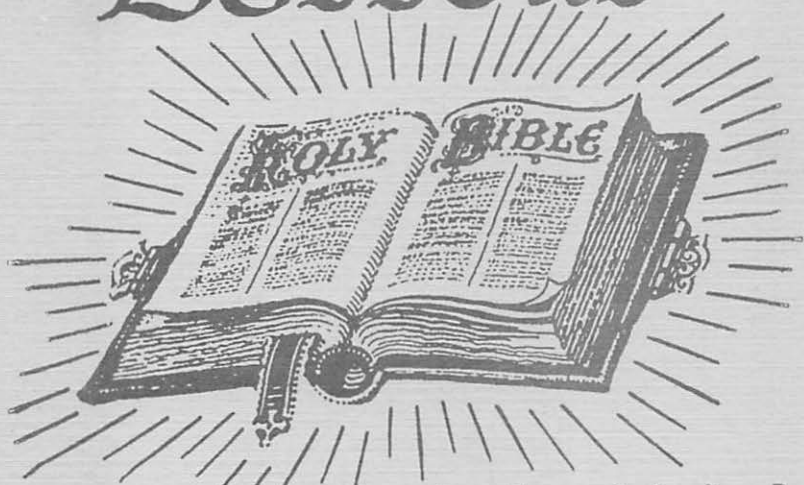


1996

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. 28, No. 2
April, May, June
1996

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, OK
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
(USPS054-680)

Volume 28

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No. 2

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

**Subscription Price-50¢ a copy for quarter of year, or
\$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.
Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.**

**Published Quarterly By:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
920 W. Mansur Ave.
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044
Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.**

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 1996

For our studies this quarter we will have various subjects concerning our relationship with God. There are many ways that people follow that hinder them from being in a right condition before their Creator. We will study, from a scriptural perspective, what are the right attitudes to have that will help us find success with God. To be ignorant of these things is spiritual blindness and gross darkness. Let us study these scriptures and take diligent heed to their message.

—Brother Leslie Busbee



APRIL 7, 1996

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

I Thessalonians 4:11 ...Study to be quiet...

I Timothy 2:2 ...Lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

I Peter 3:4 ...A meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Lamentations 3:25 The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.

Psalm 39:1 I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

4 Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Psalm 46:8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he

breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Isaiah 30:15 ...In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength....

Isaiah 32:17 The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

Amos 5:12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. Psalm 62:5-6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All carnal strife, worry, unbelief and human pride must be silenced in the soul of man before the almighty God will bless and reveal Himself.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(I Thessalonians 4:11), "*Study*": Seek or try earnestly.

(Lamentations 3:26), "*Hope and quietly wait*": Hope even in silence. (Hebrew.)

(Lamentations 3:28), "*Keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him*": Bearing faithfully the burdens and trials of the Christian life in silent submission to God prepares one for meaningful service.

(Psalm 39:1), "*Bridle*": A muzzle. This refers to the self-control of the tongue, being silent and refraining to speak.

(Psalm 46:9), *"He maketh wars to cease"*: The work of the grace of Jesus Christ in the heart causes one to cease from carnal warring with his fellow creatures. All self-devised efforts for gain and vain gratification of the flesh is brought to an end in the saved and sanctified soul. A quietness and stillness prevails in the heart and mind, making room for the sweet revelation of the Almighty.

(Amos 5:12), *"Manifold transgressions and mighty sins"*: The Hebrew says, "abundant transgressions and numerous sins."

(Amos 5:13), *"The prudent shall keep silence"*: The wise in the salvation of Christ will not blend with the racket and strife of this wicked generation. They will not participate in and condone the strikes and conflicts of covetous and bitter disputes. The holiness of the Lord will cause the godly to withdraw from factions and the strife of tongues. There in the stillness of the sanctuary of God the wise steps that should be taken will be made known.

(Psalm 62:5), *"Wait thou only upon God"*: Only to God be silent. (Hebrew.)

LESSON BACKGROUND

To learn to be silent before God is a great accomplishment. It is a wise man who learns to bear responsibility and adversity with quiet confidence in God, not murmuring, complaining, fretting, worrying, nor avenging himself. Our lesson today is a vision of the quietness and silence we must maintain in our souls in order to please God. One young graduate would say: "Silence is golden, but talking's more fun." Talking too much can bring soul troubles. The Bible speaks a lot about controlling the tongue. But the controls are within. Quietness and silence before God in your spirit will bring a stillness and peaceableness in your life. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament is found the praise of being silent and waiting on God for direction in what actions to take and what words to speak. There are times when we must speak out, but if our speaking out is not preceded by being silent before the Lord and waiting upon Him, our words will be of little value. Sometimes it is needful to refrain and hold our peace even

from seemingly good efforts. Quench the fire of anger and wrath, and let the fire of the Holy Spirit burn within you. It is an evil time and most everyone, it seems, is on their pedestal trying to straighten this world's mess out. The talk shows are raging and everyone wants to have his say. It is time to "hush every lip, close every book, and forbear the strife of tongues." (John Greenleaf Whittier.) The wrath of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God. God's true people are a quiet people, slow to speak and slow to wrath. The manifold transgressions and mighty sins prevail because too many tongues are loose and unbridled. It is time to get silent and plead the light and guidance of the Lord. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things that we must silence in our life?
2. Instead of being quiet, what are most people doing?
3. Why is it good for one to learn silence and subjection in their youth?
4. What did the Psalmist say after he had kept silent, held his peace and let the fire burn?
5. Is the talkative man aware of how frail he really is?
6. What is the work and effect of true righteousness?
7. Why can we not really know God if we are not still?
8. What is the wrath of man accomplishing in our world?
9. Why is it difficult and often not convenient to be silent?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Our lesson is telling us the plain truth that it is good for a person to learn to be subject and silent in their youth. It is a lesson very worthwhile to learn. The consequences of not learning to be silent are often very tragic. Most marriages that fall to pieces are thus because the parties involved know not the quietness and peace of the Lord. For a person to really "make it" with God, he or she must discipline themselves to be quiet and still before Him. A home where the tongue runs loose is not a pleasant place. There are many people up in years who have never learned to be still. The only silence many people have is a pouting silence, a stubborn and resentful attitude that makes a strain on everyone. There is a time to speak and

a time to be silent. We must get them lined up right. Learn to know when to speak and when to be still. The Spirit of the Lord can help us to become silent and peaceful to others and quiet and submissive to God. Woe to the person who never learns this lesson! It has been said that when a person feels like he is going to burst if he does not speak, that is the time he should exercise the greatest care and earnestly seek to be silent. There are many things that need NOT be discussed or talked on. Far better it would be if we would learn to be silent and not talk so much. Talkativeness is a disease of the soul. "Pray more and talk less" is a good motto to follow. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I Thessalonians 4:11 says, "Study to be quiet..." Being quiet doesn't come naturally. It is something we have to work at and cultivate. How do we study to be quiet? One good way is by taking note of how other people's overindulgence in words causes problems. This can bring a carefulness within us. When someone says something that we find hurtful, good can be effected in our lives if we quietly determine never to do that to anyone else.

We have often heard the advice, "think before you speak." This too is a way to study to be quiet. It is to our benefit if we weigh the motive behind our words. Are we being manipulated to speak? Is our motivation jealousy or pride?

An Aesop fable illustrates so aptly how one's pride can be manipulated and played upon to one's own hurt. A crow had stolen a piece of cheese and was flying toward the top of a tall tree where he hoped to enjoy his prize, when a fox spied him. "If I plan this right," said the fox to himself, "I shall have cheese for supper."

So, as he sat under the tree, he began to speak in his most polite tones: "Good day, mistress crow, how well you are looking today! How glossy your wings, and your breast is the breast of an eagle. And your claws—I beg your pardon—your talons are as strong as steel. I have not heard your voice, but I am certain that it must surpass that of any other bird, just as your beauty does."

The crow was pleased by all this flattery. She especially liked what friend fox said about her voice, for she had sometimes been told that her caw was a bit rusty. So, chuckling to think how she was going to impress the fox with the sound she was about to emit, she opened her mouth wide. Down dropped the piece of cheese. The fox snatched it before it touched the ground and walked away licking his chops.

—Wayne Murphey



APRIL 14, 1996

SERVING THE LORD

Psalm 100:2 Serve the Lord with gladness:...

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations,...

Romans 6:16 Knowye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 ...As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Psalm 2:11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Luke 22:25 And he (Jesus) said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve,

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

MEMORY VERSE: ...Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. **Galatians 5:13.**

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To be a servant of the Lord is the greatest place one can fill in life. Being faithful in His service, to the end, will bring eternal rewards and happiness.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

"Serve": To work for, to give attendance, to wait upon.
(Romans 6:17), *"God be thanked, that ye were the servants*

of sin": Yes, we were all servants of sin at one time. We are not thankful that we served sin in the past, but we are glad that it is all in the past and that now we are servants of God, having obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was brought to us in the gospel.

(Romans 6:19), "*Servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity*": In the past we yielded our eyes, our ears, our feet, our hands, our tongues and our minds as instruments to serve the flesh, the world and the devil. Our service to him was progressive. We went from bad things to worse things. We see where such serving led us. Now we, being delivered by the grace of God from those things, yield our members as instruments to serve God in righteousness, progressing on to holiness and higher heights and deeper depths of grace and service to God.

(Romans 6:20), "*Free from righteousness*": When we were serving self and the flesh we felt that serving righteousness was real bondage and not to be desired. But after suffering the blight and evil that serving sin brought us, we find that it is better to be free from sin and to be a servant to righteousness. In so doing we find true liberty, the freedom of the soul.

