

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
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Volume 26

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Jesus Christ and His Church**
Edited by Bros. Leslie C. Busbee and Wayne Murphey

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THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1994

Our Bible Lessons for this quarter will be a continuation of the study of the book of Proverbs. There are several wholesome subjects in this precious book that we have not covered in previous lessons. And, although the scriptures for some of these subjects are not quite so numerous in the book of Proverbs, yet they are of vital importance and, along with other scriptural references, they present some very beneficial studies.

The final lesson, Number 13, falls on Christmas Day, thus making it appropriate to have a seasonal study on the birth of our Saviour for that particular day.

May these lessons prove to be a spiritual blessing to everyone by the inspiration and illumination of the Holy Spirit.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



OCTOBER 2, 1994

FAITHFULNESS, DEPENDABILITY, TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPONSIBILITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proverbs 22:28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Proverbs 24:10 If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

15 Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous; spoil not his resting place:

16 For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.

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

14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.

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

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

8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants us to be faithful, dependable, trustworthy and responsible. He cannot bless and use a person who is unstable, irresponsible and not trustworthy. Being faithful and obedient to God is the highest level of worth and value for a soul to attain to in this life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 11:3), "*Integrity*": The Hebrew word from which this

is translated principally means "complete," referring to moral innocence and purity. It also refers to uprightness and a disposition to what is right regardless of the cost. Webster defines integrity as "entirety; the state or quality of being complete, undivided, unbroken; moral soundness; honesty; freedom from corrupting influence or practice; strictness in fulfillment of trust and duty."

(Prov. 11:13), "*Faithful*": Stable, firm, trustworthy, secure. Webster defines it as "being firm in adherence to promises, in the observance of duty; true and constant in affection or allegiance."

(Prov. 13:17), "*Ambassador*": A person who is commissioned to represent his government or state before another government or state. It is a high rank of honour bearing tremendous responsibility. The Hebrew word from which this is translated principally means a hinge in its bearing of weight and pressure of the door that turns on it. It is used here to denote a messenger or errand-doer who is pressed and constrained by the pressure of his responsibility.

(Prov. 19:3), The Septuagint for this says, "The folly of man spoils his ways; and he blames God in his heart." The Hebrew says, "He is angry with God."

(Prov. 20:6), The Septuagint translates it, "A man is valuable, and a merciful man precious, but it is hard to find a faithful man."

(Prov. 22:28), "*Landmark*": A boundary line. Solomon is probably referring to Deuteronomy 19:14, which says, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance,..." This can mean principles of truth and righteousness that have been clearly laid down in Holy Scriptures and those practices that have been proven to be beneficial to spiritual life and progress. Clarke comments: "Bring no new laws, rites, nor ceremonies, into religion or the worship of God that are not clearly laid down in the sacred writings."

(Prov. 25:13), The Septuagint is similar, but a little more clearly expressed: "As the fall of snow in the time of harvest is good against heat, so a faithful messenger refreshes those that send him, for he helps the souls of his employers."

(Prov. 27:8), The Septuagint says, "As when a bird flies from its own nest, so a man is brought into bondage whenever he estranges himself from his own place." Clarke comments: "As a bird leaving her own brood, places of retreat, and feeding ground behind, and going into strange countries, where she is exposed to every kind of danger; so is a man who leaves his family connections and country, and goes into strange parts to find employment, better his circumstances, make fortune, etc." I have seen multitudes of such wanderers from their place come to great misery and wretchedness. God's general advice is, "...Do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm 37:3 Christ's account of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 is a good example of this. There are times when God directs a man to leave his native home to go in the work of the Lord, but many sorrows have befallen people who leave the circle of their home and faithful friends to go in search of material profit alone.

(Luke 16:11), "*Unrighteous mammon*": Money; earthly and material wealth.

(I Cor. 4:1-2), "*Steward*": One who has management or oversight of another's money or property.

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the question, "A faithful man who can find?" imply?
2. Are there any influences that will tempt a man to be unfaithful?
3. How will the integrity of a man guide him?
4. Are there times when we will be required to conceal a matter?
5. There are many people who are not faithful. Does that mean that we have to be unfaithful?
6. What must a person do to really be faithful?
7. When must one start being faithful in life?
8. Why is it so necessary to learn to be faithful and true with money?
9. What are the true riches that Christ wants us to be faithful with?

10. Can a man be faithful without strong purpose and decision?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It means so much to be faithful. Those who are with Christ are those who are called, chosen and faithful. (Revelation 17:14.) Many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 20:16.) Fewer still of those chosen are faithful. There is always an influence around that will contest your faithfulness. It is easy to yield to the untrue ways of the flesh and the world. We must be faithful and hold our integrity at the peril of our lives. Think of faithful Abraham, Daniel, and our Lord Jesus Himself! Because of their faithfulness their lives are guiding Stars to Heaven. Putting trust and confidence in an unfaithful man means trouble and disappointment. Think of the blot that unfaithful men have put on history. There is King Saul who started out well, but yielded to the wrong spirit and ended his life in sorrow and despair. There is King Solomon who let outlandish women lead him away from God. There is Jesus' own disciple Judas who allowed the love of money to stain his character. There is Demas who forsook Paul, having loved this present world. The question is, "Am I going to be faithful, or am I going to go the way of these unfaithful ones?" Well, if you are going to be in that faithful band of saints who will stand before the Lord in the judgment, you will have to be very diligent and prayerful. Satan is out to get you on his side one way or the other. To be faithful one must be determined to be faithful. One must watch and pray and be always on guard. One must apply himself to duty and righteous ways and work at it every day without fail. It is possible for you to be faithful, but it is also possible for you to be unfaithful. Watch the little things in life. Small and insignificant may be the chores and responsibilities of home and childhood, but they carry great potential in teaching one faithfulness and responsibility. The question is still out: "A faithful man who can find?" Let us meet the challenge with a strong purpose that by the help of the Lord we can be among those faithful ones. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A mother-of-pearl, and a soap bubble reflect the same variety and richness of color, but just try to put the soap bubble to some worthy use and you will find there is a vast difference in their consistency. People can also be like this. Some appear very beautiful of character, but when they are depended on for something they are nowhere to be found. In our lesson it is put this way. "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Prov. 25:14. It is disappointing to depend on someone for something and they don't produce.

"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." Prov. 25:19. Probably everyone can relate to these illustrations. When our teeth are good we pretty well take them for granted. When we are chewing food we have confidence in them without giving it any thought. But when we hit something hard in the food, and a tooth breaks, it is a very painful surprise and let down. Then as we continue to eat we make very sure that that particular tooth is not depended on. This is like having confidence in an unfaithful friend. It is easy to take friends for granted and depend on them helping us, but when we come across one who isn't faithful to us, it is a very painful and rude awakening. It is then a natural reaction that in the future we do not put ourselves in a position where we have to depend on that particular person. Isn't it much nicer when we can depend on all our friends? Or perhaps a better question would be, isn't it nice when we are faithful and all of our friends can feel at liberty to depend on us? In particular, we want God to feel free to depend on us.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 9, 1994

KINGSHIP, LEADERSHIP, RULE AND DOMINION

Proverbs 14:28 In the multitude of people is the king's honour: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.

35 The king's favour is toward a wise servant: but his wrath is against him that causeth shame.

Proverbs 16:10 A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresseth not in judgment.

12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings; and they love him that speaketh right.

14 The wrath of a king is as messengers of death: but a wise man will pacify it.

15 In the light of the king's countenance is life; and his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

Proverbs 19:12 The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favour is as dew upon the grass.

Proverbs 20:2 The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul.

8 A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.

26 A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.

28 Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy.

Proverbs 25:5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.

Proverbs 28:2 For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged.

16 The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor: but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.

4 The king by judgment establisheth the land: but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it.

14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established for ever.

II Samuel 23:3 ...He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

MEMORY VERSE: ...He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. II Samuel 23:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Leadership and rule over people must be carried out according to God's Word in righteousness, true judgment and love. An ungodly leader brings trouble and woe while a faithful and righteous man brings blessings and peace to his people.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 14:35), *"The king's favour toward a wise servant"*: The Septuagint says, "An understanding servant, is acceptable to a king; and by his good behaviour he removes disgrace." The term "servant" refers to the minister who has jurisdiction and authority just under the king. This is often called the "Prime Minister." He is a very important person with great responsibility upon him. Adam Clarke comments on this: "The king should have an intelligent man for his minister; a man of deep sense, sound judgment, and of a feeling, merciful disposition."

(Prov. 20:8), The Septuagint says, "Whenever a righteous king sits on the throne, no evil thing can stand before his presence."

(Prov. 20:26), *"Bringeth the wheel over them"*: This is a threshing term. The righteous ruler will not tolerate evil in his kingdom, but will seek to save his people from ungodliness by wise judgment. Jesus, as King of kings, seeks to separate sin and wrong from His subjects by the burning fire of His Holy Spirit and His precious word.

(Prov. 28:2), *"For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof"*: God brings judgment on ungodly princes and rulers and sees to it that their evil ways work for their destruction. Clarke comments: "Where the people are very wicked and the constitution very bad, the succession of princes, (or leaders), are frequent—they are generally taken off

by an untimely death. Where the people know that the government is in their favour, they seldom disturb the prince, as they consider him the guardian of their privileges." Jesus, the righteous King, rules over His people from the right hand of God. He is King forever and will never need to be replaced.

