

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Volume 30

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THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 1997

We feel inspired to continue in our studies of the teachings of the apostle Paul. His deep spiritual life and devotion to the Lord Jesus is so sweetly reflected in his writings. What a blessing and wonderful privilege we have to be able to read these epistles that he wrote to the congregations of the saints! What a contrast is seen in his spirit when compared with many today! It challenges us to follow his counsels and be edified by his encouraging words. May we all be spiritually benefited as we consider these lessons.



APRIL 6, 1997

THE MYSTERY OF GOD REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. I Corinthians 2:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The eternal things of God which are hidden from the carnal mind of sinful man can only be perceived through the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit which is given to all who receive the salvation which is in Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 2:4), "*Demonstration*": The Greek word here means to exhibit, display or manifest.

(I Corinthians 2:9), "*Neither have entered into the heart of man*": The Greek says, "The heart of man has not ascended to". Man in his fleshly mind of covetousness, lust and selfish pursuits cannot ascend into the realm of the Spirit. The special blessings of God are reserved for those who will believe in and obey His Son, Jesus Christ.

(I Corinthians 2:13), "*Comparing spiritual things with*

spiritual": The Greek says, "Explaining spiritual things to spiritual persons."

(I Corinthians 2:14), "*The natural man*": The Greek labels this "the animal man," which is the man who is dominated by the flesh and its passions and lusts, who is not enlightened by the Spirit of God.

(I Corinthians 2:15), The Greek expresses this statement thus: "The spiritual man indeed examines all things, but himself is by no one examined." One who is enlightened by the Spirit of God can understand spiritual values and blessings, while the carnal minded people around him cannot understand his manner of life and just what his pleasures are.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the first chapter of I Corinthians Paul had spoken much on the wisdom of this world and how contrary it is to the wisdom of God. In our lesson today he reveals the blindness of fleshly wisdom to the real truth of God. He declares that the wisdom of God is a mystery which was unknown to the men who had crucified Jesus, and is unknown to everyone else who will cling to humanistic and fleshly notions. He quotes from Isaiah 64:4 in verse 9. This comes from the prophet mourning of the spiritual apostasy of Israel, pleading for God to manifest His power and presence as He had once done so "that the nations might tremble at thy presence!" Included in his prayer is this statement: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." This is a divine declaration of the blindness and darkness of the heart of sinful man. But Paul counteracts this divine judgment with the glorious truth of God revealing these hidden things to us who have the Holy Spirit. By means of the indwelling Spirit of God we are able to ascend to behold the deep things of God. In verse 16 Paul quotes from Isaiah 40:13. The Old Testament translation from the Hebrew reads: "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught Him?" Paul used the Septuagint Greek translation: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" This is another challenge to the soul, parallel with the declaration in

verse 9 of the blindness of carnal man. Who can counsel God and understand His ways? The answer is obvious: No one! The mind of God and the course He takes in working out His wondrous purpose cannot be anticipated by the animal man. But once again Paul counteracts this with the joyful assertion: "But we have the mind of Christ." We in our human realm of thought cannot penetrate the thoughts of God, but with the mind of Christ we can.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul's preaching not with excellency of speech?
2. What did he want only to make known?
3. What causes man to not see the things of God?
4. Why did the Jews crucify the Lord of glory?
5. What scripture shows the blindness of man?
6. How can we overcome this blindness?
7. What does the spirit of the world give to us?
8. What does the Spirit of God make us to know?
9. What is meant by the "natural man?"
10. How can we know the mind of the Lord?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The God of heaven has many blessings and manifold knowledge and wisdom to communicate to man. But with man so influenced and blinded by the appetites and apprehensions of the flesh, God cannot get His truth across. The friendship of this present evil world is enmity with God and the wisdom of the world is foolishness with Him. Man's thoughts and ways are not God's thoughts and ways. Man is blinded by lust, selfish interests, wrong values and pride. He does not want to listen and learn anything that differs from his vain way of life. Thus God cannot and will not communicate with man of the choice blessings and benefits that He really wants to share. But, praise the Lord, there is a way for us to enjoy the things of God. Jesus opened up the way for the Spirit of God to come down and take up His blessed abode in our inner man. With the Spirit of God living and working in our hearts we can have God's blessings revealed to us. But He will not make His

goodness known to us if we cling to the spirit of this world. If we allow our hearts and minds to dwell on the riches, cares and pleasures of this present life we will not be in a condition to comprehend the things of the Spirit of God. But if we repent of our sins and become a new creature in Christ, being born again by His incorruptible Word, and then go on to be sanctified and filled with the Spirit of God, we will be in a condition to receive the great wealth of the kingdom of righteousness and of God. We will find fellowship with all who likewise partake of this wonderful privilege of being spiritually enlightened. We can converse and fellowship with one another because we have the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts. While the world restlessly churns in its avid pursuit of the fleshly delights and treasures, we can revel in the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We can understand and discern the sore plight of the ungodly while they are mystified at our way of life. May we live so that we can attract their attention and cause them to go in search of what is so precious to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Not long ago, I saw a lot of gang graffiti prominently painted in a public place. As I studied it, it seemed obvious that the message was important to someone, for whoever was responsible had taken much time and patience to skillfully arrange their work. In spite of my careful study, however, I could not figure out the meaning. I came to the conclusion that the graffiti wasn't meant for the general public, but was done in order to give the gang member a particular psychological edge over others.