(Psalm 2:11, Psalm 100:2), "*Serve the Lord with fear; serve the Lord with gladness*": Serving the Lord is a combination of these two things. We serve the Lord carefully with reverence and godly fear, for we know that our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:28-29.) We are always respecting the fact that God Almighty is to be held in reverence and fear because of His great power and displeasure of sin and disobedience. But, at the same time, in view of the goodness and love and mercy of God, we find great blessings and benefits that bring gladness and joy to our hearts.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Perhaps one of the most important reasons why many people do not make a success in the Lord is that they do not serve Him. They do not give all in devoting their time and energies to attending upon God and what pleases Him. It is easy to profess to be saved and at the same time serve self and the flesh. In our lesson today we have several scriptures that

exhort us to really serve and devote ourselves to God and His will. We see that Jesus came to serve. He came to minister to our souls in obedience to His Father's will. The apostle Paul was a great example of this. Our scripture in Acts 20:19 was spoken by Paul to the elders of the Church in Ephesus. He was reminding them of his life in their midst and how he had served the Lord before them. It is an example we all should follow. In Romans 16:18 he spoke of those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the truth as serving "not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." He clearly shows how that when we were unsaved we yielded our members (our hands, feet, eyes, ears and tongue) as servants to sin. Now we are to yield our members as servants to righteousness unto holiness. It is a blessed life, giving service and ministering faithfully to Him who ministered to us in shedding His blood for the salvation of our souls.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How does an unsaved person serve sin?
2. How can we use our members to serve God?
3. What do most people serve today?
4. How can we serve God with gladness and yet with fear?
5. What are the ways in which we can serve others?
6. In what things are we to serve Christ?
7. How did Jesus serve us?
8. How did Paul serve the Lord and others?
9. What are our members that we use in serving God?
10. What is the reward of serving the Lord?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To serve the Lord is to obey His precious Word and the leadings of His Holy Spirit. All of our life should be made up of service to the Lord and to others. As we serve others and minister to them in their needs and spiritual welfare we are truly serving Christ. Paul served the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and in the face of great temptations and pressures from the world. His was a beautiful life of service to the Master. Jesus came into the world to serve. He served God and He served us. Such examples of serving the Lord inspire

us to want to do the same. We can always improve our service to God. In righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit we can serve Christ and be a benefit to others. By living a holy life, pure and unspotted from the world, we set an example for others to follow. By being kind and peaceable we can help to negotiate healing to the discord around us. By being joyful in the Holy Spirit we can make the way attractive. This is acceptable to God and people cannot help but approve and commend such a beautiful life. I heard of a saint minister who lived such a life of service to God in his town that he earned their respect and regard greatly. His life was above reproach and even people who did not agree with the doctrines of truth that he stood for said that he was the meekest, sweetest spirited person they had ever met. Truly a life of faithful service to God is the greatest life one can live. We should dedicate ourselves to God's service. Serve God sincerely and earnestly with all you have. Make serving Him your joy and sweetest delight. Great is the reward of faithful service to God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Service to God means we are answering the call to "go." Someone once illustrated that you cannot spell Good Samaritan without "go." However, this doesn't always mean that we must go across the seas or even across the street to prove our service to Him. Sometimes, being a servant of God simply means we need to be willing to stir ourselves up and pour out our affection toward Him.

This principle can be likened to the man, who, effusive in his effort to express his love for his wife, said, "Honey, I wish I were an octopus. Then I would have eight arms to hug you!"

"You know you aren't telling the truth," she replied, "for you are not using the two arms you do have."

In national cemeteries around the world where American soldiers are buried, the word "Unknown" appears on many graves. "Known Only to God," are the words inscribed on the memorial of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. There may be times when our service to God will be known only to Him. Being content for it to be so is "Serving the

Lord with all humility of mind,...” The reward for such service is to be highly exalted by God. —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 21, 1996

THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL VISION

Psalm 119:18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Psalm 19:8 ...The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

Isaiah 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

Isaiah 8:20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Isaiah 29: 18 And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19 The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Matthew 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Ephesians 1:15 ...I (Paul)... after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

I Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

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

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: A person will live, act, and be no more, no better, no farther than what the vision of his soul takes in. We need to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened that we may see what God wants us to have and what He wants us to be. Only through His Word and Holy Spirit can we have this true vision.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Psalm 119:130), *"The entrance of thy words"*: The entrance of the Word of God into the lowly and receptive heart enlightens the mind and guides the soul.

(Isaiah 6:10), *"Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes"*: The real rendering of this expression is more clearly seen in the Septuagint Greek translation: "For the heart of this people has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I shall heal them." This is what Jesus quoted in Matthew 13:14-15 and what the apostle Paul quoted in Acts 28:26-27. In one sense God can and will blind the heart, but this is only after the individual has hardened their heart and turned away their eyes from Him. This is a warning. The blindness of Israel in the time of Isaiah and that blindness of the people in the

time of Jesus and Paul will take us today if we fail to give diligent heed to God's law.

(Isaiah 8:20), *"There is no light in them"*: The Hebrew says, "To them is no dawn." This corresponds with II Peter 1:19 where the apostle exhorts us to take heed to the prophecy "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

(Matthew 6:22), *"If thine eye be single"*: The word "single" is translated from the Greek word, "haplous," which means "folded together." This denotes single, clear, focused vision, not hindered by looking at other things. This is talking about a man's spiritual vision.

(Matthew 6:23), *"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"*: It is when a person is not aware of his darkness that the darkness is so great. The ideas and beliefs that a man holds as light can actually be darkness. And this kind of darkness is the worst darkness of all, because his ideas prevent him from sensing his darkness and the need for the true Light.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Ever since God created man He has had difficulty with getting man to have the true vision. God speaks in plain, explicit words but still man gets it wrong. This is because there is another influence that works against the knowledge of God, that tends to confuse and lead astray. That is the work of Satan. He confused and beguiled Eve by blurring her vision of God and what He had commanded. Back of all the departure of humankind from the path of life down through the ages is lack of vision. In our lesson today we have several scriptures that deal with this great problem. One thing we see quite readily in all of this. Through God's holy law there is vision to be gained. As we read it, study it and seek to obey it there is communicated light and knowledge for our needy souls. Isaiah had the mighty vision of God in the temple and he heard the call of God calling for someone to go warn the people. And the warning was against spiritual darkness that was already upon the people, a darkness that could be overcome if only they would seek earnestly for the light. In Isaiah 29 the vision

of all the prophets had become as the words of a sealed book. To the learned the book was sealed and he felt that he could not read it. To the unlearned the book was not readable because he was unlearned. The prophet further said that the people drew near to God with their mouth, but their hearts were far from Him. Jesus quoted this in Matthew 15:8. But God did not leave this condition without a promise of help. He said that the deaf would hear and the blind would see out of obscurity and the meek and the poor among men would find the joy of God. Yes there is help at hand. Jesus came to bring the light of the glorious gospel. But the god of this world is still around, and he is so good at blinding the minds of those who do not believe lest that glorious light should shine unto them. (II Cor. 4:4.) But if we are willing and obedient, through that precious Word and Holy Spirit we today can have a vision and understanding of all that is in the great storehouse of God for us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the wondrous things we need to see from God's law?
2. How will understanding God's Word cause us to hate every false way?
3. What eyes do we have that need to be enlightened?
4. How does spiritual blindness keep a person from being saved?
5. Is there any real danger of us becoming without vision?
6. What steps can we take that will help us to have a true vision?
7. Can we be given vision if we do not sense our darkness?
8. What did Paul pray for us to have?
9. How does God reveal things that we cannot see as humans?
10. What are some of the present-day evils that show how blind humanity is?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

One prayed of old: "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." Psalm 13:3.

Spiritual vision leads to life while spiritual blindness brings us death. Jesus said, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Some of the Pharisees heard what He said and they responded: "Are we blind also?" And Jesus said unto them: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." John 9:39-41. A person can be spiritually blind and be totally unaware of it. If his life is made up entirely of the flesh and the material side of life to where he has no room or desire for spiritual things, he is blind. Jesus called some people in His day "Blind leaders of the blind." To so many in our evil day the "television" has a great sway in their lives. How much more important is spiritual vision! Habitually watching the television will surely dim the spiritual vision. Oh, how we need a vision of what is in our inheritance in Christ! We need a vision of what it means to be truly born again, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to have clear vision of what it means to be holy and to live an upright, pure and holy life. We need to have a vision of the Church of God, Holy Spirit leadership, the unity of the saints and the body of Christ. We need to understand the importance of modesty and godliness in word, conduct and dress. We need a vision of sanctity in marriage and home life, of patience, gentleness, longsuffering and forbearance. We must desire this vision and seek God every day that we might keep it. Our outward mortal vision may fail, but oh! let us hold fast to the vision of the soul and the clear light of the knowledge of God's will and pleasure.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We navigate through life with our five senses; the sense of smell, touch, hearing, taste and sight. We operate in the spiritual realm with an inner sense of faith, or a spiritual eye.

By having our spiritual eyes opened, we can see the true visage of Christ, not as One who has no beauty that we should desire Him, (Isa. 53:2) but as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14.) We will desire Christ as well as all those things which pertain to God. We will see the beauty in them.

Someone found fault with a little girl. Later she said, "I wish they saw me in Grandpa's eyes." She was referring to how she would appear if seen through eyes of love, which is how we view God if our spiritual vision is clear.

Having an interest in the Word of God is an indication of good spiritual vision. To many, the Bible is nothing more than literary art. Henry Ward Beecher said that the greatest influence in his life was a hired man on the farm which belonged to his father. Beecher said the hired man did not try to influence him, and in fact, was unaware that Beecher, as a boy, would slip into his room and listen as he read the Bible. He said the hired man would lay on his bed, talking and chuckling aloud about what he was reading. It was the first time Beecher heard the Bible really read by someone who enjoyed it because their spiritual eyes were open.