QUESTIONS:

1. Does man need someone to rule over him?
2. What happens when those in authority are ungodly?
3. What is the only right way to rule over men?
4. Why does a one-man rule or kingdom not work very well in this world?
5. How does Christ Jesus, as King, rule over His people?
6. Can you see that Jesus fills the place of a king as these scriptures show?
7. Does God want anyone to rule by force or violence?
8. Why is Jesus qualified to be King of kings?
9. What is Jesus going to do with the wicked who refuse to obey Him?
10. Do Christ's servants have the same qualities of leadership that He has?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Solomon began his reign as king over Israel he was in favour with God and sought to establish his kingdom in righteousness. He had several ungodly elements put down and destroyed. The kingdom was established in his hand. God promised to bless his rule if he would be faithful to Him. But, sad to say, Solomon got lifted up in pride and lost the favour of God. His kingdom after his death was divided. The history of Israel after that was stained with the terror and blight of evil kings. The history of the world is darkened by the abuse of tyrants and evil rulers. But there is one King who reigns in righteousness. His throne is set in the heavens and His rule is a rule of love and holy power over the hearts and lives of all who believe and follow Him. By being obedient to the will of God, God gave Jesus Christ the throne of eternal glory at His right hand. He is sitting on the scriptural throne of David, fulfilling

the kingship that David had in prophecy. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He has absolute power, and is full of judgment and righteousness and wisdom. He rules with love and dominates His subjects with a power that carnal man knows nothing of. He is tolerating and permitting sinful man to have his way, but the day is coming when this righteous Monarch of the skies will come in power and glory to punish men for their wickedness and cast them down to eternal hell. Oh, how we need to embrace and worship this King and submit to His holy rule in our lives. His kingdom is everlasting and if we will be subject to His righteous rule, we will reign with Him forever in that blessed world of glory to come.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Much wisdom is needed to be a good leader. Probably one of the greatest qualities of being a good leader is knowing how to follow. It is a mistake for someone who is put into a position of leadership to think that he always has to do the talking. Listening can be a real asset to a leader. If an individual has the ability to be a good follower, that person is a good candidate to be a good leader.

Vassar College wrote to the father of an applicant, asking if his daughter was a leader. The father replied: "I am not sure about this, but I know she is an excellent follower." The president of the college answered the father by writing: "As our freshman group next fall is to contain several hundred leaders, we congratulate ourselves that your daughter will also be a member of the class. We shall thus be assured of one good follower."

A good follower develops discernment, and does not follow after a mob spirit or a fad, which has plagued many generations. It is like a high school girl who came into the kitchen one morning wearing a gray stocking on one foot and a brilliant red stocking on the other foot. Her father, rather surprised, asked if that was the way the girls at school were dressing. "Well," the daughter said, "they weren't yesterday, but they will be tomorrow." If as a follower, you can discern what is right to

follow, and have the courage to stand for what is right, then you will make a faithful leader. —Wayne Murphey

OCTOBER 16, 1994

LABOUR AND FRUIT

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

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

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

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

12 The wicked desireth the net of evil men: but the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.

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

Proverbs 13:2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

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

Proverbs 14:4 Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

23 In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

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

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

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

Proverbs 21:17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man: he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin. Proverbs 10:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: If a man is going to have bread to eat and means to live on he must labour with his hands that which is honest and good. Even so a man must work diligently at his experience with God in prayer and study of the precious Word of God if he is to prosper in his soul.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 10:16), "The work of the righteous is for life; the gain of the wicked is for sin." Hebrew. "The works of the righteous produce life, but the fruits of the ungodly produce sins." Septuagint.

(Prov. 12:11), "*He that followeth vain persons*": The Hebrew says, "He who chases after vanities." The Septuagint agrees with this and adds, "He that enjoys himself in banquets of wine shall leave dishonor in his own strongholds." Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon is a prime example of this.

(Prov. 12:12), "*The net of evil men*": The word "men" is an added word. The Hebrew says "net of evils." The net refers to the covetous desire of the carnal minded reaching out to lay hold of everything in the realm of worldly gain. The Septuagint says here: "The desires of the ungodly are evil, but the roots of the godly are firmly set."

(Prov. 12:14), "*Recompence of a man's hand shall be rendered unto him*": The Hebrew says, "The dealing of a man's hand shall return to him."

(Prov. 13:2), "*Fruit of his mouth*": I believe this is referring to what a man enjoys in eating of the produce brought forth by his labour. The Septuagint puts this verse: "A good man shall eat of the fruits of righteousness, but the lives of transgressors shall perish before their time." Let us bear in mind that along

with the truth of these things in natural labour and fruit there are the spiritual values, also. A person who labours in prayer, humility, diligence and study of the Word will find spiritual food and reward.

(Prov. 13:23), *"The poor's fallow land yields much food, but it is swept away where there is no judgment."* Hebrew.

(Prov. 14:4), *"Crib"*: The stall or barn where the work animal is fed and sheltered. The ox or horse was a valuable asset to the farmer in times past. But along with the benefit of the animal was the work and responsibility of feeding, watering, and caring for the animal, plus keeping his manger and stall clean. Today our society uses beasts of burden very little, but much care is still needed in the sheltering, upkeep and repair of the vehicles used.

(Prov. 14:23), *"Penury"*: Poverty.

(Prov. 18:20), *"A man's belly shall be satisfied"*: The belly is that part of the body that contains the stomach and intestines which receives the food eaten, digests it, and puts it into the bloodstream so that the body may receive nourishment that will enable the person to work and go about his business.

(Prov. 21:17), *"He that loveth pleasure"*: He that pursues hunting, sports and otherworldly activities when he should be attending to the culture and welfare of his fields. *"Wine and oil"*: These are the things that money can buy that are costly. To love these things is to seek to have them excessively which will drain his finances and keep him from prospering in the things which are more important.

(Prov. 27:18), *"He that waiteth on his master"*: He who lovingly and diligently guards, protects, and attends to his master's welfare and care.

(Prov. 28:19), *"He that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough"*: The one pursuing vanities shall be filled with poverty." Hebrew. The Septuagint says, "He that follows idleness shall have plenty of poverty."

QUESTIONS:

1. How is labour a blessing and a help to man?
2. What does a righteous man have in view with his labours?

3. What kind of fruit does the righteous bring forth?
4. Will ground bring forth good fruit without being properly tilled?
5. Why is the fruit of a man's life so important?
6. What does the return of a man's labour depend on?
7. Would there be food enough for everyone on earth if the labour and control was what God would have it to be?
8. What are some of the responsibilities in having a work horse or ox? A tractor or truck?
9. Is it lawful for a man to work his ground to grow crops for increase?
10. Why does getting a man's work in order come before building his house?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the beginning God created man and gave him work and activity and responsibility to be engaged with. He was put into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. This meant to till and work the ground and to guard and protect it. Man failed to protect it by listening to the devil and he lost his place in the beautiful garden. He was sent forth from the garden and his labour was increased because of the thorns and weeds that were sent as a punishment for his sin. It has always been that man has to work and earn what he has to have for life and its success. But with the fall into sin and transgression came the potential for man to engage in evil work and activities for self. Cain was an example of this. He contrived to plow the ground and to see what he could get out of it. He was covetous and proud. He refused to take God's way. He took his own way, and that is why his sacrifice was not accepted. So we have righteous labour and the works of wickedness. It is for us to decide what our work is going to be. The book of Proverbs lines out to us this important issue. If we are to enjoy good fruit we are to employ righteous and earnest labour. The man who labours diligently and according to the laws of God and nature can hope to have a good return. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap. With what measure a person metes, it shall be measured to him again. Jesus taught this. It works in natural things and it works also in spiritual things. If you are going to

be a success at anything you will have to work at it. If you want to be a success and prosper in the Lord you will have to diligently work at it everyday. With labour employed properly will come a return. It is a uniform and unfailing law of life. Sloth and laziness are diseases that attack the mind and spirit and rob the soul of a most important trait. Life is the time for work and labour. The night cometh when no man can work. Let us fill our hours with labour for the Master and for the good of others. God will recompense our labours with a rich reward if we will be faithful to Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Life consists of labor. Some people seem to think they have solved that problem by being dependant upon other people's labor. If someone is able to provide their upkeep and doesn't, they really don't have much of a life. There is satisfaction and reward in having a goal and disciplining yourself to accomplish it.

Henry Ford once told of the purpose behind the first automobile with these words. "When we were building our first car, was it money we were thinking about? We realized, of course, that the new car, if it would run at all, would be profitable to manufacture. But making a fortune for ourselves was not in the front of our thoughts. What we wanted to do was build a car which would cost so little that every family in the United States would be able to buy it. So we worked morning, noon, and night. We worked until our muscles ached; worked until our nerves were so ragged that we could not endure the word 'automobile.' One day when all of us were near the breaking point, I laid down my tools and said, 'Well, boys, there's one consolation anyway. Nobody can take this thing away from us unless he's willing to work on it harder than we've worked. And so far I haven't seen anyone who's willing to do that!'"

Sometimes the competitiveness of life is discouraging, but we must still do our best on our jobs without having a competitive spirit. We still live in a world where "the recompence of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him."

In the Christian life we are competing against Satan, and he is a very formidable foe, one who is wiser and stronger than us. But there is one thing that he is not willing to do, and that is to ask God for help. Therein lies the secret of our success—to abide in the center of His will where His power flows. The tactic of the devil is to keep this power away from us through the temptation of laziness so that we don't seek God, and through pride so that we decline to seek God.

—Wayne Murphey



OCTOBER 23, 1994

THE WAY OF PEACE AND THE WAY OF STRIFE

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

Proverbs 11:9 An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

Proverbs 15:18 A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

Proverbs 16:7 When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

28 A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.

Proverbs 17:1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

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

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.

19 He loveth transgression that loveth strife: and he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

Proverbs 18:6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.

19 A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Proverbs 20:3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling.

Proverbs 22:10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

Proverbs 25:8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.

Proverbs 26:17 He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.

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

21 As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

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

Proverbs 30:33 Surely the churning of milk brings forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

MEMORY VERSE: It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling. Proverbs 20:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God is not pleased with us when we strive and contend with our fellowman. His fruit is sown in peace and it does not glorify Him for us to engage in arguing and strife with one another.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 10:12), "*Strifes*": Quarrels, contentions, contests, arguments; parties of individuals seeking to outdo or outtalk one another.

(Prov. 11:9), "With the mouth the ungodly ruins his friend." Hebrew. "In the mouth of ungodly men is a snare to citizens, but the understanding of righteous men is prosperous." Septuagint.