If I know something you don't know, then I have an advantage over you. Knowledge translated into everyday practicality is power. Sometimes an individual with a small mind will hint to someone else that they know something, but refuse to say what it is. This makes that person feel superior.

How opposite this way of thinking and acting is to God. It is His desire that everyone know the deep mysteries which He knows. And He will teach us just as much as we care to learn about how to live our lives in a wise way.

It is possible for Christians to gain a certain amount of knowledge about spiritual things, and feel like they know it all. These same people will find that they are able to be victorious in their spiritual life up to a point, and then they seem to find themselves in a stalemate with the devil.

The more ignorant we are, the greater advantage the devil will maintain over us.

Our spiritual life will reflect our willingness to continually learn and grow in the things of God. —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 13, 1997

ENDURING WORKS TRIED BY FIRE

I Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. I Corinthians 3:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants us to leave the baby stage and grow up in the Christian life and not be carnal. We must build on Christ, our foundation, those qualities of faith and steadfast obedience that will stand the judgment shock and endure the consuming fire of God's wrath.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 3:1), "*Carnal*": Paul called them carnal because they were undeveloped in their experience (even though they were saved in Christ) and were still affected by fleshly ideas and impulses.

(I Corinthians 3:12), "*Gold, silver, precious stones*": These are things that the fire will not destroy. These represent qualities of faith such as obedience, humility, consecration, godly conduct, forgiveness, patience, trustworthiness, self-control, brotherly love and charity. "*Wood, hay, stubble*": These are things that fire will destroy. These represent qualities of life and character such as envying, strife and divisions, as well as picking preachers and favoring one above another.

(I Corinthians 3:13), "*Every man's work shall be made manifest*": The Greek text reads: "The work of each one shall become manifest; for the day will show, because in fire it is

revealed; and the work of each one what kind it is the fire will try." We can see a two-phase trying and revealing here. In the first sense, the light of the Word of God in the gospel of Christ along with the fire of the Holy Spirit makes manifest our works whether they are right or wrong. The gospel day as it shines upon the heart of man makes manifest the errors of his way, and the burning of the Holy Spirit will reprove and burn out of one's life all trashy and combustible material. In the second sense we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ and meet the consuming fire of God Almighty's wrath. Only the pure in holiness can abide that fire. Now is the preliminary judgment in the light of God's Word and the burning of the Holy Spirit to prepare us for that day of judgment.

(I Corinthians 3:15), *"He himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire"*: The apostle's meaning is clear. It is possible for a man's labours to not be able to stand the consuming fire, but his heart is pure and sincere and he will be saved, and shall escape. The fire is going to try our works and it is going to try us, also. Let us take heed that we build into our lives only those qualities of holiness and righteousness that will meet the approval and blessings of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

There are several points that Paul brings out in our lesson today that are so vital. The first is the thought of us not growing up in Christ like we should and remaining babes too long. The Lord wants us to grow out of things and progress to maturity. Just as a human starts out as a babe and has to be handled and dealt with in special ways, so a Christian starts out as a babe in Christ with many things to learn and develop in. The envying and strife and the preference of one minister over another are common in newly saved babes in Christ. But the Lord wants us to grow up and learn His holy ways. Paul also points out that the ministers are only what the Lord works in and through them, and it is God that really gives the spiritual increase. The ministers must labour together in unity and must labour with God, that is, in harmony with His Spirit's leading and inspiration. Then he speaks about building on the one true foundation, and how serious a matter this is. We