—Wayne Murphey



APRIL 28, 1996

LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS - HATE WICKEDNESS

Psalm 34:11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16 The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalm 37:27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

Psalm 45:6 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

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

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

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

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

Romans 12:9 ...Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

I Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

II Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

MEMORY VERSE: The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy,... Proverbs 8:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants us to hate evil and not allow anything displeasing to Him to have any part in our lives. He wants us to love righteousness and holiness and seek earnestly to have them always.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Psalm 45:7), "*Righteousness*": That which is good, just, true, faithful, acceptable and well pleasing to God.

(Proverbs 11:3), "*Integrity*": Completeness, innocence. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word is "tome," the plural of which is "Tummiym," from which is "Thummim," which was one of the epithets of the objects in the Jewish High Priest's

breastplate as an emblem of complete truth. There are many influences and evil forces in this world that will mar a man's integrity, his moral uprightness and love for holiness and truth. Blessed is the man who will not allow anything to stain this vital treasure. "*Perverseness*": That which is subversive, vicious, distorted and crooked.

(Proverbs 11:6) "*Naughtiness*": Eager coveting and desire for that which is forbidden.

(Romans 12:9), "*Abhor*": To detest or hate utterly. "I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love."

(I Thessalonians 5:22), "*Abstain from all appearance of evil*." :To hold one's self off and refrain from every form, shape, sight and fashion of evil.

(II Thessalonians 2:10), "*Deceivableness of unrighteousness*": The deceitful power of evil to delude and cunningly cause to go astray unawares. This comes about because the heart receives not a love for the truth, but rather has pleasure in unrighteousness. When people get light concerning the wrong and evil of a thing, and they walk over that light and refuse to give up the wrong, then they are opening up the way for a delusion to come in. How important it is to receive and retain a love for truth and righteousness!

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we will consider from a scriptural standpoint a most vital and important disposition that God wants us to have, and that is the love for good and hatred for evil. This should be drilled into a person in their youth. Satan will try hard to offset the sense of godly values that one is taught. But it is so critical that the heart and mind comprehend and distinguish the good from the bad and be aware of the effect of both.

Our scripture from Psalm 34:12-16 is quoted in I Peter 3:10-12. Psalm 45:6-7 is quoted in Hebrews 1:8-9 and is applied directly to Christ. Jesus certainly loved righteousness and abhorred the evil practices of those of His day, even though He gave His life to save them. The book of Proverbs has many strong statements along this line of thought, and the four scriptures we have in our lesson are right at the first of the

wise proverbs of Solomon. And then from the apostle Paul comes counsel that agrees with our Old Testament sayings. Along with his earnest counsel for us to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good is the warning of danger and deception to those who fail to take their stand to love God and the right. God wants us to hate evil and love righteousness, but if we draw back from thus taking our stand He will execute upon us the delusions that He here warns us about. Isaiah 66:3-4 says, "...Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."

May God help us to be diligent to love the truth. Even when it seems hard and we are tempted to draw back, may we humble ourselves and seek Him in prayer. He can work His grace within our hearts and help us to love His truth and righteousness.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there about righteousness and good that makes it desirable?
2. What is there about wickedness and evil that makes it undesirable?
3. What is the future reward of loving righteousness and truth?
4. What is the future reward of loving wickedness and sin?
5. What kind of kingdom is the Kingdom of Christ and God?
6. Why did God anoint Christ with the oil of gladness?
7. What happens to a person if they "cool off" in their abhorance of evil?
8. Why is it so important to receive a love for righteousness and the truth?
9. What condition is a soul in who has a delusion?
10. What can we do to keep from having a delusion?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This world was stained with evil and filled with its woeful blight long before you or I came into being. Its ugly hands reached out to us in youth and childhood in the deceitful gloves of pleasure and gain. It seemed to allure us by deceitful appearances of enjoyment mixed with a charm and fascination. And, before we realized the depth of the woe that followed its embrace, we reached out and partook of its commodities. We who were blessed with godly parents and other righteous influences were given warning and counsel to beware of sin and worldly ways. But so often these warnings are ignored and the thrill of the flesh makes them seem too out of step and undesirable. Thank God for Jesus, the gospel and the precious Holy Spirit who worked so faithfully with us to help us finally see the folly of sin and the value of righteousness. As we forsook our sinful ways and associations in the world and began to apply our hearts unto wisdom, we began to taste and see that the Lord and His righteousness was good and satisfying, far more than what we had been involved with in sin. As we sank deeper into the will of God, how more sweetly did we enjoy His presence within our souls! We would to God that this could be true with everyone. But, sad to say, with the majority of people, even those we have known, this is not the case. We see many who are not willing to turn loose of the things of the world to seek the love of Jesus. Today their lives are empty of what is really worthwhile. Oh, they (many of them) have a lot of earthly things that they are lavishing their hearts upon. But mixed in with it all is sin and things offensive to the divine nature of God. How sad! They go on, seemingly undisturbed and untroubled. It makes us fearful that the warnings we have in our lesson today have come tragically to pass in many hearts and lives. Let us take heed to these scriptures and receive a love for truth and righteousness and escape the delusions of Satan.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Psalm 34:11. To teach the fear of the Lord is

to teach how to know the Lord, and live in the enjoyment of His favor and presence. As children then, let us sit down at the feet of this great Teacher and learn what He has to say about the way of life and blessedness. As a man of experience, He sets forth the truth in order. He speaks—

About Desire. (Psa. 34:12) The anxiety of the soul must be after the right and proper object to begin with. The heart that longs to “see good” has come to the gate of the narrow way.

About Evil. (Psa. 34:13-14) Those who would seek life must be ready to be separated from all their sins. To run this race every weight and sin must be laid aside. (Heb. 12:1.)

About Peace. (Psa. 34:14) He does not teach us that we should *make* peace, but *seek* it. Christ hath made peace by the blood of His cross. Seek the peace of God, and follow peace with all men. (Heb. 12:14.)

About Prayer. (Psa. 34:15-16) Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ no man is better able to instruct in the art of prayer than David. God and prayers were tremendous realities to him. “Ask and ye shall receive.” —Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*



MAY 5, 1996

FOOD WHICH ENDURETH UNTO EVERLASTING LIFE

Isalah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Matthew 4:1 Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be

the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which persisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

32 ...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

MEMORY VERSE: Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which

the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. John 6:27.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There is a food that God provides for the health and sustenance of the natural body, but there is also a far more important food: the food for the inner man which Christ alone can give through His blood, His Word and His Spirit.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(John 6:27), "*Him hath God the Father sealed*": The word "sealed" here refers to being stamped with a special signet designating high authority or importance for security and preservation. God the Father made Christ the Author and Finisher of the salvation of our eternity-bound souls. He put His seal of approval on Jesus from eternity, and carried it with Him from His entrance into the world in the womb of Mary all the way through His life and consummated it in raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand in the eternal heavens.

(John 6:54), "*Eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood*": Jesus here is speaking of us partaking of Him in a manner that He knew would offend the carnal minds of those who were listening to Him. These people had witnessed His power to provide food for them, and were carried away, not with His miraculous power, but with the view of Him satisfying their hunger for earthly bread. This was a carnal element in their minds that He had to deal with. And, as He did on other occasions, He brought in a thought that caused them to question and be offended. But Jesus was speaking purely spiritual language, a language that these people did not know. Instead of humbling down and seeking to know what He meant, these people became offended at Him and turned away from Jesus and walked no more with Him.

(John 6:57), "*He that eateth me*": To eat of Christ, eat of His flesh and drink of His blood, is to receive, absorb into our innermost being and diligently follow and obey His Holy Spirit and Word.

(John 6:63), "*It is the spirit that quickeneth*": Jesus is

trying to explain here that we cannot partake of Christ in a fleshly sense of literally eating His flesh and drinking His blood, but it was rather a spiritual eating of Christ. His words are Spirit and life for the inner man, and His Spirit quickens and gives us power to be the children of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a study of great importance for our spiritual well-being and eternal welfare. Food is a very important item in every one of our lives. The necessary amount of food and the right kind of food is vital to life and health. Food can be not only a source of health, but also the root of many physical problems. The absorption of food into the human body is a very serious thing as well as a needed and desired thing, for your body takes the food that you put into it and processes it into a substance that is passed into the bloodstream to be sent to nourish all organs and parts of your body. So it is very necessary that the food we put into our bodies be healthful and beneficial, not harmful and abusive. There is a saying that is very true: "You are what you eat!"

But there is another kind of food and eating and digestive process that is far, far more important. And that concerns the things on which our minds and spirits feed. The food for the soul is something that the majority of people are not aware of. Jesus tells us in our lesson today that man lives not by (literal) bread alone, but by the Word of God. He quotes from Deuteronomy 8:2-3. In that text God reminded Israel how He had led them through the wilderness, humbling them, suffering them to hunger and feeding them with manna, which they did not know about. He did all of this, as He said, "to make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The prophet Isaiah, in our lesson joins in with this thought in his call for us to come and eat that which is good and to let our souls delight in the fatness and abundance of the life in Christ.