(Prov. 16:28), "*A froward man*": A man of perversity. Webster defines perverse as meaning "turned the wrong way."

(Prov. 17:14), "The beginning of strife is like the releasing of water, so before it breaks out, forsake striving." Hebrew.

(Prov. 17:19), "*He who exalteth his gate*": He who promotes his own selfish cause.

(Prov. 18:6), "*Strokes*": Blows.

(Prov. 18:18), "*The lot*": This refers to the ancient method of settling disputes and distributing property in an inheritance. It was a pebble or a stone which when it was tossed would fall on one side or the other. It was really an appeal to God to cause the stone thrown at random to fall in the way of His wisdom's choice. "*Parteth between the mighty*": Settles disputes between leaders.

(Prov. 20:3), "*Every fool will be meddling*": "Every fool exposes himself." Hebrew. The Septuagint expresses this verse like this: "It is a glory to a man to turn aside from railing; but every fool is entangled with such matters."

(Prov. 25:8), Verses 8, 9 and 10 here in the Septuagint speak wisely: "Get not suddenly into a quarrel, lest thou repent at last. Whenever thy friend shall reproach thee, retreat backward, despise him not; lest thy friend continue to reproach thee, so thy quarrel and enmity shall not depart, but shall be to thee like death. Favour and friendship set a man free, which do thou keep for thyself, lest thou be made liable to reproach; but take heed to thy ways peaceably."

(Prov. 26:17), "Like one who grabs the ears of a dog is the passer-by who enrageth himself over strife that is not to him." Hebrew. "As he that lays hold of a dog's tail, so is he that makes himself the champion of another's cause." Septuagint.

(Prov. 26:21), "As coal to burning embers and wood to fire, so is a man of strifes to kindle contention." Hebrew. "A hearth for coals, and wood for fire; and a railing man for the tumult of strife." Septuagint.

(Prov. 30:33), "For squeeze milk, out comes curds; and squeeze the nose, out comes blood; and squeeze wrath, out comes strife." Hebrew. "Milk out milk, and there shall be butter, and if thou wring one's nostrils there shall come out blood: so if thou extort words, there will come forth quarrels and strife." Septuagint.

QUESTIONS:

1. What would you say is the basic cause of strife?
2. Why does a righteous person not want to be involved in strife?

3. Is it a Christian's duty to try to appease strife?
4. Does carnal strife solve any problems?
5. Why is it hard to make an argument cease when it gets started?
6. How can a person love strife?
7. Why should we be slow to speak, and slow to wrath?
8. What is getting into someone else's strife likened unto?
9. What kind of person will feed strife?
10. What does the godly seek to promote in his fellowman?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One thing that is very clearly revealed in our lesson concerning strife is that it is not good for the soul and is not the fruit of a real child of God. That is very evident. Strife is something that we must avoid and keep away from. I know that it is hard to keep out of strifes and contentions. They are all around us in the world, and they have a way of creeping into the home, the neighborhood and the congregation. Disagreements, differences of opinion and various other things that tend to drive wedges between people are always on hand. The child of God should be on guard and be watchful lest he would fall into the whirlpool of strife. We will have to deal with issues and disagreements, but there is a Christian way to do it. Self-control and longsuffering should be employed constantly. It is something that we have to be very careful about. Patience, calmness and quietness of spirit must be maintained at all times. It is wise to wait on God and seek His guidance as to when to speak and what to speak. Sometimes it is not what we speak, but how we speak that will make a difference. There are some conditions that we would be wise to leave alone. Most of the world's strife cannot be solved anyway, because of the disposition of the darkened minds of men. For a long time I was troubled over the dispute that hung between two professed Christian men. It bothered me greatly and weighed on my mind so much. One day the Lord spoke to me and told me to quit bothering about it, as I was not responsible for it and there was nothing that I could do about it. I took His counsel, and committed it to Him. Thank the Lord, before both of those men

left this world the Lord had worked their differences out. Oh, if we can only learn to commit things to God! Let us keep out of strife and quarrels. Let the peace of God rule in our hearts and give Him a chance to work and bring about a solution.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The old world looked for glory in war; the Christian ideal—anticipated in Old Testament teaching—is to recognize honor in peace. It is better to keep peace than to be victorious in war, better to make peace than to win battles. Consider the grounds of this higher view of conflict and its issues.

"The honor of peace may be seen in self-suppression. It is much more easy to give the reins to ill will and hasty passion. Men find it harder to fight their own temper than to do battle with alien foes. It is the same with nations when the spirit of war has maddened them. Heedless of consequences to themselves, and blind to the rights of their neighbors, they hurl themselves headlong into the horrors of battle. But if men could learn to curb their own strong feelings, they would really show more strength than by raging in unrestrained fury.

"The honor of peace may be recognized in magnanimity. It may be that we are in the right, and our foes unquestionably in the wrong. Still, it is not essential that we should fight to the bitter end. It may be a generous and noble thing to suffer wrong without resisting it. We cannot but see how much more harm is done in asserting just claims by force than would result from silent submission after a dignified protest. Often the more magnanimous conduct will result in the very end that would have been sought through violent measures. It is possible to appeal to the generous instincts of opponents."

—Taken from writings by W. F. Adeney



OCTOBER 30, 1994

LOVE, FRIENDSHIP AND BENEVOLENCE

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

Proverbs 11:24 There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

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

26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.

Proverbs 12:25 Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.

Proverbs 15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

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

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

Proverbs 22:11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

Proverbs 25:21 If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:

22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

Proverbs 27:5 Open rebuke is better than secret love.

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

9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

10 Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.

17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Song of Solomon 8:7 Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the

substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned.

I Peter 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants each one of us to have a friendly and loving attitude toward everyone. We should be forgiving, patient, gentle, kind and merciful to our fellowman. The bond of loving friendship is one of life's richest treasures.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 11:24), "There is one who scatters, yet increases more, but a withholder of rightness comes only to poverty." Hebrew.

(Prov. 12:25), "Anxiety in a man's heart makes it droop, but a good word makes it glad." Hebrew.

(Prov. 17:17), "Have thou a friend for every time, and let brethren be useful in distress; for on this account are they born." Septuagint.

(Prov. 18:24), This verse is omitted in the Septuagint, and the Hebrew expresses it differently: "A man of friends may be broken up (spoiled or disappointed), but there is a lover (or friend) who sticketh closer than a brother." This may be indicative of "fair-weather friends" or friends in prosperity who will drop you when the adversities of life hit you. But there is a loving Friend who will adhere to you no matter what happens. This is, of course, especially true of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Prov. 22:11), "He who loves pureness of heart, grace is on his lips, the king shall be his friend." Hebrew. Clarke comments: "He who aims to be what God would have him to be—the King of kings shall be his Friend." What a blessed privilege and joy it is to have close friendship with Jesus!

(Prov. 27:9), "Oil and perfume give joy to the heart, and sweet is one's friend from the counsel of the soul." Hebrew.

(Prov. 27:10), Adam Clarke comments on this verse: "A well and long tried friend is of great value. Him that has been a friend of thy family never forget, and never neglect. And in the time of adversity rather apply to such a one than go to thy nearest relative who keeps himself at a distance."

(Prov. 27:17), "*A man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend*": The warmth and closeness of true friends benefit one another mutually: the one inspiring, comforting, cheering and enlightening the other. Just the thought of a true and faithful friend is a source of courage and strength. How true this is of Christ!

(Song of Solomon 8:7), "*Utterly contemned*": Utterly despised.

(I Peter 3:8), "*Be pitiful, be courteous*": The Greek says, "Be tenderhearted, be friendly."

QUESTIONS:

1. Why does true love tend to overlook faults and failures?
2. What does true loving friendship move one's heart to do for those in need?
3. How can we secure the friendship of a faithful soul?
4. What are some of the things that bring about a loving friendship?
5. Is it possible for a husband and wife to be together and still not be the friends to each other they should be?
6. How did the Lord Jesus win His friends?
7. Is it possible to turn an enemy into a friend?
8. How will a friend minister a rebuke?
9. What kind of wounds would a friend give?
10. Must we wait for our fellowman to be friendly before we are friendly?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Loving friendship is one of life's greatest treasures. A faithful friend who will be your friend in all seasons of life will become more dear and precious as time goes by. Seeing such

a wonderful blessing a friend is, we should have a desire to be a friend to others. Friendship is built through patience and loving deeds and thoughts expressed. Friends never impose or push themselves on others needlessly. Friends seek to lift another's load and lighten their cares. There is a bond, a strong attachment of affection and sacred endearment that is developed between faithful friends. Much can be said about friends, but the greatest Friend for us all is the Lord Jesus Christ. He has showed His kindness and help to us as no other one ever has. A godly parent is a wonderful friend. The little infant feels warmth and care from a true mother. She is the first friend that he ever knows. The bond is so strong between that little one and its mother! God wills that this bond remain throughout life. Even after the child grows to an adult the flow of friendship should still be between them, even stronger than ever. God plans it that way. Brothers and sisters can be real friends to one another. One young girl said about her sister who was suddenly taken in a car crash: "She was my best friend!" Then there are the saints of God. They can be our friends even closer than blood kin. Let us get a vision of what it means to really be a friend to your brother and sister in Christ. Be friendly, be tenderhearted, be thoughtful of others. Exercise courtesy and respect and a tender feeling for the welfare of others. It will pay off. We reap what we sow. If we sow friendship we will reap friendship. May the Lord help each one of us to be friends to all we meet along life's journey!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

King Henry the Fourth, of France, being taken to task for returning the salute of a poor man as he was passing through a village, said, "Would you have your king exceeded in politeness by one of his meanest subjects?"

Have you ever turned down someone who really wanted to be your friend? It has been done before, but it takes a rather hard-hearted person to spurn the overtures of someone who wants to be loved. Especially is this true if the love of God is filling the heart. That love will respond to the needs of others,

whether the recipients are of low stature in life or well ensconced in many friendships.