must be careful what we build into our experience with the Lord. It is possible to think we are right about something and actually be wrong. The fire of God's Spirit and the light of His Word is given to help us to discern what is good in His sight and what is rejected. We must be very attentive to what we do, the kind of life we live, and what we really are in our hearts. The fire is going to try us and everything we do. We should take heed to this now and make our calling and election sure so that we can stand that awful day that is coming in which the heavens and earth shall pass away before the great fire of the Almighty God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the things Paul named as being carnal?
2. Were these people saved?
3. Why is it not good to prefer one minister above another?
4. Who are ministers anyway, and what is their work?
5. Why should we be careful how we build on Christ?
6. What is going to happen to every man's work?
7. What are some of the things that will stand the fire?
8. Name some of the things that will not stand?
9. How will the fire try us?
10. Name the two ways that the fire will try us and our works.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." What serious words these are! How diligently we need to take heed to them. There are many things that are in our hearts and lives when we come to the Lord that need to be eliminated. Many things that we know and understand are not good are taken out of the way when we get saved. But then there are things that we are not aware of as being unapproved. It is a process of learning and growth and keeping submissive to the will of God that will bring us to spiritual maturity and success. We must constantly be open for reproof, instruction and correction. We

must seek God faithfully and be willing to lay aside anything that He puts His finger on that He does not want in our hearts. God is patient and will give us every chance we need to grow and learn of His ways. And as long as we are diligent to walk in the light and obey the truth we will do well. But if we become negligent and careless we will not prosper in our souls. If we rebel and refuse to obey His voice we will lose our fellowship with Him. Things will begin to accumulate in our lives that are wood, hay and stubble. The gold, silver and precious stones will diminish. The fruits of righteousness will wither and die and the works of the flesh will take over. Oh, let it not be thus with us! Let us be swift to hear and obey His Word. It will build us up and give us an inheritance among the sanctified. It will enable us to meet that awful day of vengeance of the Almighty God. We will be accounted worthy to escape the terrible outpouring of His wrath upon this lost world and to stand before the Son of man. The warning is clearly and lovingly given. May each one of us take diligent heed.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In our lesson, Paul, who was a wise masterbuilder, is dealing with some fundamental facts concerning the Christian's life and work in the Kingdom of God. First, he tells us that God Himself laid the foundation upon which we are to build. This foundation was laid with infinite wisdom. One writer has said that it is "laid as deep as the grave, and as stable as the Eternal Throne." Christ is that foundation. (I Cor. 3:11.)

Next Paul considers the structure that is to be built upon the foundation. It must be of a quality that is consistent with the foundation. II Peter 1:5-7 gives us a list of suitable materials. The wise builder will be careful about his doctrine and his manner of life, for these are the things that determine his attitude and the perception which others have of the Church of God.

The foolish builder is wise in his own conceits. He thinks that as long as he believes in the foundation it doesn't matter how it is built upon. For him, faith in Christ brings no change

in his life or outlook. The strength with which he builds comes from a carnal zeal, and his dependence for wisdom in building is not founded upon God but his own philosophies.

The foundation has already been tried. (Isa. 28:16.) But there is a time in the future when our works will be tried. The day of judgment is not to determine whether or not we have believed in the foundation, but whether the works we have built upon the foundation are worthy of Christ. Will He own them, or will He burn them? This is an ongoing question for us to always keep in mind.

—Wayne Murphey



APRIL 20, 1997

GLORIFYING GOD IN OUR BODY AND SPIRIT

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

5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

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

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

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

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

12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God

shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. I Corinthians 6:12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Since we are purchased with the blood of Christ and thus belong to Him and not ourselves, we ought to walk carefully to glorify God while we live in this mortal flesh. We must keep its appetites and sensations strictly governed to glorify God and to be a blessing to others.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 6:9), "*Effeminate*": A man becoming like a woman. "*Abusers of themselves with mankind*": Sodomites or homosexuals.

(I Corinthians 6:10), "*Revilers*": Abusive people. "*Extortioners*": Covetous people who wrest and take from others by force, pressure, or any other illegal and unlawful means.

(I Corinthians 6:12), "*Expedient*": To a good advantage; proper; beneficial. "*I will not be brought under the power of any*": The Greek text says, "I will not be brought into subjection by anyone." Paul does not mean that he will not listen or

be subject to godly brethren and their counsel. He is stating his position in matters that involve right and wrong, saying that he will not be brought into slavery to any element that will cause sin to come into his life.

(I Corinthians 6:13), "*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats*": God has given man the function to eat to obtain nourishment and sustain life. The belly is the place where the food goes and is digested. But this function is temporary, just for this life. Both the food and the belly will perish. It is permissible and our privilege to take food into our bodies, but this should be with care and self-control. But we are not allowed to satisfy any appetite of the body for that which is forbidden. The body is not made for that. It was made for the Lord and we must not violate His laws and good pleasure with any fleshly indulgence. "*Fornication*": This includes any kind of unlawful indulgence in the gratification of the desires of the flesh.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Corinthian Church was an infant church in the early stages of the development of Christian perfection. That is why they were caught up in ways of life that we today wonder about. But Paul is endeavoring to counsel them to the better way. Yes, they were going to the law with one another, but they were unaware that Christ had a better way. Paul encourages them to cease from going to the law, but look among themselves for a wise person who could help them settle their differences. There is no better judge of life's problems than a godly and holy saint of God who is living close to Him. And Paul goes farther and encourages them to not even want to go to the law, but rather take the injustice and allow themselves to be wronged without any retaliation. This is really the best way, as we see how our Lord and Saviour took the judgment placed upon Him and went to the cross as a lamb dumb before her shearers. Also in our lesson Paul warns and admonishes about keeping pure and free from the awful spirit of lust and unlawful sexual relations. Fornication is a major sin today in our wicked world. It means much for us to keep ourselves from this unholy practice, and not allow ourselves to be in situa-