In John 6 we read where Jesus had fed the great multitude with five loaves and two fishes. The people were so enraptured with this miracle that they wanted to take Jesus by force and

make Him king. They probably felt that with Him as their king they would never suffer hunger again. But Jesus had food to eat that they were not aware of. They followed Him to the other side of the sea of Galilee where, in our lesson, He spoke to them of the real food that He wanted to give to them. Sad to say, these people were not interested in this kind of food. Jesus gave them an occasion to be offended at Him when He called this food His flesh and His blood. They turned away and walked no more with Him. They would not heed His explanation that it was the spiritual food of His Word and His Spirit that He was talking about. And so it is today. So many are not interested in the spiritual food. Thus they are void of life in the soul and the blessings thereof. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the food that Jesus is most concerned about?
2. How do we partake of spiritual food?
3. Name some unwholesome things people eat spiritually.
4. How are we "what we eat" both literally and spiritually?
5. What did Jesus say was the bread that cometh from heaven?
6. What will become of the literal food?
7. What does it mean to eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood?
8. How can we "eat" Jesus?
9. Can we hope for eternal life if we fail or refuse to eat Him?
10. What will eating of Christ's bread enable us to do.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus said that He was the Bread of life and that if a man would eat of this Bread he would live forever. It is just that simple. If we would live forever, we must eat of the Bread that will enable us to live forever. We must consume within our being that life-giving substance that will give us power to overcome sin, death and the grave. Eating Christ takes hearing and receiving His word in our hearts and minds, believing it with all of our hearts, and then obeying it to the letter. It is a spiritual eating that we must all do if we are to

have life eternal. We must also drink of His Spirit. We must enter into the realm of the Spirit. Let the Spirit live within you, inspire, comfort, enlighten, lead, control and teach you. You must have a fervent desire and appetite for these spiritual blessings. We must partake of Jesus in His holy essence constantly. We must not absorb into our being things that would corrupt. Filthy stuff can get into the mind and spiritual bloodstream. Think of the pornographic literature that is devoured daily by our society! People are eating garbage when they could be feasting on heavenly food. The spiritual food in the Word of God and the songs of Zion and the Spirit of the Lord are tasteless and undesirable to the proud and lustful. So many feed on the gratifying of the lusts of the body, its care and adorning, while the soul is pining away. The love of money and the deceitful care of this world is choking out the precious Word of God. Oh, let us set ourselves to flee these things and seek after that meat that endures unto eternal life, that food that the Son of Man, seated in power in the heavenly places, will give to us!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Christ likened Himself unto a number of things and many applicable thoughts can be drawn from each comparison. An abundance of material supports His likeness to the Bread of Life.

In Bible times, bread was made from different varieties of grain. Barley was used by the poor or in times of scarcity. Ground wheat was more desirable meal for bread. The wealthy generally preferred bread prepared from sifted wheat flour. This was also the type of flour used to produce the best bread for sacred offerings. By way of comparison, Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. He was the best that heaven had to offer.

In Egypt a certain type of bread was made from spelt. Spelt is a species of wheat with grains that do not thresh free from the chaff. Just as Egypt is typified by the carnal world, we find many people who are feeding their souls on that which is tainted and impure. How much more pleasant to feast upon Christ, who is pure, holy and of the highest quality!

—Wayne Murphey

MAY 12, 1996

GOD'S WORK AND OUR WORK

Psalm 111:2 The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3 His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

Psalm 90:16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

John 5:17 ...Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

John 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Pillippians 2:12 ...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

I Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

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

MEMORY VERSE: We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We need to submit to God and let Him work His great work in our souls. His work will save, sanctify and strengthen us for the work that He wants us to do.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Psalm 111:4), "*Gracious*": Bending and stooping in kindness to an inferior; bestowing favour.

(Psalm 111:6), "*The heritage of the heathen*": Or, the inheritance of the nations. It was God's work that brought Israel out of Egyptian bondage to conquer and possess the land of Caanan. It is God's work to redeem a soul from sin to be able to lay hold on the Holy Spirit-filled life of victory and peace. It will be God's work to keep us in this world until Christ comes in power to destroy the earth and the heavens, bring all mankind to the judgment and bestow everlasting reward to the faithful.

(John 5:17), "*Hitherto*": Until now.

(I Corinthians 3:9), "*Husbandry*": Field or farm.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In this world of much activity and commerce it is vital for us to recognize God's work and to be sure that our work is in harmony with His work. In our lesson today we want to behold the great benefit of God's work in us and the importance of us working with Him.

From the 111th Psalm we find great praise and admiration for the mighty works of the Lord. Notice the expressions that describe His works: "great, honourable, glorious and wonder-

ful." It is generally believed that this Psalm was written after the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon. They were praising God for His mighty works of keeping them through the years of their captivity and for their wonderful deliverance and return to their beloved homeland.

The title on the 90th Psalm attributes it to Moses, the man of God. Adam Clarke is more of the opinion that it was written during the Babylonian captivity. To me, it will fit either case, and, most joyfully, can be applied to us today. I can picture Moses pouring out his heart in this prayer to God while he was herding sheep for Jethro in Midian. The expressions in this Psalm blend very well with his situation. His heart being heavy for his nation in captivity in Egypt was kin to the heaviness of the captives in Babylon. Both were praying for God's work to appear, for His beauty to be upon them, and for Him to establish the work of their hands. Even so must we fervently and devoutly pray for God's work to appear to us, that our children may behold the brightness and beauty of God's work, and that the work of our hands, that is, what we do for His name and His cause, may be in harmony with HIS work that it be established.

We have also two expressions of our Lord and Saviour concerning His Father's work. We see that Christ leaned heavily upon the working of God. He was not alone and the work He did was in full harmony with His Father. The people in John 6 were those people mentioned in our previous lesson who were after the literal food. They wanted to know what to do to work God's work, but were not very well prepared for Christ's answer. To believe in that One that God was sending to them was and is still the real work of God in the soul, believing from the heart with loving obedience and action.

From the apostle Paul we have three different sayings concerning the burden of our lesson. We can see from his expressions that he put very little importance in man's work without the workings of God. Note: "Not of works....we are His workmanship....It is God that worketh in you....God giveth the increase....we are labourers together with God."

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What work does God want to do in us?
2. Name some of His wonderful works of old.
3. What value is man's work without God's work?
4. Is it possible for us to be working without Him?
5. What were the four things prayed for in Psa. 90:16-17?
6. What were some of God's workings with Christ?
7. What did Christ say the work of God is?
8. Why is man inclined to boast in his works?
9. What all does God want to accomplish in us?
10. How can we be sure that we are working with God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The most important thing in your life today is the work of God. There is a work that God wants to do in your soul. In fact, as I heard Bro. Sam Barton put it one time, "The work of God is your soul." The salvation of your soul and its success in life and its triumph in death is His greatest work for you. It is needful for us to furnish God a willing and obedient heart for only then can He accomplish His great work in us. He works not over or contrary to our will. We must yield submissively to Him in love and faith. He will work His works in us. There must be fear and trembling, carefulness and sincerity. It should be a special part of our prayers that His work will appear, that His beauty will be upon us and that He will establish the work of our hands. And then apply ourselves to doing His will with all of our heart. To have God working in our lives and us working with Him is life's greatest joy and achievement. Jesus counted it of number one importance to be in the will of the Father. Even when it meant His death upon the cross (which was His greatest work) He was resigned to carry it through. The apostle Paul was the same way. He let God work His works in him and he spent his life working with God. May the Lord inspire our hearts to diligently pursue this course in life, to let God work His works in us and see to it that we are workers together with Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Something which has always impressed me is how God has always done His work without a lot of fanfare. Christ worked quietly without any announcement of the miracles He was about to perform. When He was resurrected, it was without a crowd on hand to applaud the feat, and He still works that way. Our work for the Lord will not be an ostentatious work.

An incident is recorded in which a pastor had among his congregation an eminent lawyer who was an infidel. He had long desired the salvation of the skeptic, and one day, knowing that he was to be present in the worship service, prepared a sermon especially for him, hoping and praying that through it he would be converted.

The infidel came. It was an icy winter's day; he listened to the sermon, went his way, and not long after confessed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The minister rejoiced and in conversing with him inquired of him what portion of the sermon it was which especially affected his mind, and led to such a desirable result.

He answered, "It was not your sermon at all; I did not hear it. I was making a brief all the while you were preaching, but after meeting closed, as I came out, I saw old Aunt Chloe trying to get down the slippery steps. I stepped forward and helped her down over the ice to the crossing, and as I left her she looked up in my face and said, 'Oh! mister, I wish you loved my dear Jesus.'

"Those words rang in my ears, and I could not get rid of them until I went to my office and bowed myself on my knees and gave myself to Christ." It was just a quiet word that had worked the work of God.

—Wayne Murphey

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MAY 19, 1996

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,)

3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

II Timothy 3:15 ...From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the

prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

I Corinthians 15:3 ...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

II Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

MEMORY VERSE: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Through the Holy Scriptures God has seen fit to prophesy concerning His Son Jesus and this great salvation He came to bring; and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit with the Scriptures Christ is revealed to the heart of man. Therefore, the Scriptures are worthy to be considered earnestly, sought out fervently and obeyed diligently.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

"The Scriptures": By the term "The Scriptures" we mean the Old Testament writings which include the books of Moses, the books of History of the Jews, the books of Poetry, and the books of the Prophets. In the time of Jesus and Paul and Peter there were no New Testament writings. They only had the Old Testament.

(John 5:39) *"Search the scriptures":* The Greek text says, "Ye search the scriptures." The Jews made big motions of being doctors of the law and the prophets. But, as Jesus implies here, though they made great pretence of being avid scholars of the Scripture, they were ignorant of their true

meaning because they refused to come to Christ that they might have life, to the Christ that the Scriptures testified so clearly about.

(Romans 1:1-2), *"The gospel of God promised...in the holy scriptures"*: The gospel that Jesus and Paul both declared is found foretold and promised in the Old Testament scriptures. It was a mystery in those olden times and it seems evident that those prophets and inspired men of old did not fully understand what they were writing. But the hand of God led unerringly and by His Providence and wisdom He has preserved the Holy Scriptures for us today to enjoy and be blessed by.