Once a friendship is made, it is to be treasured for the blessing received from helping that person, not from being able to use the friend. Anything that is received in return from the friendship should be considered a perk of the friendship and not the reason for it. When you begin to use friends to achieve a selfish motive, you will lose them very quickly. Christ was certainly an example of One who loved, and gave, without requiring a return, and revelled in the resulting friendships.

One definition of a perfect marriage is when both the man and woman marry someone better than they. Likewise, if in a friendship both parties see the other as the most desirable of the partnership, and the one worthy of receiving, then that bond will be enduring.

—Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 6, 1994

THE IMPORTANCE OF WHOLESOME DESIRE

Proverbs 10:24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted.

Proverbs 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

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

12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

19 The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.

25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want.

Proverbs 18:1 Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

Proverbs 19:22 The desire of a man is his kindness: and a poor man is better than a liar.

Proverbs 21:20 There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up.

Proverbs 23:23 Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Proverbs 24:13 My son, eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:

14 So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

Proverbs 27:7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

Isaiah 26:7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

MEMORY VERSE: Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. Proverbs 23:23.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The blessings of the Lord are so wonderful and beneficial that to really behold them causes a person to desire them. As the beauty of the Lord becomes brighter the desire increases. This desire for the things of God and a spiritual appetite for His blessings is a very important thing for the soul. Without desire for God and instead being desirous of sinful and worldly things is the most serious,

dangerous state one can be in. We should always cultivate and keep a wholesome desire for fellowship with God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 13:12), "Hope delayed or put off makes the heart sick, but a living tree is desire fulfilled." Hebrew. When once a good thing is discovered and its value becomes so important to a person, the desire begins to reach for it with great intensity. Desire for forbidden things can work this way, too. Satan is ever out to deceive and mix up a person's sense of values. But a righteous desire and the obtaining of it is one of God's great dealings with the soul of man. He wants His blessings to mean much to us, but they will not mean much without desire. So he allows the desire to be withheld and delayed only to intensify the joy that will be experienced when His divine will grants its fulfillment.

(Prov. 13:19), "When the desire comes it is sweet to the soul, but it is hateful to fools to turn away from evil." Hebrew. To obtain the desirable blessings of God and heaven one must sever all allegiance and enjoyment of sinful pleasures and associations. A person is a downright fool if he holds on to his sinful follies and allows the opportunity of being saved to pass him by.

(Prov. 18:1), "*Having separated himself*": For a person to really be successful in the Christian life he must separate himself from all distractions, involvements and associations that will impede or hinder him from obtaining and enjoying a really close walk with God. He must mix and mingle with the scriptures, getting them into his thoughts and meditations, spend much time in prayer seeking God, and give God a chance to reveal Himself to him. Here is where many people make a serious mistake. They allow themselves to be taken up with worldly pleasures, activities and pursuits to the point that they cannot apply themselves to the knowledge of God.

(Prov. 19:22), "*The desire of man is his kindness*": For a person to have a hungering and thirsting for God is a special touch from heaven. God will draw on what desire a person initially has and with His Spirit will increase it. It is so sad that

many do not have a desire, and it is because they allow their desires to go out in the wrong direction. God leaves it up to the individual as to what they desire. He has given us opportunity and knowledge to know what He has for us, and it is for us to listen, behold and cultivate a desire for it.

(Prov. 21:20), "A desirable treasure and oil is in the home of the wise." Hebrew. There is a richness and special happiness to be felt when one visits the home of a godly man and his family. There is a restful feeling of peace and satisfaction. There are special delights and the spirit of love and holiness that will deeply impress the visitor. So many times they will go away with this thought in mind: "That is the kind of home I wish I could have!"

(Prov. 23:23), "*Buy the truth*": Get it, obtain it, lay hold upon it and never let it go!

(Prov. 24:14), "*There shall be a reward*": The Hebrew says, "There shall be a hereafter, and your hope shall not be cut off."

(Prov. 27:7), "*The full soul loatheth an honeycomb*": "The satisfied soul tramples a honeycomb." Hebrew.

(Psalm 27:4), "*Inquire in his temple*": To search, consider, inspect and seek to know the spiritual blessings and realities of the Lord.

(Isaiah 26:7), "*Thou dost weigh the path of the just*": In the Hebrew it is more of a prayer: "Upright One, make level the track of the just."

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is this matter of desire such an important one?
2. Can Satan mix up our sense of values and get us desiring things that are not for our good?
3. Should we take heed to our desires, and be on our guard against unwise and unholy desires?
4. What is one of the main drawing cards of desires?
5. If a person will listen carefully to the Word of God and will look at the Christian life in its true light, will they have a desire for it?
6. If a person thinks that the preaching of the Word is boring and will not give it the proper attention, but will allow

his mind to be turned toward the things of the flesh, which direction will he go?

7. Can a person really find and serve God without a wholesome desire for Him?

8. What responsibility do we have concerning our desires?

9. Will a person have much desire for God if he is filled up with the "junk food" of this world?

10. What does God do to make the fulfillment of our desires more enjoyable and precious?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God made man with desires, things to be enjoyed and things to be shunned. Unholy desires have been the downfall of creation. God wants man to desire Him and His blessings. But Satan has allurements and enticements to work on the desire of man. His drawing is chiefly in the realm of the flesh and the material things of this fleeting life. But God's offers are above the natural realm and rooted in eternal values. These things are communicated to us through the gospel, the eternal Word of God. We are to listen and open our minds to the truth of God. We are to taste and see that the Lord is good. He wants us to look and consider. If we will have a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and an open mind, it will help us to have a believing heart and a willingness to obey. The blessings of the Lord are desirable. They are the richest treasures one can have. They make the things of this world look sick. No one ever found God who did not first desire Him. People do not just accidentally find God. They have to desire Him and seek for Him with all of their heart. God does not go where He is not desired. He will not intrude or force Himself on anyone. Only those who desire Him and who truly hunger and thirst after Him will find the satisfying grace of His salvation. And then after we have received His wonderful grace we must continue to maintain a wholesome desire for His presence and blessings. We must not allow our desires to go out after things forbidden or not edifying. Let us cultivate desires for heaven, for spiritual blessings, for His special dealings and times of refreshing. Let

us desire to meet with His saints in holy worship and assembly. The Lord has wonderful treasures to fill the heart of everyone who has a real, living desire for Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after;..." Psa. 27:4. The greatness of our desires is one proof of our greatness. This is one thing that separates man from beast. Animals have few desires, and they are only for the immediate gratification of their bodies. Yet how often we see mankind sunk to this same level. Someone who has a desire for God and spiritual things is to be admired. Sometimes we fail to realize this because often we are around those who have a desire for God and we take it for granted.

"That will I seek after." It is not sufficient to desire without seeking. Desire will not take us to heaven. The blessings of God will not be unlocked to our benefit unless we actually put effort behind our desire. Not only must we desire and seek, but in dealing with God we must expect. Our seeking must include the faith of finding. Too often people seek for things and do not expect them.

It could be that one reason we do not realize answers from God in our lives is because we are not focused on our seeking. The Psalmist David said, "One thing have I desired..." God was the totality of his seeking, and neither was he asking for a whole catalog of blessings. When we find the fullness of God the answers to our many needs will come more easily. Some people ask for so many things that they forget what they have asked for and cannot give God credit when their prayers are answered. Let us put God first and foremost in our seeking.

—Wayne Murphey



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NOVEMBER 13, 1994

BLESSEDNESS AND SECURITY

Proverbs 10:7 The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

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

30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.

Proverbs 11:28 He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

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

3 A man shall not be established by wickedness: but the root of the righteous shall not be moved.

7 The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.

Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 16:3 Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.

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

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

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

Proverbs 20:7 The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.

Proverbs 22:9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

Proverbs 24:3 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

4 And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

5 A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.

Proverbs 28:14 Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

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

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

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

MEMORY VERSE: In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge. Proverbs 14:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Following after the Lord and His righteousness assures us of having His protection and guidance through the dangers of life and will bestow upon us a blessedness and happiness that is so wonderful.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 10:7), "The memory of the just is praised; but the name of the ungodly man is extinguished." Septuagint.

(Prov. 10:25), "When the storm passes by, the ungodly vanishes away; but the righteous turns aside and escapes forever." Septuagint.

(Prov. 11:28), "*Flourish as a branch*": The Hebrew says, "Flourish like a green leaf." The Septuagint puts this verse: "He that trusts in wealth shall fall, but he that helps righteous men shall rise."

(Prov. 16:3), "Roll on Jehovah your works, and your thoughts shall be set." Hebrew. We should seek God for His guidance and working in our lives, that what we do will be in His pleasure and blessing so that it will be His working in us. Thus our thoughts, our plans and our purposes will be sure to succeed and will endure the trials and pressures of life.

(Prov. 16:20), "*Happy is he*": The Hebrew expression here is "how happy!" The Septuagint says, "He who is skillful in business finds good, but he that trusts in God is most blessed."

(Prov. 18:10), "The name of Jehovah is a tower of strength, the righteous run into it and are set on high." Hebrew.

(Prov. 22:9), "*Bountiful eye*": "A good eye." Hebrew.

(Prov. 24:4), *"All precious and pleasant riches"*: The house that he speaks of here that is built by wisdom, established by understanding and filled with these wonderful riches is the house of our experience with God. It is a wonderful life that God gives to the soul who sets his love upon Him. He fills the heart and the mind with good and wholesome principles to live by. These become treasures that never dim, but rather increase in value and sweetness as the years go by. Memories of God's blessings, the fellowship of holy saints, scenes of trial and victory, and the times of refreshing when God visits and blesses the soul—all of these are enshrined in the heart forever. Oh, how blessed it is to live for God!

(Prov. 29:18), *"No vision, the people perish"*: How gross and how sad is the darkness upon the heart and mind uneducated and undisciplined by the law of God! No guidelines, no restraint, no warnings, no respect,—all of this accompanied by no happiness, no peace, no hope, no victory. What a sad state of life for the man or woman who forgets God's commandments! On the other hand, for the sincere and obedient heart who seeks constantly to please God according to His precious Word will come the over-bounding joy of inward peace and fellowship with His Maker. He is godly, he is careful, he is strict, and upright; but the blessings that pour into his soul are worth it all!

