct some of the other problems in this congregation, he now addresses this problem with the clearness and earnestness that was needed. His expressions are frank and pointed. First he declares that to not believe in the resurrection of the dead is to not believe that Christ was risen from the dead. And, he declares, if Christ is not risen from the dead, all of our faith and profession and labor for His sake in vain and of no profit. Those who had died with Christ's resurrection in view were gone and perished, never more to live or be seen again. In other words, without the resurrection of Christ from the dead, all the value and benefit and blessing of Christ is as vain as everything

else in this wicked old world. But, thank the Lord, he was able to declare that Christ IS risen from the dead. He knew that Christ was alive. There was no doubt nor wonder in his mind about it. Jesus had died as a sacrifice for sin, and had arisen from the grave, and had ascended up to the right hand of God to be our high priest forever! This gives to all who trust in and obey Him a bright and happy future, for we will share with Christ the powers of the resurrection by coming forth from the graves unto everlasting life with Him in that blessed world to come. Praise the Lord for the hope of the righteous!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. If there was no resurrection, where does that put Christ?
2. If Christ is not risen, where does that put us?
3. If Christ is not risen, where does that put those who have died believing in Him?
4. Why would a Christian be of all men most miserable if there is no hope in Christ beyond this present world?
5. What is the glorious news that Paul declares concerning these doubtful ideas?
6. What does Christ being the firstfruits of the resurrection mean to us?
7. What does Paul liken the resurrection to in our lesson?
8. Who decides on what kind of body will come from the planted grain?
9. What will take place at the last trump?
10. What is the victory that God gives us over?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is something deep within the soul of man that wants and yearns to live. Death is a foe, an enemy that man constantly seeks to avoid and overcome. But death continues to take his toll. Still we want to live. Some hope that the day will come when all disease and affliction will be conquered and that man will be able to live on and on. But this is vain hope, and if they will be honest with themselves, they know that it is a vain hope. There is but one way that any hope can be afforded of a victory over death, and that is through the hope of sharing in the resurrection with Jesus in the last great day. Christ has risen from the grave. He was dead and buried. He came forth a conqueror. His soul was not left in the spirit world, and His body did not see corruption in the grave. Death did not prevail over Him. And because He conquered death, He gives to all who truly follow Him a hope of sharing in the

same resurrection. He became the firstfruits, and we that believe in and follow Him in this life will share in His resurrection when He comes the second time. We must be Christ's. We must be His peculiar possession. In another place, Paul stated the fact that the Lord knoweth them that are His. (II Timothy 2:19.) If we belong to Jesus, being born of His Spirit and are following Him in all things, we will be in the resurrection with Him in that day. Our mortal bodies are likened unto grain that is planted in the earth. The grain planted in the earth rots and deteriorates, but from that rotted seed springs new life. There is no life in the dead body of a person to cause it to come forth except the faith and love that was in the soul for Christ when he or she lived in this world. Oh, that precious faith and love for the Lord Jesus will prevail over all the powers of corruption and death. It will spring forth from the tomb at the coming of the Saviour, to rise up to meet Him in the air and go with Him to the bright mansions of glory to live forever and ever in the presence of the heavenly Father who loved us so much. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Humans stand in awe at the exhibition of power. Great conquerors have left their mark on this world. Men like Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, etc., have held within their hands the fate of people's lives, cities, countries and continents. Historians record these feats and they are etched into the minds of those who read them. These people are remembered.

It is impressive to sit in a large jet airplane and feel the power that presses you into your seat and carries you, along with many others, to an altitude of 35,000 feet. It is beyond our understanding when we consider the power that has been harnessed to propel a rocket to the moon or the power to furnish lights for a large metropolitan area.

These things are minute in comparison to the power that Christ has. Jesus acknowledged, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Matt. 28:18. Christ has the power to raise the dead back to life; something that man has tried in vain to do. Someday Christ will harness the power to resurrect every person who has ever lived and carry them far beyond the skies. Someday, all those who are dead in Christ will follow his example of resurrection and experience everlasting life in a body that is enduring. It is because of this hope that we have the assurance our labours on this earth are not in vain.