(II Timothy 3:17), *"Perfect, thoroughly furnished"*: The Greek text reads: "That the man of God may be fitted, having been furnished for every good work."

LESSON BACKGROUND

From three important witnesses in our lesson today we behold the seriousness and importance of the Holy Scriptures with regard to the salvation of the souls of men.

Jesus in John 5:39 was trying to reason with the antagonizing Jews. He had just told them that they had not God's Word abiding in them for they did not believe in Him whom God had sent. "Ye search the scriptures," He said, "for in them ye think (or suppose) that ye have eternal life." Yes, the Jews, as many of this day, made a profession of being godly and, after a matter of form, read the Scriptures. But at the same time, they resisted the Holy Spirit and would not receive His true light. Jesus went on, "And they (the Scriptures) are they which testify of Me. And (at the same time) ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

When Jesus was walking on the road to Emmaus with the two disciples (who did not recognize Him) He opened the scriptures to them, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, showing them all the things concerning Himself. Then later, as our lesson shows, before He was taken up, He explained further what was in the Scriptures to His disciples. He said that these things were in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms.

We find in all of Paul's writings constant referral to the Scriptures. The gospel, the mystery hid from past ages, the truth of Christ's death and resurrection, and everything that the man of God needs to be taught, reproved, corrected and instructed in righteousness is found in the Scriptures. This will completely furnish us for successful Christian life and labour.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible to be a Bible reader and yet not know the Scriptures in their true meaning?
2. What must we have to be able to understand the Scriptures?
3. What are some of the things that our lesson shows are found in the Scriptures?
4. What are the Scriptures able to do for us?
5. Can we understand the Scriptures on our own?
6. How were the Scriptures written?
7. Why cannot a carnal, earthly mind take in the truth of the Scriptures?
8. What can the Holy Spirit do with the Scriptures?
9. What happens when a person twists or wrests the Scriptures? (II Peter 3:16.)
10. What can we do to love more and better understand the Scriptures?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

You have within your reach a mine of wealth untold, a collection of tools of unlimited value, a map of the path to mansions eternal in heaven, a health kit guaranteed to take care of every ill or wound you will meet in life, plus many more valuable benefits that you need. And yet it is something that so many count lightly and overlook in their endeavors for success. What is this? It is that which we have been studying about today in our lesson. It is the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation when accompanied by faith that is in Christ Jesus. The Word of the saints and prophets of old contain wonderful truths that we need to have inscribed upon the tables of our hearts today.

May we entreat you to not neglect the prayerful, diligent study of God's sacred Scriptures. They bring light and life to the soul. They help to put life and all of its functions into the right perspective. A person without the knowledge of the Scriptures is not qualified or ready to face life and its responsibilities.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Any time clear thinking men with honest hearts begin to study the Word of God, they are soon convinced of its truthfulness and merit, and as a consequence many will believe and accept its teaching for themselves. The problem, then, is not the convincing power of the gospel, for Jesus told us if He be lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself, but rather, the difficulty comes in getting men to examine the Word with an honest heart.

Men with honest hearts and open minds who begin to study the Word of God, believe and accept its teaching, measure to its requirements, and receive its rewards, are soon filled with the Holy Ghost who will lead them into all truth.

Think for a moment of a few things that will hinder such progress. Indifference—not interested enough to give consideration to the Word. Dishonesty—refusing to accept and acknowledge the truth when it is perceived. Study which is void of the Spirit—ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Study for the purpose of argument or to criticize. Study to justify oneself rather than seeking how to be justified. These and many, many more can and often do prove to be very effective reasons why many are weak and sickly and never able to come to full stature in the Lord.

—Clifford Wilson (Written in 1970.)



MAY 26, 1996

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR GOD

Psalm 84:1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Psalm 107:8 Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Isaiah 41:17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18 I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Psalm 43:3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Psalm 63:1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

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 enquire 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.

Psalm 119:20 My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

Luke 1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is very needful and important for us to keep a keen appetite for God and the blessings of His Word. We should be careful not to allow any earthly desire to take away from the hungering and thirsting of our souls for the Lord.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Psalm 84:1), "*How amiable are thy tabernacles*": The Hebrew says, "How lovely are thy dwellings!"

(Psalm 42:1), "*As the hart panteth*": In the Hebrew the hart refers to the stag or male deer. The word "pant" means to long for with intense desire and desperate thirst.

(Psalm 63:1), "*Early will I seek thee*": The word "early" means to be up early, at any task, with earnestness, to search for with painstaking. "*My flesh longeth for thee*": Here the word "longeth" means "to pine after." Webster defines "to pine after" as to be in pain and torment with desire, to languish and waste away, to grieve and mourn for.

(Psalm 63:5), "*Marrow and fatness*": Marrow refers to the richest and most choice part, while fatness denotes abundance. Thus it means, that in Christ, we will receive the abundance of the richest and most choice portion one can ever know.

(Psalm 119:20), The Hebrew rendering on this verse is good: "My soul is crushed for the longing to your judgments in every season."

(Psalm 119:131), "*Panted*": This pant means to inhale eagerly, that is, to covet.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Most of our lesson today is taken from the various prayers of the hungry and thirsty after God in the Psalms. We have also

Jesus' own words concerning the blessedness of those who have a real hungering and thirsting for righteousness. It is evident that not everyone has this longing. This does not mean that everyone cannot have it, but they can have it if they will. But there are so many vain things in this world to set your heart upon. And, because many do not have set before them the love, beauty and goodness of the Lord, they are so inclined to lavish their affections after the carnal delights of the earth. These things do not fully satisfy their desires, but they seem to be enjoyable and satisfying for the time, and it quenches their thirst momentarily.

But to those who are made aware of the vanity of these earthly things there is a hungering for things higher and nobler, alluring their sight toward heavenly joys that are far richer and more beneficial. The soul needs to be touched and awakened to the fact that material things do not satisfy the soul. When once this is realized and the hungering of the soul begins to search for that which WILL satisfy, they can be very well on their way to finding God. God wants to be desired, sought for, felt after, hungered and longed for. A person cannot find God unless there is first a deep craving in the heart for Him. Our lesson today contains the language of the hungry soul for God. May it be true in every one of us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is there about the Lord worth hungering for?
2. What generally causes most people to NOT hunger for God?
3. What is the usual cause of a child not being hungry at mealtime?
4. How can we sharpen our appetite for God?
5. What is the consequence of NOT being hungry for God?
6. Why is the water brook so important to animals?
7. Why is a hungry, starving man not hard to please?
8. What does God sometimes do to get man to hunger for Him?
9. Why is God pleased greatly when men hunger for Him?
10. What will God do for the hungry soul?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Hunger and thirst are not very pleasant feelings to have upon one very long. The first impulse when a person is hungry or thirsty

is to try to find something that will quench their thirst. That is why many people seek for satisfaction from the world and what it has to offer in wealth, pleasure and excitement. They, for the most part, are not aware of what they are really desiring or hungering for. What they are really desiring is fellowship and communion with God. We have known of people who testified that they tried many things in the world and the realm of the flesh before they finally came to realize that what they were really searching for was the Lord. When they found Him, all their searching stopped. They were satisfied, and their testimony was that this was what they were looking for all the time. It is strange and sad, but true. Many people spend their whole life seeking for satisfaction and never give God a chance to show them what He can do. People need to get desperate in their hungering for God. Jesus spoke about the the violent taking the kingdom of heaven by force. (Matthew 11:12.) So, filled with desire for heavenly blessings and peace we must be willing to press our way to obtain it. I remember one day when I was working for a farmer driving a tractor. I went to work planning to stay out all day. It was a warm fall day. The problem was that I forgot to take a jug of water. I will never forget the sufferings of that day! I really felt the torment of thirst. I found myself off the tractor looking in bushes and the grass areas for some form of water. I felt that I would drink water from an old tin can that had been sitting for awhile. I was terribly thirsty. Well, the Lord helped me through that day, but I tasted the torment of thirst. Oh, let us get thirsty for the Lord and keep a thirst for Him. How sweet it is when we get hungry for a blessing and we begin to seek the Lord in earnest prayer, and then have the Spirit of God just bless our souls. That is wonderful! Oh, it is a blessed thing to hunger and thirst after His presence and be richly blessed when He visits our souls!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Not long ago I spoke over the phone with a person who had been affiliated with a religious group. She had become disillusioned with what she had been taught. She said she found herself doing a lot of things that the group taught against, just to rebel against their teachings. Although she still sought a mooring for her beliefs, disillusionment with what she had been taught was seriously affecting her faith in God.