QUESTIONS:

1. Is not blessedness and security something that every person wants?
2. What all is included in the price tag to have this blessedness?
3. What causes much of the distress and misery of this world?
4. What kind of security is it that allures a soul into the ways of sin?
5. What does a man need strong confidence for?
6. How will seeking God's work for our lives establish our thoughts and plans?
7. How can a person be supremely happy when supremely tried?

8. What are some of the precious riches that we can fill our spiritual house with?

9. Can a person hope to be saved if he does not seek to walk uprightly?

10. What happens to a family or a nation that does not keep the law of God continually in mind?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There is a blessed and secure inner sense in a person who seeks God with all the heart and strives to follow His precious Word. Instead of seeking the pleasures of the flesh and self, the righteous are earnestly following after the spiritual treasures of faith, holiness, humility and divine love. This brings a quietness and a confidence that makes his life solid and sure. He is able to rise to meet each new day with courage and a cheerful heart. He sees the blessings of heaven all around him. When burdens and adversities come, he looks steadfastly up to his heavenly Father. He holds trust in His promise to help and bless in every time of need. God answers prayer, brings him through, works out his problems and supplies his needs. He proves the Lord faithful and true over and over. He walks this dark earth through with God's law in His heart and is surrounded by God's wings of protection. Each new day brings new mercies and compassions that never fail. He does not worry about anything, for he knows that God holds tomorrow and that God is with him for the present day. He clings to the promises, knowing that as his day is so will his strength be. Although he may be overwhelmed at times by trouble and distress, yet he maintains his faith in God and waits on the fulfillment of His Word to come to his aid. God brings him through great and sore troubles. His hope is bright for he knows that beyond the valley of the shadow of death is life eternal. He is not afraid to die, and is willing to go all the way even as his blessed Master did when he went all the way to Calvary. Thus his mortal days are blessed with blessedness and security: blessedness while here and a secure hope for the great beyond. Oh, how sublime is the life of a Christian!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The game of blind-man's-buff is a very old one, and, metaphorically, a very common one. The game was first to bind the eyes of one, then say, 'Catch me.' Of course it is easy to escape from the hands of one who is blindfolded. If men can only get the preacher afraid to offend them they have succeeded in binding up his eyes, and can afford to smile at his vain attempt to catch them. It is sad to see ministers in the pulpit every Sunday playing at blind-man's-buff. 'The fear of man bringeth a snare:...' (Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*.)

"...but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Prov. 29:25. When we take God and His ways into our life we can live with confidence. We have nothing to fear. We don't even have to fear offending man, because God will teach us how to be wise in winning souls. We can present the truth in its purity, without humanity being mixed with it, and rejoice when people are drawn to Christ. —Wayne Murphey



NOVEMBER 20, 1994

SIN AND TRANSGRESSION AGAINST GOD

Proverbs 11:6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.

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

Proverbs 14:9 Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.

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

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

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

11 Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?

Proverbs 19:2 ...He that hasteth with his feet sinneth.

Proverbs 20:9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

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

Proverbs 24:9 The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

Proverbs 26:10 The great God that formed all things both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors.

Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Proverbs 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

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

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall.

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

Proverbs 2:21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

MEMORY VERSE: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To transgress and disobey God's holy law brings failure and defeat to a man's life. The result of yielding to sin is death and separation from God. It brings reproach and disgrace to a man. But through the mercy of God man can turn away from sin and find deliverance that will help him live righteously.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 11:6), *"Transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness"*: "Traitors shall be taken in lust." Hebrew. Unholy desires and unbridled lusts ensnare the foolish and heedless soul. The appetites of the body unrestrained and

undisciplined will bring about the bondage of sin and transgression.

(Prov. 13:15), *"The way of transgressors is hard"*: The Hebrew says, "The way of traitors is continual." It is very difficult and it takes much effort, and sometimes violent effort, to change from the way of transgression to the way of righteousness. This is because the way and practices of sin are hard to break. The habits and ways of unrighteousness get a person involved and rooted so that it is very difficult to pull out of it. But if one is convicted of the awful condition he is in, and has a firm mind and decision to make the change, he can do it and God will help him.

(Prov. 14:9), *"Fools make a mock at sin"*: "Fools scoff at guilt." Hebrew. The vanity of carnal minds will not allow a person to take guilt and condemnation for sin seriously. They think that it is unmanly to be conscientious and sensitive to right and wrong.

(Prov. 14:21), *"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth"*: "He that dishonours the needy sins." Septuagint.

(Prov. 14:34), *"Reproach"*: Disgrace and shame.

(Prov. 20:9), "Who will boast that he has a pure heart? Or who will boldly say that he is pure from sins?" Septuagint. No man can make this statement or boast without the power and virtue of the precious blood of Christ. And then it is not really a boast, or a spread of pride, but an humble testimony of thanks and praise to God for His mercy. Only by the grace of God can we have a pure heart and be free from sin.

(Prov. 21:4), *"Plowing of the wicked is sin"*: On the meaning of the Hebrew word for "plowing" Adam Clarke had this to say: "The lamp, the prosperity and posterity of the wicked; is sin—it is evil in the seed, and evil in the root, evil in the branch, and evil in the fruit. They are full of sin themselves, and what they do is sinful."

(Prov. 24:9), *"The thought of foolishness is sin"*: The Hebrew says, "The plan, or plot, of foolishness is sin."

(Prov. 29:1), "A reprov-er is better than a stiff-necked man: for when the latter is suddenly set on fire, there shall be no remedy." Septuagint. The Spirit of God, the ministers of the gospel, godly parents and teachers utter forth warnings and

reproof in the ears of many who pay no heed. God will not force anyone to serve Him. They must respond to His Word and Spirit willingly. There is an inclination in the heart to stiffen up and refuse to repent. God is merciful and long suffering, but there will come a time when the stubborn soul will resist the Spirit of the Lord beyond the call of mercy.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is to blame for all the trouble and sorrow in this world?
2. What is sin?
3. Who can truly say that he is cleansed and freed from his sin?
4. What causes a person to not be willing to acknowledge their sin?
5. Will a person ever get victory over a sin as long as they cover it?
6. What must a person do to get victory over their sin?
7. What will finally happen to a person who refuses to listen to reproofs for their sin?
8. Why is sin so difficult to escape from?
9. What does it take to really break the powers of sin on our part?
10. Is it a sin for a man to lose his temper and say and do hurtful things to others?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Sin and transgression against God is to blame for all woes and troubles in this world. When sin came into the world, misery, trouble, affliction, pain, sorrow, and death came, also. Sin ruins and wrecks a person. Sin takes a sweet, innocent youth and drags him in the mire. Sin is habitual and progressive. It has a tendency to get worse as time goes on. It takes much effort and determination for a person to part with the old master of sin. Habits and ways of life have to be changed and many adjustments have to be made in our thinking and emotions. The change from sin to righteousness is no little thing! But the power of God will be there to help a person who

sincerely wants to quit the sin business and live for God. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. Sin is the work of the devil, and Jesus defeated Satan and has made it possible for us to escape his clutches. We do not have to sin any more. We can say, by the grace of God, that we are clean and pure from sin. Our hearts can be cleansed from the nature and disposition of sin. The very root of evil can be swept away by the power of the blood of Jesus and we do not have to serve sin any more. We can live for God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Praise the Lord! The victory over sin is ours. There is not a sin in the catalog of sins that we have to keep doing. Jesus came to set us free from our sins. If we will confess our sins and acknowledge our condition we can get help and deliverance. But if we keep it covered up and we do not want people to know about it, we will never get victory and that sin that we are covering up will sink us into eternal hell some woeful day. There is no excuse and there is no need for us to continue in sin. We can be delivered through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ if we will repent with sorrow of heart and anchor our faith in Him and what He did for us in shedding His precious blood.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...The way of transgressors is hard." Prov. 13:15. Why is the way of a transgressor so hard? Not only are his ways hard because he has crossed over the fixed laws of God, but also—and more importantly—because he has brought sorrow into the heart of the One who loves him more than anyone else. Have you ever accidentally or intentionally hurt someone who really loved you? It seemed so important to achieve your goal but when you realized that your misdeed was a source of discomfort to the one you loved, was there any joy left in it? The way of a transgressor is hard for this reason—in bringing sorrow and pain into the heart of our loving Lord we also bring failure, defeat and guilt into our own life.

Aren't you glad that the Lord made a way for us to repent of our sins and forsake the way of the transgressor? "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. 28:13. As long as we

cling to our ways of error, we continue to walk a hard road, a road with many disappointments and heartaches along the way. But just as soon as we realize what we're doing and are willing to forsake that way the Lord is there with abundant mercy and pardon. Our walk in life is no longer hard and dreary, but rather, full of pleasure. —Selected



NOVEMBER 27, 1994

THE HEART WITH ITS JOY AND SORROW

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Proverbs 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commandments:...

20 ...The heart of the wicked is little worth.

Proverbs 11:20 They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord:...

Proverbs 12:8 ...He that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.

20 Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil:...

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

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Proverbs 14:10 The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy

13 Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.

30 A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.

Proverbs 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.

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

30 The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: and a good report maketh the bones fat.

Proverbs 16:1 The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord.

Proverbs 17:20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good:...

22 A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

Proverbs 20:5 Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Proverbs 24:1 Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

2 For their heart studieth destruction, and their lips talk of mischief.

Proverbs 26:23 Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross.

24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips, and layeth up deceit within him;

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

Proverbs 27:19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Proverbs 28:14 ...He that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

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

MEMORY VERSE: A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. Proverbs 15:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Serving God and pleasing Him brings gladness and rejoicing deep within the innermost being of man, while sin and transgression against God and His word brings bitter sorrow and regret.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

"The heart": There is the natural heart which is the organ that pumps the blood to and from all parts of the body. Then

there is the spiritual heart, the very center of a man's being, which is composed of his thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires, affections and intentions.