—Wayne Murphey

PART OF DERO BROWN'S TESTIMONY

On arriving in Los Angeles and settling here in the Valley, my wife found a job almost immediately and so did I. I joined the painter's union and it looked like we were going to make it for awhile. I stayed off of drugs for a year and worked. Of course, I was stopping at too many of the bars and booze will get you in trouble almost as fast as drugs. Of course it is not a violation of the law to drink, but it will get you into a lot of trouble. I am sure that there are more men in all of the prisons that I have been in who are there indirectly because of alcohol than there are for any other one thing in the world. It will break up your home and will destroy your life and will certainly send you to prison.

Any number of men I have talked to seemed like nice fellows when I met them in prison and after talking to them they would say, "Brownie, you wouldn't believe this I am sure, no one else does, but I was so drunk when I committed this crime I don't even remember committing it. Here I am in prison doing twenty years for this terrible crime committed against society while I was so drunk I don't remember it." So you see alcoholism is just as destructive and will cause you just as much trouble and send you to a devil's hell just as quickly as any of the rest of the vices that I know anything about.

So here I was in California, painting, making good money, but drinking too much, and for the first time in all these years I was having some serious domestic difficulties. My wife resented very much my use of drugs, but at least while I was using drugs I wasn't violent and didn't abuse her or do some of the things that I did when I started using alcohol. It looked like this thing was going to break up our home. I began associating with some of my old friends doing many things for which we could be sent to prison (if we got caught) and one day found myself facing an assault and battery with-intent-to-kill charge. I had a lot of hatred in me built up during my years in McAlester, Oklahoma when I was locked up in solitary. I was on bond doing everything in my power to get it fixed, and really the police knowing the circumstances, were not too anxious to send me to the penitentiary for this because of the way it came up—it didn't look too bad on my part. Even though I was still out of prison I was not doing too well. It looked like that I would get back in there because the boys were coming around frequently and we were playing some of the old con games trying to make some easy money.

It wasn't long until I was back on drugs again and this, of course, almost crushed the heart of my dear little wife because

she had seen this pattern over a period of years and she knew just what it would do. I would begin as though I had a little sense and then I would wind up like I didn't have any because this thing grows on you as time goes by. I started out by using a small amount of drugs and then I kept on until I was again using a large quantity. Of course, this requires more and more money. Now you can't make this kind of money painting, or any other kind of legitimate work, so I had to start back in the rackets again to support this vicious dope habit.

Heroin in California was about twenty-five dollars per paper and before it was over I could shoot one of these papers every two hours and I had to have it. If I didn't have it, I was out there trying to get it and this meant I had to commit an awful lot of felonies. I would imagine that in the year and a half or two years this dope habit ran, I must have committed not less than five thousand felonies. So you see when I was caught, I was way overdue. I was arrested and as always I made bond and then set about to try my best to get the lesser sentences on the charges against me. Some of these charges called for more time than others, but usually I put it off as long as I could. By spending money with attorneys to have my case postponed in court, and then getting my business all straightened out, when it came to a show down, I would plead guilty just to save the State some money and the prosecutor some trouble. He usually agreed to give me the lightest sentence that he possibly could. And that is what happened in my case in California.

I took the least that I could possibly get, which was fourteen years. Now I had never been in an institution like the one in California where they have an indefinite sentence, where after the sentence is given, the pardon and parole board, (or adult authority as it is called) determined how much time one is to serve. Of course when they classified me they saw immediately that I would be placed in the incurable class along with the habituals that could not be cured and there was little hope or help for me from any of these people. They would no doubt be surprised today if they knew that I am out, going on my second year, doing the work that I am doing right now and writing this testimony. But nevertheless, I am out, and this is the important thing in my life and I believe with all of my heart that I am out now to stay since God so marvelously saved me.

—By Dero "Jack" Brown, 30 years a drug addict, 17 years in prison, 3½ years in solitary confinement.

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