The devil has many ways to prevent people from finding a satisfying portion for their souls. We were spiritually designed to search for more than a church, group of people or any particular person to follow. We are to seek God Himself. It is the fulfilling of such a hunger that leads us into fellowship with other saints. The important thing is for us to keep a desire toward God for His guidance into all truth. —Wayne Murphey



JUNE 2, 1996

THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE INNER MAN

Genesis 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

Psalms 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

Psalms 72:12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

Psalms 86:12 I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Isaiah 38:16 O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

17 ...Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

II Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though

our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Ephesians 3: 14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

I Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

MEMORY VERSE: For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matthew 16:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The spirit of man is as eternal as God is. There is an outer man, which is the earthly body; and there is an inner man. This inner man, called the soul or spirit, is the most important part of us. The salvation and preservation of the soul is man's most important and most serious responsibility.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

"Spirit, soul, life": In the Greek language these are three different things distinguished from each other, yet very much related. And in the Hebrew language there are three corresponding words which have identically the same meaning. The word "spirit" in the New Testament (including where Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is mentioned) is always translated from the Greek Word "pneuma." This is referring to the breath or Spirit from God which is the vital principle of rational immortal soul. The word "soul" is always translated from the Greek word "psuche" which also means breath or spirit, but is the animal or natural life only. This means that it is the kind of life that animals and humans have alike. The third word is "life," sometimes translated from the same as "soul," but other times from the Greek word "zoe" which refers to the plant life that man also has in the cell structure of the body. We might say that man has the potential for having all three of these forms of life. But sin and transgression deprives him of the

Spirit, the life of the soul. The writer in Hebrews 4:12 spoke of the Word of God piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. The soul and the spirit is divided asunder when sin and transgression enters into the heart and man loses that spiritual fellowship with His Creator. But in a fallen state man still has the soul that can be redeemed and restored to spiritual life and health. The soul that receives the new life in Christ, that revives and resurrects him to fellowship with the Spirit of God, is alive in all three ways! The carnal, unregenerated person has plant life and animal life, but has no spiritual life. Thus his soul is void of spiritual life, dead in trespasses and sins and separated from God, inactive and non-functional. He is dead while he liveth. (I Timothy 5:6.) And, unless he recovers his spiritual life through the grace of salvation in Christ he is in danger of losing his precious soul. Note: There may be other angles to this thought, and our insight to this great mystery of what man is made up of may be incomplete and even inaccurate. But the main thing that the scriptures speak of, in regard to the saving of the soul, remains the same. The soul of man without the quickening power of the Spirit of God is dead and is in great danger of the second death, eternal damnation.

LESSON BACKGROUND

All the scriptures in our lesson have one main theme, and that is the welfare of man's most precious possession, that of his soul, his inner man. Man was made a living soul, and Christ was made a quickening Spirit. (I Corinthians 15:45.) At the first, man was a living soul, in contact and fellowship with his Creator. But because of sin and transgressing God's commandment, man lost his spiritual life. But we see in our other scriptures that God wanted to save that precious soul of man. The New Testament speaks of it as the inner man. It is the spirit part of man, the part that will live in eternity somewhere. God wants to redeem every soul. He wants to fill that soul with His Spirit, preserve it, renew it every day and receive it back to Himself as He once gave it. We want to stress our Memory Verse, the very words of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls Himself. Let its message be inscribed upon the tables of your heart. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, in this life that will equal the value of your precious soul. If you lose it in eternity's night you have lost everything. Let us take heed to this lesson. At any cost, at all cost, save your precious

soul and keep it safe throughout all the years of your life. Someday, as it was said of the poor rich man in Luke 12:20, "Thy soul shall be required of thee." You will have to give it back to the One who gave it. All provision has been made that you may be able to render it back to God, acceptable in His sight.—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is your most valuable possession?
2. Where did the soul of man come from?
3. Where is the soul of man going after death?
4. What is God's attitude toward the soul of man?
5. Is it possible for us to neglect our soul?
6. What are some things we must do for the good of our soul?
7. By what means is the soul of man redeemed?
8. What kind of value did Jesus put upon the soul of man?
9. What are some of the things that "war against the soul?"
10. What part does God's Word have in our soul's welfare?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

A truly wise person is one who lives in constant concern for the salvation and welfare of his soul. A fool is one who has no concern and makes no provision for his soul. When we consider the worth of a soul and how much is lost or gained concerning the soul it is a sobering thought. One can lose his business, his home, his health and financial holdings. But to lose one's soul in eternity's night is a loss that words cannot utter. The writer in Psalm 119:109 said, "My soul is continually in my hand." How true this is! The welfare and responsibility of your soul is yours. It is in your hand to save or to lose your precious life, the life of your soul. I remember seeing a drawing years ago that illustrated the drastic mistake that so many make in life. It showed a man sitting at his desk piled high with his work that was pressing him. Jesus was standing before him, saying, "Will you not take a few moments and let Me minister to you for the good of your soul?" But the man waves him away, saying, "I don't have time for such things!" But the next picture shows the man still at his desk heaped high with work. He is older now, stooped beneath the weight of the years. Another figure approaches him. It is Death. "Oh!" says the man, "I did not expect you so soon! Can't you wait until a little later?" But Death answers: "I don't have time!" Oh, if we could but realize how fleeting this life is! In this life we must do something about our

soul. Beyond the shores of this time world, in eternity, it will be too late.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Once a man related this story. "I was just a child when one spring day my father called me to go with him to old man Trussell's blacksmith shop. He had left a rake and a hoe to be repaired. And there they were ready, fixed like new. Father handed over a silver dollar for the repairing. But Mr. Trussell refuse to take it. 'No,' he said, 'there's no charge for that little job.'

But father insisted that he take the pay, still extending to him the dollar. 'Ed,' the blacksmith said, 'can't you let a man do something now and then—just to stretch his soul?'"

If our soul has life, there will be signs of it. The healthy soul will want to be active, serving the Lord and doing good things for others.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 9, 1996

THE HELP OF OUR FAITHFUL GOD

Deuteronomy 33:25 Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

Psalm 121:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

Isaiah 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Psalms 116:6 The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: All who love, follow and obey God find in Him wonderful help and assistance for life and its many needs. God helped the saints of old and now, with Christ at His right hand interceding for us and His blessed Holy Spirit abiding within us, He sends us abundance of help for our daily needs.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Deuteronomy 33:26), "Yeshurun": This is a symbolic name for Israel, or God's people. It means "upright" in the Hebrew. "The

God of the upright!" The Septuagint says "The God of the beloved." *"Rideth upon the heaven in thy help"*: This is an expression of the almighty power of God over conditions, circumstances, barriers, limitations and human weaknesses. This power and help will enable us to be triumphant and successful in our lives for Him.

(Deuteronomy 33:29), *"The shield of thy help,..the sword of thy excellency"*: This is the defensive and offensive help of God for His people. God is our helper because He is our shield, our Protector and Safeguard. He is also the sword of our conquering power, enabling us to go forth to overcome the powers of darkness and be victorious in every battle we face.

(Hebrews 2:18), *"Succour"*: Help or aide.

(Hebrews 13:5-6), The Greek reads in these two verses: "Let the way of life be without money-loving, being satisfied with the things present; for He has said, I will leave you not at all, nor in any way will I forsake you. So that we may confidently say, The Lord is a helper to me, and I will not be afraid; what shall man do unto me?" This saying is a warning against getting too deeply in financial obligations. If a person is in a financial bind that arises because of real need, and not because of being too greedy, he may well have faith to trust God's help. But if the financial difficulty is the result of going needlessly and without temperance into debt, we cannot expect God to so readily come and bail us out.

(Romans 8:26), *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities"*: The Greek says, "And likewise also the Spirit joins in to help our weaknesses." *"The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us"*: The Greek says, "The Spirit itself pleads our case for us."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our scripture in Deuteronomy 33:25-29 is the final part of the blessing that Moses gave to the children of Israel before he departed from them. All that he here spoke to Israel is prophetic of us, the spiritual Israel who are born again of the Spirit of God. We can claim the truth of His words as our comfort and counsel today. It was a great blessing for Moses to give this blessing at the close of his wonderful life and service to God's people. The promise of God's help to His upright people means so much to us in the battles and needs of our time.

The 121st Psalm is generally believed to have been written during the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Prayers were going up for God's help and deliverance. It is the second of the fifteen

"Songs of Degrees" (Psalms 120-134), which in the Hebrew means "Songs of Ascents." We could say that these Psalms are songs that will cause our souls to rise up to higher levels of faith and victory in the Lord. Adam Clarke said that some believed that there were fifteen levels in the ascending up entrance to the Jewish temple, and that one of these Psalms were recited at each of these levels. He said that there is really no proof of this. But we know that there are special spiritual values in these Psalms that are a real uplift to our souls unto higher levels in God.

All of these precious scriptures in the Old Testament find their happy fulfillment in Christ's intercession for us at the right hand of God. After suffering for us in the flesh, He has ascended up to the highest heavens to appear in the presence of God for us. We can go to Him in prayer at any time at the "throne of grace" for grace and help in any time of need.

Our scripture in Romans 8:26 shows us that the Holy Spirit in our souls also helps us in our human weaknesses, helping to bear our petitions to God.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What keeps a person from feeling the need of God's help?**
- 2. What helps a person to realize the need of God's help?**
- 3. How willing is God to help us?**
- 4. In what various ways does God want to be our Helper?**
- 5. What is Jesus at the right hand of God for?**
- 6. Why is Jesus so qualified to be our Helper?**
- 7. What gives us boldness to come to the throne of grace?**
- 8. How will being content help to give us confidence in God?**
- 9. How can covetousness get us into trouble with man?**
- 10. What does the Holy Spirit do to help us?**

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In Hosea 13:9 the prophet cried to the people: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." Paul testified before king Agrippa in Acts 26:22 that he continued witnessing of Christ both to small and great, "having obtained help of God." God's help is so good. To experience a time of need and the wonderful intervention of God's gracious help is a wonderful thing. We have all of these accounts in the scriptures of God's help in ages past. The scriptures declare over and over again of God's willingness to give us His help in time of need. Bro. Isaac Chandler

told of how God helped him when he was a young lad. He would be out throwing rocks at certain objects, and he would pray that God would help him hit his target. He said the Lord helped him so much and he really got good at it. He told about one day a wasp was threatening to sting him and he picked up a rock and threw it and hit the wasp and killed it. This is but one testimony of God's help even in the smallest matters. While we lived in the chapel parsonage in Springfield, MO, my wife got to wanting some means of growing tomatoes. I remember hearing her say one day, "Oh, if I had just ONE good tomato plant!" Not long after this I noticed right off of the front porch, in a small corner, a small tomato plant coming up. That plant grew into one of the most remarkable tomato producing plants I have ever seen before or since! We had large beautiful tomatoes clear up until frost and we pulled it up the night before the first frost and put it in a brother's basement and had tomatoes yet for awhile. Don't underestimate God's help! He will help us in natural things as well as the spiritual things. He is a wonderful God. Be encouraged to live for Him and seek His help in all your ways of life. He is ever near to lend a helping hand!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

While submitting evidence for his client who was accused of murder, the defense lawyer observed that the presiding judge closed his eyes and nodded several times, as if sleeping. So when the judge announced a guilty verdict, the lawyer immediately appealed the case to the chief justice of England.