(Prov. 4:23), "*Out of it are the issues of life*": Just as the natural heart pumps blood that issues forth to all the parts of the body to sustain health and completeness, so the spiritual heart pumps courage, decision and strength to every part of our ways and doings. If the heart is kept right and pure, everything about our life will be moved toward holiness and that which is pleasing to God.

(Prov. 14:10), "*Stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy*": This stranger is a foreigner, one who is profane and contrary to godliness and holy living, one who is not enlightened by the Spirit of God. The unregenerated cannot know, feel or fellowship with the deep hidden treasures of the heart of the child of God.

(Prov. 14:13), "*Even in laughter the heart is pained, and in its end joy is grief*." Hebrew. Sometimes behind a laughing face there is a deep sorrow and a crushing burden of care, and the most joyful seasons can end up in bitter grief.

(Prov. 14:30), "*Sound heart*": The Hebrew says "A heart of healing (or health)." It works both naturally and spiritually. A healthy heart that is pumping rich and healthy blood to the parts of the body means vigor and energy and well-being to the natural man. A spiritual heart full of the love of God and powerized by the Spirit of God makes for victory and peace in the soul.

(Prov. 15:13), "*A merry heart*": A gleesome, bright, and joyful heart. Hebrew.

(Prov. 15:15), "*A merry heart*": This merry heart in the Hebrew means a good heart filled with good desires and intentions.

(Prov. 15:30), "*The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart*": Beholding all things in their true light and purpose brings gladness and joy to the soul of man, for he sees the true intent of the divine Creator in creating everything for his pleasure and good.

(Prov. 16:1), The Hebrew says, "From man are the controls of the heart and from Jehovah the answer of the tongue." The

Septuagint says, "Let the heart of a man think justly, that his steps may be rightly ordered of God." We are given of God the responsibility to keep our hearts free of wrong attitudes and purposes. If we will keep our heart with all diligence, the Lord will help us to act and speak as we should. We have a tremendous job, keeping the heart!

(Prov. 17:22), "A joyful, gleeful heart makes good healing, but a stricken spirit dries the bone." Hebrew. Keeping filled with the joy of the Lord promotes spiritual health and well-being, but if we allow the sorrows and distresses of life to dampen our joy and gladness in Christ we will dry up spiritually within a short time.

(Prov. 20:5), "*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water*": A wise man does not go about slinging his knowledge and spreading out his feathers to appear wise. He knows that wisdom given to the non-seeking soul will be of very little effect, therefore with meekness and quietness he awaits the door to be opened by the workings of God for him to speak to the glory of God and the good of souls. An understanding heart who is seeking for knowledge will probe and inquire, and draw from the wise the enlightenment he needs.

(Prov. 24:2), "*Their heart studieth destruction*": The Hebrew says, "Their heart meditates violence."

(Prov. 26:23), "*A potsherd covered with silver dross*": Dross is the scum or waste matter which forms on the surface of melted metal which is worthless and to be thrown out. A potsherd is an earthen vessel. Just as an earthen vessel smeared with dross, so burning lips and a slandering tongue will ruin a person's life and make him not fit for any worthwhile purpose.

(Prov. 26:24), "*Dissembleth*": To dissemble means to hide under a false pretense.

(Prov. 27:19), The Hebrew says, "As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man." God weighs the heart and searches the thoughts and intentions of the heart, for this is the real man. Only when you know what is in the heart can you really know the man.

(Prov. 28:26), "*He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool*": Jeremiah 17:9-10 declares: "The heart is deceitful above all

things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart,..."The reason we cannot safely trust in what our heart might tell us to do and follow the inclination of our conscience is that the heart can have so many hidden evils and damaging dispositions that we may very well not be aware of. It is therefore the great challenge of these scriptures to take heed and beware of the forces of Satan that are continually seeking to sow evil in the heart.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the heart the most important part of us?
2. Are we responsible for the condition of our hearts?
3. Is there any provision for correcting an evil heart?
4. What good is there in having a cheerful heart full of love?
5. Can we change our hearts?
6. Can anyone else change our hearts if we are not willing to change?
7. Why is it not a safe thing to just suppose that our hearts are right?
8. How can we really be sure that our hearts are right?
9. Why is it so worthwhile to keep our hearts right?
10. What will the condition of our hearts have to do with eternity?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The greatest and worst pollution and impurity in this world is that which is found in the hearts of men. When Adam and Eve chose to disobey the commandment of the Lord they opened the door of their hearts to sin and wickedness. Sin came into the world and with it came all the evil and sorrow. The attitude and affections of a person will cause him to do what he does. The grace of God that has come to us in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, deals with this woeful heart problem. We can have that evil and wicked heart changed to a heart of love and purity. We do not have to go on in this life with a heart that is constantly getting us into trouble and condemnation. We have the control of our hearts. If we want

to have a pure heart that will have fellowship with God and right, we can have it. We must do something definite and without fail about it, though. Our hearts will not change without drastic action on our part. We can call on the Lord with all sincerity and earnestness and His divine Spirit will help us to amend our hearts and we can live our days out with heaven on our side. Oh, it is worthwhile to be diligent about the condition of our heart! God is weighing our hearts, and our eternal destiny hinges upon the condition of our hearts. We can have a heart that is good and submissive to God, gentle and loving to others. We can have an honest heart, a heart that is true and filled with holy purposes and desires. We can have a happy and joyful heart that is healing and beneficial to ourselves and others. Jesus is the great heart specialist. Much is said today about heart disease which is the greatest killer of all physical ailments. But the real heart disease is so often not considered. The spiritual heart, the center of man's being, needs the work of God. How sad that so many are unaware of the true condition of their heart! They go on from day to day with little care or regard about it. Oh, let us take heed to the Word of God! Let us let God search our hearts and help us to see the true condition we are in. With every defect there is a cure, and help for every need. Through the plan of God's salvation the heart can be justified, cleansed and kept from all sin through this life until the day we leave here. Thank the Lord for His wonderful grace and victory that we can enjoy in our hearts!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Suppose a man would advertise to take photographs of the heart; would he get many customers?" This is a quote by D. L. Moody, and I dare say that the answer to the question is "No." But consider this, our memory verse says, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance:..." or as another writer observingly remarked, "The face is the index of the condition of the mind." Many people wouldn't want it known what was in their heart, but in actuality often the face is a reflection of what is in the heart. If a person is happy, a smile creases their face. If they are sad, the countenance will droop. If someone

has a pure heart, there will be a radiance about that person, but if that heart is pocked by sin, often the countenance will be marred. The heart has a way of telling on its possessor.

Sorrow isn't very kind to the face, and it is even harder on the heart. "...But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken." Sorrow has a way of shrinking the heart and taking away its elasticity to swell with hope, and as one translation renders this verse, "But in sorrow of heart is the breath oppressed." Certainly it is God that puts meaning to life and gives beauty to both the inner and outer man. —Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 4, 1994

CARE AND REGARD FOR THE WELFARE OF THE SOUL

Proverbs 10:3 The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

Proverbs 11:17 The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.

Proverbs 13:2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.

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

Proverbs 15:32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

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

Proverbs 18:7 A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.

Proverbs 19:2 ...That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good;...

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

16 He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul: but he that despiseth his ways shall die.

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

Proverbs 22:5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the

froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Proverbs 27:7 The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

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

24 Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God gives to each one of us a soul. This soul is eternal, and is our most valuable possession. The care and regard for the welfare and salvation of our precious soul is life's most important responsibility. The loss of our soul is a loss that can never be recovered.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 11:17), "*Doeth good to his own soul*": The Hebrew says, "A merciful man treats well his own soul." For us to be merciful and kind and longsuffering to our fellowman is to bring us into a like benefit from the Lord. He accepts the feelings and dealings that we have toward others as a standard for His feelings and dealings toward us. It is for our welfare and eternal profit that we show mercy and patience toward others.

(Prov. 13:4), "*Soul of the diligent*": "The soul of the hard workers." Hebrew. The Septuagint labels this: "The hands of the active are diligent."

(Prov. 15:32), "*Despiset his own soul*": "Spurns and casts away his own soul." Hebrew. How sad that the general run of society today has little if any regard for the welfare and value of their soul. So many are completely unaware of the fact that they have an eternal principle of life in them that will always be! They spend their days with no knowledge of their eternal future. For that cause they are not open for instruction or

knowledge, for in the vanity of their minds they have need of nothing.

(Prov. 18:7), "*Lips are the snare of his soul*": A snare is a noose or a trap to catch an animal in. An unbridled tongue will catch a soul and keep it imprisoned until death ushers it out into eternity. It is a snare that each one of us would do well to stay out of.

(Prov. 29:10), "Men of blood hate the blameless, but the upright seek his soul." Hebrew. The thoughts of the godly are always concerned with the welfare of the souls of others. It is drilled into their hearts that the soul is far, far more important and valuable than this frivolous and fleeting flesh.

(Prov. 29:24), "*He heareth cursing, and bewrayeth it not*": "He hears a vile oath, but does not tell it." Those who go along with sin and the ways of the world are slow to see or tell the faults and sins of their fellows. They are so drawn into their company and pleasures that they are willing to overlook the vile and foolish behaviour that is manifested.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the most precious thing that you have?
2. Why do so many people neglect and overlook the welfare of the soul?
3. What must we do for our soul to insure it of eternal life?
4. Is there any danger of us neglecting our souls?
5. What are some of the things that people allow to hinder their souls?
6. What kind of value does God put on our souls?
7. Why should the welfare of our souls be so serious to us?
8. Do we have plenty of time to take care of our souls?
9. Can a person hate their soul and not realize it?
10. Is the care and regard for the soul a popular thing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the lover of the souls of men. For this cause He came into this world to be the atoning sacrifice for the saving of the souls of men. He knows as we all should know that the soul of man is priceless and of

eternal value. Everything in this material world that we have to deal with on the human level will one day pass away to nothing. All is to perish with using. But the spirit part of man that God breathed into the body is eternal as God is. This is the soul, that principle of life and being that is the gift of almighty God. What a privilege we have to be a part of God! For this cause we should be very attentive to the things that concern the welfare of our souls! People have a tendency to neglect their souls or to try to fill their souls with the moldy and vain things of earth. The soul or spirit part of man is reaching out for the Lord and is not satisfied with anything else. The soul is eternal and will one day stand before God in judgment. Unbelievers and skeptics through the ages have sought to deny the existence of the soul. Some religions try to teach against it. But their efforts are vain. The soul is spoken of so often in the Bible. It is the main object of the Bible, and the soul is the most important thing in our life. You can lose your home, your business, and your possessions; but nothing equals the loss of a soul. Is it not wise to put the soul first and live with the welfare of your soul uppermost in your mind? Just think: A few days here and eternity over there. A few days of diligence here for the welfare of our souls will result in eternal happiness in glory. And a few days of neglect and indulgence in earthly pleasure will result in eternal loss of the most precious thing we have! The soul that is unsaved will go out into the realm of eternity. There it will be in outer darkness, far away from the warmth and security of the love of God and His saints. I would rather choose the welfare and salvation of my soul, be sure and complete in my attending this important matter, and be rewarded for eternity. This is the message of the book of Proverbs. The salvation of your soul is the purpose of righteousness, faithfulness, obedience, endurance, patience and godliness. Without the saving of our soul life loses its worth and importance. Let us purpose as never before to live with the welfare of our never-dying soul in mind. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The devil certainly has a way of clouding the issues and camouflaging what is good and what is bad. He will confuse what is sweet and what is bitter.

It is a scientific fact that the illuminating power of phosphorus is due to the process of decomposition, the outcome of putrefaction, although no appearance of it may be visible. There are many things in this world that are attractive and yet are damaging to the soul, bringing about death and decay. The things of God are also attractive and are life-giving. So how do we tell the difference? It takes wisdom—a God-given wisdom. “The way of life is above to the wise...” Prov. 15:24. If we realize that life comes from above, or from God, and keep our eyes upon God, depending upon Him for our existence, the harm of sinful things will automatically be excluded. It is wisdom that says the ways of God are right, and it is God-given wisdom that tells us what things in life are of benefit. —Wayne Murphey



DECEMBER 11, 1994

THE EVILS OF STRONG DRINK

Proverbs 20:1 Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Proverbs 23:19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

20 Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh:

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

29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.

31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

33 Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.

34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.

35 They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.

Proverbs 31:3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink:

5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert judgment of any of the afflicted.

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. Proverbs 20:1.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The various strong alcoholic drinks that we have in the world today are to be avoided and denied of use by the wise and righteous. The curse of alcohol has wrought sorrow untold in the earth and laid many people in a Christless grave. It is wise and best for the child of God to totally abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 20:1), "*Wine is a mocker*": "Wine is a scorner, strong drink is loud and noisy, and each who strays by it is not wise." Hebrew. Wine and strong drink have a strange appeal to mankind. It is attractive, fragrant, and a person can develop a peculiar fascination and love for its flavor. But it is a deceiver and a vain substitute for the real happiness that comes from drinking into God's sweet Holy Spirit. Instead of happiness,

strong drink has a bitter sting to give to all who partake of it.

(Prov. 23:20), "*Winebibbers*": The Hebrew says, "Heavy drinkers of wine." "*Riotous eaters of flesh and the glutton*": This refers to people of loose morals, who have no discipline nor control of their bodily appetites. Their god is their belly and they glory in things that are shameful. We are living today in a gluttonous age. Gluttonous means eating to excess, beyond what is really needed. Much of the world's sickness and disease is brought about by uncontrolled eating. God is calling for His children to be temperate not only in the abstinence of strong drink but in their eating habits as well. To overeat is harmful to the body.

(Prov. 23:29), "*Babbling*": Incoherent talk void of reason and judgment. One stage of drunkenness is talkativeness. "*Redness of eyes*": Dullness of eyes. Strong drink affects the brain and its signals to the senses. One under the influence of alcohol cannot see, hear or think straight.

(Prov. 23:31), "*When it moveth itself aright*": The Hebrew says, "When it goes down smoothly."

(Prov. 23:33), "*Strange women, perverse things*": Along with the physical damage inflicted by alcoholic drinking, there is the association with those who are also partaking of this evil. There are ungodly women and spirits of evil that will fill one's mind and heart with ideas and practices that are so greatly contrary to godliness.

(Prov. 23:34), "*As he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or upon the top of a mast*": Intoxication so addles the brain that it makes a person want to do things unreasonable and dangerous with no fear. Many criminals have to have a good shot of whiskey to brace them up to execute their evil deeds. The Dalton gang who tried unsuccessfully to rob two Coffeyville, Ks, banks in 1892 had charged themselves with whiskey to brace them up for their grisly mission. It was their last such venture, for before the day was over they were all killed but one. So ridiculous can alcohol make the frame of mind that they think they can lie down in the ocean or upon the top of the ship's ropes and sailing apparatus with no danger, only to fall to the deck to their death or into the sea to be drowned. The

warning is clear: stay away from strong drink, for its end is bitter.

(Prov. 23:35), This is the language of the drunkard. All effort by friends and loved ones to awaken him to his woeful plight is in vain. When he gets over one season of drunkenness he will soon seek it again. The pattern stays in conformity. Unless a violent decision for Christ and a contact with the saving grace of God is made, he will go right on in his way of destruction.

(Prov. 31:4), "*O Lemuel*": A king of uncertain history. The general opinion is that it was referring to Solomon, but no one is sure as to who Lemuel really was.

(Isaiah 5:22), "*Mingle strong drink*": "To mix fermented drink." Hebrew. Alcoholic beverages are made from various grains and juices of fruits. Corn, wheat, barley and sometimes even potatoes are used to produce the evil beverage. The grain is soaked for a period; then when fermentation begins to develop the substance is cooked. The vapors that come up from the cooking mass is drawn off and cooled to distill back into liquid again. This liquid is the beverage, whether it be whiskey, gin or vodka. The juices of grapes, apples, cherries and other juicy fruits are allowed to ferment to develop the wine or cider. This powerful substance is too much for the body to handle. To drink this puts alcohol into the blood stream. This affects the brain, and the organs of digestion as well. It is harmful and destructive, and wisdom speaks loudly to each and every one to leave it alone entirely.

QUESTIONS:

1. What draws most drinkers to start drinking alcoholic beverages?
2. In what way is strong drink deceitful?
3. Do you think that God ever meant for man to produce strong drink?
4. What must a person do to keep from being caught in this snare?
5. Are there other ways to be drunken besides with strong drink?

6. Can a person do their body harm with improper and abnormal eating?
7. How can a person get real help from God concerning this awful habit?
8. Can God deliver a person from the habit of drinking liquor?
9. Is it safe to drink a little or be a social drinker in moderation?
10. What is the Christian's position on the use of strong drink?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a terrible condition prevails in our world today on account of strong drink! It is a picture of sorrow and shame. And many people are caught up in this licensed snare. The Word of God in our lesson today describes it just as it is. Most of us have seen how ridiculous and foolish a drunk person is. But it is sad more than anything else. It is ruinous to the character and to the health of a person. There is nothing good that can be said of the drunkenness that comes from drinking strong drink. It is a habit that can only be broken by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Young people need to take heed to the warning given here in the scriptures. You might think that you will never be tempted to partake of this evil, but remember that Satan is crafty and he gets many people into his snare that never thought they would. Just don't ever take that first drink. Total abstinence is the best and safest policy. The end of taking strong drink is like the bite of a copperhead or rattlesnake. It allures with its color, its fragrance and its taste. It has a curious attraction, and many are attracted to it because of its curious and strange bearing. But oh, once it gets a person in its grasp, there is trouble and sorrow untold. There is case after case in history of people who proved the folly of strong drink. Various names in Bible history have strong drink connected to their history. Some were innocent and not aware of the danger, but it stung them just as well. There was Belshazzar who had a drinking party the night of his great fall when the handwriting on the wall spelled his doom. He was drinking wine and dared to drink from the holy vessels from

God's temple in Jerusalem. He met his doom that night. It has been proven over and over that wine is a deceitful art of the devil, and those who are deceived thereby are not wise. Let us take heed to the warning, and make sure that you never get caught in this destructive snare. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"A vine bears three grapes, the first of pleasure, the second of drunkenness, and the third of repentance." —Anacharsis

"Wine heightens indifference into love, love into jealousy, and jealousy into madness. It often turns the good-natured man into an idiot, and the choleric into an assassin. It gives bitterness to resentment, it makes vanity insupportable, and displays every little spot of the soul in its utmost deformity."

—Joseph Addison

"The bar room as a bank: You deposit your money, and lose it; your time, and lose it; your character, and lose it; your manly independence, and lose it; your home comfort, and lose it; your self-control, and lose, your children's happiness, and lose it; your own soul, and lose it."

—J. B. Gough

"Wine and youth are fire upon fire." —Henry Fielding

"Wine has drowned more than the sea." —Publius Syrus

The Japanese say: "A man takes a drink, then the drink takes a drink, and the next drink takes the man."

"Wine is like anger, for it makes us strong, blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong; the strength is quickly lost; we feel the error long."

—George Crabbe

"Wine invents nothing; it only tattles. It lets out all secrets."

—Johann Schiller



DECEMBER 18, 1994

VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS AND INSIGHTS OF WISDOM

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

6 Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

7 Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.