After reviewing the case, Chief Justice Lord Widgery dismissed the appeal. He believed that Justice Robertson Chichon was not asleep during the trial since his summation of the case to the jury contained evidence submitted during the time in which the defense lawyer alleged he was napping. Said the chief justice, "Whether he appeared to be asleep is a matter which the court finds very difficult to determine, but there is not sufficient ground for me to say that justice was not done."

To lose one's life because of a judge who slept during the trial would be a travesty indeed. Judges, who are to see that justice is done, hold a great responsibility. But to lose one's soul would be an even greater tragedy. We can be confident that God, the One who can help us through life, faithfully fulfills His responsibility, and as we are told in our lesson, never slumbers nor sleeps.

—Wayne Murphey

JUNE 16, 1996

PERFECT TRUST IN THE LIVING GOD

Psalm 125:1 They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

Psalm 37:3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

Psalm 118:8 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

Jeremiah 17:5 Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

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

Mark 10:24 ...How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

I Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation

against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

II Corinthians 1:8 ...We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

MEMORY VERSE: Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Psalm 62:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There are many things that people trust in: money, man, man's inventions, self—but to trust in these things brings us under the curse of God. The only safe and reliable One to trust and put our confidence in is the Lord God Almighty.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

"Trust": The Hebrew word basically means to flee with haste for refuge. It means to hide in and rely on for protection and salvation. Webster defines "trust" as "absolute and assured reliance upon the integrity, faithfulness, justice, friendship, or any other sound principle of a person or thing; confidence, faith, belief."

(Psalm 125:1), *"As Mount Zion, ... cannot be removed, ... abideth for ever"*: Mount Zion typifies and refers to the spiritual city, the New Jerusalem, founded upon Christ Jesus, and made up of all the blood washed, born again and Spirit-filled children of God. This blessed city is eternal because all of her citizens have their trust fixed, without fail, in the almighty God.

(Psalm 37:3), *"So shalt thou dwell in the land"*: To dwell in the land is to be a saved and sanctified saint of God, trusting in God and obeying His precious Word in all things. It is a spiritual land or inheritance that we are able to possess by the grace of God.

(Jeremiah 17:6), *"Heath in the desert"*: The barren, blasted and withered juniper tree, parched and dry, void of moisture. For a plant such as this, there is no hope for any profit or benefit to come by. A good picture it is of a person who trusts in the flesh and the material things of this life. He is doomed for disappointment and frustration. What a contrast this is to the man who puts his

trust in the living God, who is like a tree planted by the waters!

(I Timothy 6:18), "*Ready to distribute, willing to communicate*": The Greek text says, "to be ready to impart, or share; generous."

(II Corinthians 1:8), "*Pressed out of measure, above strength*": The Greek says, "excessively we were burdened beyond power." This means the burdens were heaped upon them that called for strength and endurance that was beyond their mortal powers. They were to despair even to live. But they were not trusting in their ability which would have quickly failed them, but they were committing themselves to their faithful God who could and did quicken their strength to be able to stand.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From the beginning man has shown the disposition to trust in something beyond himself. In his primitive state, as he was created and placed in the garden of Eden, his trust was in His Creator for all things that were needed for his life and sustenance. It was when he fixed his hope and trust on another source, by yielding to the tempter, that he displeased God and incurred His anger and was put out. Sin came into the world and with it came unbelief, mistrust, doubts, fears and the ever-groping disposition to find something for support and refuge, which too often found its relief in the vain and deceitful material things of life.

In our lesson today we have drawn several scriptures from the Old and New Testaments that show the blessedness of putting our trust in the living God and also the vanity of other things that are available. The decision is ours as to what we want to trust in. The flesh, the abilities of man, our own strength and abilities, our own desires and ideas, money and wealth, inventions and devices (chariots and horses, etc.), and any other support of earthly source: all of these are available for our trust. But there is God and His faithfulness that has been proven in ages past as being the most reliable and safest refuge to flee to. Our scriptures today point us to faith and trust in God and His almighty power.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is man tempted to trust in other things than God?
2. What are some of the other things that people trust in?
3. Why is it not wise to trust in anything other than God?

4. Does God force us to trust in Him? Why?
5. How does Satan discourage faith and trust in God?
6. Why is it a serious matter as to who we put our trust in?
7. What is the result of a person trusting in man?
8. What are the blessings of trusting in the Lord?
9. What are the main things people trust in today?
10. Why are we criticized and persecuted for our trust in God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In this world of doubt and gloom, unbelief and pride, there is a great pressure against the child of God for his simple faith and complete trust in the living God. The carnal mind, in the general run of people, causes them to preclude perfect trust in the Unseen Higher Power. In the field of medicine and physician treatment the masses of people find a great reliance for refuge from the many ills of the body. People are lavishing their trust and hope in these things. There is something about financial accumulation of earthly wealth that affords a glittering prospect of hope and security. The carnal mind leans toward that prospect very ardently. Man's wisdom and ability has enabled him to invent many things, and his brilliant successes seem to verify the fact that these things are worthy of our trust. When you board an aircraft to fly swiftly to a distant destination at speeds of 500 to 600 miles per hour, flying at a height of 5 to 7 miles, you are in a man-designed, man-made, man-operated and man-sustained machine. All and every part of that contraption can and does fail. Traveling in an automobile is a similar dependence on man's talent and skill. It is not wrong to use these things, but back of our using them there should be some real faith and trust in God's protection and care. Our modern world, though glittering with a fascinating charm of wonders, carries with it the constant threat of disaster and death. A wise person will recognize these terrible dangers and will seek the God of Heaven to be his support and shield. Let us not be fools, depending on the natural and physical powers alone for our joy and happiness. Let us not fall into the trap of big money and the ease of fleshly lusts. It is treacherous and so apt to fail. Let us be wise and seek a life of faith in the living God and enjoy the things that He has promised to bestow upon us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In Ephesians 3:8 it says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

I am glad that as we feel lowly and unworthy, as did Paul, we can be partakers in these unsearchable riches of God. How rich every saint should feel! Many people are striving for "uncertain riches" (I Timothy 6:17), but true riches are found only in God. When men set their hearts on temporal riches, they are prone to have eyes only for themselves. Other people and God become secondary. This thought was forcibly presented to a rich man one day. A minister led him to the window. "Look out there," he said, "and tell me what you see." "People," answered the rich man. Then the minister led him to a mirror. "What do you see now?" he asked. "I see myself," answered the man. The minister said, "Behold, in the window there is glass, and in the mirror is glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with a little silver, and no sooner is a little silver added than you cease to see others and see only yourself." It is when we are blinded by the things of this world and see only ourselves that we lose that perfect trust in God.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 23, 1996

HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Proverbs 21:29 A wicked man hardeneth his face: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.

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

Zechariah 7:8 And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying,

9 Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

10 And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

11 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 19:8 He (Jesus) saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

II Corinthians 3:3 ...Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Mark 8:17 ...He (Jesus) saith unto them,... Have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hearye not? and do ye not remember?

Mark 6:52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Hebrews 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: There is a dangerous tendency in everyone of us to become stiff, hardened and not sensitive to the

Spirit of God. We must continually seek to keep our hearts tender toward God and toward our fellow man. If we will continue to yield and submit to God, our hearts can be kept tender and easily managed by the Holy Spirit.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Psalm 95:8), *"Harden not your heart, as in the provocation"*: The Hebrew says, "As in Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness." This refers to two different times when the people needed water during their travels in the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. In both times the Lord gave them water from the rock, but the people murmured sorely. In the second incident Moses, through his anger, did not follow the Lord's directions and was denied the right to go into Caanan. These people had seen God's great power, but instead of holding on to faith and going forward into Caanan, they rebelled and refused to believe God. It is a lesson and a warning to us today to not harden our hearts but to keep trusting and obeying God.

(Zechariah 7:12), *"Adamant stone"*: This is referring to a stone of extreme hardness, like a diamond. A heart can become so stubbornly resistant against all reproof and counsel that nothing, no matter how severely it is given, can move or change it.

(Matthew 19:8), *"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives"*: Adam Clarke comments that "Moses perceived that if divorce were not permitted, in many cases, the women would be exposed to great hardships through the cruelty of their husbands." Permitting a man to put away his wife, if he was not pleased with her, seemed then to be an act of mercy for the woman. But, as is so often the case, the man is the culprit because of the hardness of his heart. Paul counselled in Colossians 3:19, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." In many homes today the marriage bond is affected because of hardness developing in the man and the woman both. It is a condition we should be on guard against.

(Ezekiel 36:26, II Corinthians 3:3), *"Heart of flesh; fleshy tables of the heart"*: This denotes tenderness, impressionableness, being easily affected and influenced by the Word and the Spirit of God. The New Covenant in Christ is to be written in the heart and the mind of the child of God. One has to have and maintain a very tender and loving heart for this to be done.

(Proverbs 29:1), The Hebrew of this is clearer: "A man of reproofs, who hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be shattered and there will be no healing."

LESSON BACKGROUND

It takes a very tender and submissive heart for God to do anything worthwhile with a person. The greatest trouble He has had with His creation is the hardness that sets up in the heart. Hardness of heart causes stiffness and an unyielding determination to have one's own way. The 95th Psalm is a plea of the Holy Spirit to us to worship the great almighty God and never harden our hearts against Him as those did of long ago. We see the accounts of people in the past who have allowed their hearts to "set up" in hardness toward the Lord and His Word, and we see what happened to them. In Israel's case, as the 95th Psalm goes ahead to recount, their hardness of heart caused them to be denied entrance to the land that God had promised to them. The history of Israel shows this tendency to become hardened. All along the way, even after Israel had taken possession of Caanan, their hearts were hardened time and time again. But, thank the Lord for His grace and goodness, God is offering help to us for this problem. Through the love of Jesus and the kindness of the Father our hearts can be softened and tendered and made pliable in His hands. Our lesson shows that God promises to take out the stony heart and give us a heart of flesh, a tender heart. But we must take heed. Christ's own disciples had this problem that He had to deal with. Our scriptures in Mark are a combination of two different incidents. Christ had fed the multitude with five loaves and two small fishes. This was a great manifestation of His power. It should have erased all doubt and wonder from their minds. But it did not. When they beheld Him walking on the seas and calming them, they were sore amazed beyond measure and wondered. Through the hardness of their hearts they failed to remember the miracle of the loaves. Then later when Jesus warned them about the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees they wondered if it was because they had forgotten to bring bread with them. Jesus had to reprove them again for their hardness. Note: Seeing miracles does not erase the possibility of becoming hardened. We have a real warning in our lesson. We should be on guard against an evil heart of unbelief and being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And then we are warned that hardness and refusal to repent

is storing up wrath for us in that dreadful day of judgment. May we take diligent heed and do all we can to keep our hearts tender and submissive to God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is a hard heart a dangerous condition to be in?
2. What are some of things that cause a heart to be hardened?
3. What can we do to keep from being hardened?
4. Why does the heart get harder as time goes by?
5. How can God help us to have a tender heart?
6. How will a hardhearted man treat his wife?
7. How can a man have a hard heart after seeing miracles?
8. What is going to happen to a man with a hard neck?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God is warning everyone of us to strive and seek earnestly to have and maintain an humble and tender heart toward Him. He wants to manifest and reveal Himself to us, but He cannot do it unless we have a real tender and receptive heart. He wants to teach us His way and guide our steps in His Word, but He cannot do it if we are hard and unyielding to Him. He wants to whisper His peace and comforting words of the Scriptures to our innermost being, but it will not be heard if we are not tender and open-minded to Him. Oh, think of all that the proud and hardhearted miss out on! Our lesson warns us to exhort one another daily. It is so good to be in fellowship with other spiritual people and have daily contact with them. There are saints that I know of who live such a beautiful and godly life that all I need is just to think of them and it melts my heart. But you let a person get away from godly influence and hold constant intercourse with this cold, dark world and quit praying and having contact with heaven, and you will see that person get hard and cold. Our heart is like certain glues and adhesives that keep soft and workable when kept warm and plugged in to the electric power. But when contact with the power is cut off, then it begins to get hard. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!"

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A heart that is "stony" is—

Cold. It has become insensible; past feeling. All warmth of affection for God and His Word has died away.

Hard. Not easily impressed. Unyielding as a rock. Indifferent to all the gracious influences of light and the force of spiritual truth.

Dead. Incapable of spiritual motion. No vitality toward God. Deaf to His call.

The only cure for a stony heart is a *new* heart. Polishing or carving a stone into an altered and improved form will not make it a "living stone."

A heart of flesh is—

A new heart. It is not only *new* to the man who gets it, but its manifestations are new to all who see them.

A warm heart. The love of God has found a home in it and is shed abroad through it. It glows with compassion for the perishing, and burns with indignation against sin and iniquity.

A living heart. Once dead, but it is now alive unto God. It is a heart fitted to have communion with the living God. —Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*.



JUNE 30, 1996

ENTERING INTO REST WITH GOD AND CHRIST

Hebrews 3:7 ... (As the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.
Hebrews 4:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

MEMORY VERSE: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Matthew 11:28-29.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God has a rest for us to enter into with Him. At first it was the Seventh Day rest, and then in Israel's time it was the Caanan rest, coming in and taking possession of the land that God had promised them. But now it is a spiritual rest of us ceasing from our own ways and doings to enter into a life filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit of God.

DEFINITIONS AND SPECIAL COMMENTS

(Hebrews 3:9), "*Saw my works forty years*": Psalm 95:9-10

puts it like this: "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." The last forty years of Moses' life was spent trying to lead Israel to the blessed land of promise. The people saw God do miracle after miracle during that time. They should have been persuaded that God was able to give them the power to conquer Caanan, but their hearts were hardened.

(Hebrews 4:3), "*For we which have believed do enter into rest*": The Greek speaks plainer: "For we, those believing, enter into the rest." This is a key saying in this lesson. Who failed to enter into God's rest in times past but those who did not believe Him and His promises? Who kept faithfully and sincerely the Jewish Seventh Day rest but those who believed that they were under His care? The manna fell on every day but the Sabbath. On the day before, the children of Israel were allowed to gather twice the normal amount and it kept fresh over the Sabbath. Some of the people went out on the Sabbath day to gather manna and found none. They would not have done that if they had believed God. Moses rebuked them for that. Others tried to save over some manna from the previous morning and it bred worms and stank. Moses was wroth with them. They were not believing God, either. In the Canaan-land rest, it was unbelief in the heart that caused the people to murmur and rise up in dismay against Moses when the obstacles were presented to them. The rest that God is offering for us to enter now is through faith, believing Christ and His Word. It is the confidence of Christ's victory over sin, death and the grave, and this confidence brings calmness and quietness to the soul and assurance of His secure care for us to bring us out of our mortal woes to that blessed world to come.

(Hebrews 4:6), "*It remaineth that some must enter therein*": From the foundation of the world God had wanted man to enter into His rest with Him. In the Sabbath Day rest and, once more, in the Caanan rest it was an invitation to men to enter into His rest.

(Hebrews 4:7), "*Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David*": The Greek says, "He marks out a certain day." In David, in Psalm 95, God extends the invitation to us to enter into His rest by believing and trusting His mighty power and love for our forgiveness, sanctification, victory and hope.

(Hebrews 4:8), "*If Jesus had given them rest*": This "Jesus"

here is referring to Joshua who led the children of Israel into Caanan. The names "Jesus" and "Joshua" are the same in the Hebrew. They are the combination of the two Hebrew words "Jehovah" and "Yasha," making Jehoshua, which means "Jehovah Saves."

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is speaking to us that there is still offered to us a rest for us to enter into. We should take this seriously, for the almighty God is displeased for anyone to draw back and come short of the rest He is wanting us to enter into with Him. Using the Sabbath rest and the Caanan rest as types and examples the writer is urging us to strive earnestly to enter into this spiritual rest of faith and trust in God. It is this rest that, in our Memory Verse, Jesus is inviting us to enter into with Him. By taking upon us His meek and lowly way of life, pictured as a yoke that binds us together with Him, we are able to find rest to our souls. It is a life of rest and peace in Christ over all this world of sin and strife.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kept Israel from entering the Canaan-land rest?
2. How should we feel about the rest God wants us in NOW?
3. Why did the Word not profit them who heard it before?
4. Who is it that enters into the spiritual rest in Christ?
5. Can you explain why this rest is not a Seventh Day rest?
6. What was the Caanan rest and the Sabbath rest a type of?
7. What is the rest that is available to the people of God now?
8. What are some of the works we must cease from?
9. What must we do to really enter into this blessed rest?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Several years ago I got into a real deep discussion with a man who said he was a Seventh Day Adventist, who believed that we should still be keeping the Sabbath as they did in the Old Testament. We had a very lengthy discussion. I must say he was very pleasant to deal with, even though he seemed very rooted in his opinions. We finally came to a point where I put this question before him: "Is the rest that the writer in Hebrews 4:3 speaks of the Sabbath rest or is it the spiritual rest of faith and trust in God

that is for the soul?" I told him to think it over for a few days and when he was ready I was ready to hear his answer. When we got back together here was his answer: "I must admit that it was the spiritual rest that the writer was speaking of. We Adventists stress much the Sabbath day rest, but we neglect greatly the spiritual rest." I was very glad to hear him say that. I never saw him anymore and that was several years ago. Let us face the issue in our lesson. There is a rest that God wants us to enter into. It is not the Sabbath or Seventh Day rest. It is not the Caanan rest. Those rests were types and shadows of the real rest that God wants us to enter into. This rest is the rest that Jesus came to this world to bring. It is a rest of the soul, a sweet repose of the inner man resigning all things in God's hand and believing in His providence and care. It is a serious matter. It was a serious matter back in those days of old for anyone to fall short of the rest God wanted them to have. One man, who was caught gathering up sticks on the sabbath, was ordered by the Lord to be stoned with stones. (Numbers 15:32-35.) There should be a fear in our hearts, a carefulness and a conscientious zeal to not violate this holy Sabbath of the soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Had the children of Israel entered, by faith, into the rest which the land of Canaan afforded, there still would have been difficulties to surmount. Entering the soul rest which God provides does not alleviate all of our human sufferings, but it supplies peace in the midst of our trials.

One who is physically asleep and resting will be oblivious to the events happening about him. He may have troubles, but when he is sleeping, they are forgotten in the peace which rest affords.

Rest renews strength. Should a person never rest, he would soon become worn and weak. The soul rest of God imparts strength and courage to those who live for Him in an acceptable manner.

Perhaps you know of some who, in the midst of tribulation, display a cheerful smile and conduct themselves as though they are free from care. Those individuals know the meaning of soul rest.

—Wayne Murphey

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