9 Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

15 ...There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough:

16 The grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough.

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not:

19 The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

21 For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear:

22 For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

23 For an odious woman when she is married; and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceedingly wise:

25 The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in summer;

26 The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

27 The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands;

28 The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.

MEMORY VERSE: Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Proverbs 30:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's ways, though marvelous, mysterious, and full of wonder, will prove out to be best for us if we will submit ourselves to Him and be content with what He provides.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(Prov. 30:5), *"Every word of God is pure"*: The Hebrew word translated "pure" here means to be tested and refined as metal is refined by fire. This declares that God's Word needs no human touch or addition, for it has been proven in the fires of opposition and adversity through the ages. As verse six implies, it is a serious offense to add to or take away from His Word. We cannot really add to or take away from his word, for it is forever settled in heaven. What we do when we attempt such folly is but to prove ourselves as liars.

(Prov. 30:8), *"Feed me with food convenient for me"*: The Hebrew says, "Break for me the bread of my portion." God has promised to supply our needs. We should trust Him to do that and be glad for what He provides. We should not want riches, and we can trust God to keep us from poverty. He will give us the portion that is best and sufficient for us.

(Prov. 30:16), *"The grave"*: The Hebrew word is "Sheol" which is parallel with the Greek word "hades," which means the realm of the dead, the departed spirits, whose bodies are in the grave. It is never satisfied for it keeps daily on taking in the pilgrims of earth who close out their mortal passage in this world. *"The barren womb"*: The natural God-given desire of a woman is to be able to conceive and bring forth children. Until this blessing is granted there is unfulfilled desire and disappointment. How different it is in our perverted society, when, instead of desiring children and the joy they bring, every conceivable method is employed to prevent birth. *"The earth that is not filled with water"*: The soil that is dry and void of proper moisture cannot be satisfied with anything else. So the soul of man is not satisfied when void of the water of life that Jesus has provided so abundantly! *"The fire that saith not, It is enough"*: You can never satisfy a fire, for as you keep adding wood, it will continue to burn indefinitely. Thus the flame of ungodly passions and desires are never satisfied, but will keep reaching for more and more fulfillment even to that which is forbidden of God. These four things: the grave, the barren womb, the earth not filled with water, and the fire, symbolize man in his need of God's mercy and help. All four of these things God can and will supply for our souls if we will but submit ourselves to Him according to His Word.

(Prov. 30:21), "Under three things the earth quakes, and under four it is not able to bear up under." Hebrew.

(Prov. 30:22), "*For a servant when he reigneth*": Here is a condition that always makes trouble in the earth, and that is in the realm of leadership. When those who are in the lead are not qualified for the position, and ought to be taking orders instead of giving orders, you will see trouble, trouble, trouble. We have this in our world today. "*A fool when he is filled with meat*": In other words, a contented fool. This is another problem in this world that is true today. People are living such foolish and shameful lives, but are not bothered or disturbed about it. They are contented in their folly.

(Prov. 30:23), "*An odious woman when she is married*": The Hebrew says, "A hated woman when she is married." Marriage was designed to be a lifetime partnership of love and happiness. Both man and woman should earnestly endeavor to make their life together happy by seeking to win each other's love and affection. When love breaks down in a marriage and bitterness and hatred take its place you have trouble that will make the weight of sin and evil heavier upon this earth. This gives rise for divorce, broken homes, double marriage, adultery and other great evils. "*An handmaid that is heir to her mistress*": She may be legally heir, but she is not qualified to assume the responsibility of the estate. This happens to nations, businesses and estates. Those who have to step into a fallen leader's shoes so often prove unfit and unqualified to handle the leadership rightfully, thus bringing sorrow and ruin. This goes on all the time in our wicked world. All four of these things here mentioned are taking place in our time. It is no wonder that we are nearing the end of this world, the transgression is so heavy upon it!

(Prov. 30:26), "*Conies*": A small rabbit-like creature.

QUESTIONS:

1. Can a person find true satisfaction outside of his Creator?
2. When a person finds God precious to his soul, does it take much to satisfy him?
3. Is it common for people in this world to not desire riches?
4. What are some things about wealth that are not so desirable?

5. How is God's way like an eagle in the air?
6. How does Christ deal with us like a man with a maiden?
7. Are the four things that disquiet the earth coming to pass today?
8. What lessons can we draw from the little creatures who are so strong?
9. How can we take hold and be in the King's palace?
10. Why must we take heed not to add to or take away from the Word of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Man, in his unrest and dissatisfaction does many things that are not beneficial to himself nor glorifying to God. His imagination and thoughts frame ideas and beliefs contrary to the Word of God. His lust and appetites reach for things that he does not need, nor can use. It means much for us to be satisfied with God's dealings and with the bread of our portion, the part that God provides for us in life. "Give me not riches" is scarce the prayer of one in a thousand. So many lust and desire for wealth and work toward that end. They think that happiness and contentment lies in how much they can possess. In this they err. "...Godliness with contentment is great gain." I Timothy 6:6. Jesus told us to pray the Father to "give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11.) God has promised to bless us with provision one day at a time. And we who have learned to trust in Him fully have proved that this is the way He does it. God gave Adam and Eve a beautiful garden home with all the provision that they needed to make them happy. But Satan caused them to feel that they needed more, that to disobey to procure wisdom and a higher state of life would be profitable for them. They became dissatisfied with what they had just enough to cause them to incline toward the devil's suggestion. This is the way that Satan still works, seeking to cause people's minds to look on the grass on the other side of the fence as more desirable than what they have. Oh, how we need to learn the art of contentment! Just be satisfied with what God does. Do not try to add to it nor take away from it. His way is perfect and His word is tested and sure. You can never be satisfied until you become submissive to God. You must recognize that friendship with this wicked world is enmity against God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Every word of God is pure:..." One little girl got hold of a copy of the New Testament and began to read it. Before she got past the early chapters of Matthew, she rushed into her Mother's room and said: "Oh, Mother, look what I've found! Isn't it lovely? Now we can all live like this." Wouldn't it be nice if everyone had the same enthusiasm for the Word of God and the lifestyle it purveys; every word of it?

Anything that is pure has intrinsic value, and nothing more so than the Word of God. It is complete and there is nothing that can be added that would embellish it.

Who is there that could add anything to God's creation of the universe? Or who would be bold enough to bring forth an opinion of how the plan of salvation could be improved? These are of God's workmanship and come from an infinite mind that can not be excelled. Then why do you suppose there are so many who by their zeal and actions add to the pure Word of God? When we go about to establish our own righteousness instead of leaning upon the grace of God we are in effect saying that God's plan does not include enough within its covers to give me security. At the other end of the scale we find people trying to omit some of the Word of God by proclaiming that not all of it is of use to us. The Word of God does not need to be scaled down or enlarged. It is wise to accept it as it is and live by it.

—Wayne Murphey

DECEMBER 25, 1994

THE GIFT OF GOD'S SON TO THE WORLD

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

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.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

MEMORY VERSE: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. I John 4:9.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God gave to the world the greatest Gift that could ever be given. He gave His Son to us, and sent Him into the world to bring peace and salvation to all mankind. Through this peace and salvation we find victory and hope to help us live with heaven in view.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is about the wonderful Gift of God to mankind, the Gift of His dearly beloved Son. He sent Him to us, but He also gave Him to us. He can be ours to have and to hold and enjoy for all time and eternity.

From Isaiah we have the precious prophecy of Jesus, the Son to us given, and the Child to us born. From the gospel of John we have the declaration that the Word was made manifest and that God gave His Son for us to believe in and have eternal life. From Luke we have the words of Zacharias exalting the Lord God for sending help and deliverance to our souls. And then from the first epistle of John we have a few utterances of John with regard to God sending His Son into the world.

Since God went to such great ends to bring His Son within our reach, it is for us to reach out and lay hold upon Him and never let Him go.

—Leslie C. Busbee

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

(John 3:18), "*Condemned already*": The Greek text says, "Judged even now."

(Luke 1:69), "*Horn of salvation*": The word horn denotes power, authority and conquest.

(I John 4:10), "*Propitiation*": This word means "atonement." It also means "expiator, or expiation." The word explator means one who has extinguished and put away guilt by suffering and paying the penalty.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the purpose and need of God giving us the gift of His Son?
2. In what manner did He give the gift of His Son to us?
3. What kind of people appreciate this wonderful gift?
4. How should this gift be received?
5. What kind of effect will the gift of God's Son have in the soul?
6. To what extent is the gift of God's Son ours?
7. How long will we be able to keep this wonderful gift?
8. What kind of life ought we to live to be accounted worthy of receiving this gift?

9. What will happen to us if we refuse or fail to receive this gift?

10. Is there any means available for us to be saved other than through this gift?

God Sent Forth His Son

The Father God Almighty looked on earth from up above;
He heard the groaning sorrow, men's despair bespeaking of.
For bowed beneath sin's wages, and enrapt in fearful gloom,
The sons of men were groping in the shadow of the tomb.

His heart all stirred with pity, see the Father call His Son,
"I will send Thee on a mission, for there's work that must be done.
Go to earth's dark sinful regions, for a body I've prepared
That you might live down among them, all their sorrows must be shared."

"I will go for Thee, my Father! I delight to do Thy will!"
Hear the Saviour's holy answer with determination still.
On the wings of love and mercy to the Virgin's womb He sped,
And united with the woman's seed took on Him mortal's stead.

Born in Bethlehem's low manger 'neath the stars of silent night,
Christ, the Son of God made entrance to shine forth His gracious
Light.

God sent forth His Son so kindly, to redeem the souls of men,
Just to ransom them from evil, and to wash them from their sin.

On the cross His great atonement for our souls was fully wrought,
On the mount and by the seashore lessons wonderful He taught,
He was given for us solely to receive, to have, to hold:
Such a gift is far more precious than the richest, finest gold.

How with joy we should receive Him, oh, how thankful we should
be,

For the gift of God so precious bringing life to you and me!
He is ours, our Lord and Saviour, He's our Brother and our Friend;
He is ours, yes, ours forever, in a bond to never end.

And today He is the Treasure that grows richer all the time,
Sweetest song to cheer our spirits, bringing gladness so sublime.
Let us ever praise and serve Him, and obey His word until
We behold His blessed beauty high on heaven's golden hill!

—Leslie C. Busbee

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