tions where we might fall a prey to this awful sin against the body. The body is for the Lord, not for mere animal gratification. Christ's blood has been shed as a ransom for us that we might be delivered from the power of lust and sin. The body and spirit both belong to the Lord and we must live a righteous and holy life that is consistent with His perfect holiness. There are things that we must stay away from that may not be unlawful, but if it does not edify or benefit our eternal welfare we may be called upon to lay it aside. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul against going to law against each other?
2. What did he advise them to do?
3. What can we do to escape the power of sin?
4. Could some things that are lawful not be expedient?
5. Is it possible for a person to overindulge in bodily appetites?
6. What are our bodies created for?
7. How is it that the Lord is for the body?
8. What does it mean to be joined to the Lord?
9. Who are we really hurting when we sin against God?
10. Why should we seek to glorify God in our body and in our spirit?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many religious people of our day who are taught and who believe that the soul is kept pure while the body sins. But it surely does not agree with the teachings of Paul in our lesson today. If a person does wrong he is going to receive for that wrong. God wants us to quit doing the things that displease Him and do the right. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Without holiness and purity from sin no man shall see the Lord. It is wrong for people to go to law against others. It is better to take the humble side like Jesus did. To please the Lord we must avail ourselves of the great fountain that is opened in the House of God for sin and for uncleanness. We must cease from all activity that is sinful and wicked. There is no such thing as a truthful liar or an

honest thief. Thus there is no such thing as a sinning Christian. God wants people to quit the sin business, stop doing things that displease Him. We must glorify God in our bodies as well as in our spirits. We must live a strict, careful and conscientious life if we are to succeed for God. We must bring our bodily appetites under strict and rigid disciplines and control. Temperance, or self-control, is one of the things Peter mentioned that will enable us to be fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord. (II Peter 1:6.) "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I Corinthians 10:31.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Know ye not that these bodies of yours belong to Christ as really as your souls? The Lord is for your spirit, He also is for your body. Your body is a visible, working member of Christ. The temptations of the devil often come by way of the body. Keep it in subjection, lest by any means it might lead to uselessness.

"In Solomon's temple the glory of the Lord rested on the mercy seat, right in the center of the Holy of Holies, making the temple a true witness to His presence and power. The Church of God is also His temple. We are all one in Christ, as a corporate body. It is the temple of God. But the body of each individual believer becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. This is a more humbling, searching and inspiring thought than that God dwells in His Church. **Your** body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Right in the center of this temple, in the Holy of Holies, the heart, the Holy Spirit broods and works, bringing comfort and guidance in life, and power for testimony.

"For ye are bought with a price:...' Is this freedom or bondage? It is both. It means the freedom of the sons of God, the liberty of the Spirit; and the bondage of a conquered love. Independence is an impossibility. To be independent we must be without a country, without a body, and without a God."

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*.



APRIL 27, 1997

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

I Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?

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

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

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

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. I Corinthians 12:13.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Church of God is the body through which Christ works and manifests Himself in this world. Through the Holy Spirit that Christ has filled the Church with, are given various gifts and functions to individual members to be used to edify and further the spread of the gospel.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 12:7), "*Given to every man to profit withal*": No gift of God is given to any man for his own private advantage or benefit. It is given for the blessing and benefit of all the members of the Church.

(I Corinthians 12:10), "*Working of miracles*": Two Greek words that are basis for two corresponding English words are in this expression. The working (energy) of miracles (dynamite), that is, the force of exertion of the power of God to do miraculous things that are impossible in human strength. "*Prophecy*": This gift can be defined as (1) the power to foretell future events as that of Agabus who foretold the coming dearth, (Acts 11:28) and Paul's coming persecution in Jerusalem; (2) it can be the ability to teach and expound the scriptures in showing the prophecies of Christ and how they are fulfilled in the New Testament.

(I Corinthians 12:27), "*Members in particular*": Members of individual parts.

(I Corinthians 12:28), "*First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers*": Adam Clarke comments on this: "God has made evident distinctions among the members of the human body, so that some occupy a more eminent (or important) place than others, so has He in the Church. And to prove this, the apostle numerates the principal offices, and in the order in which they should stand." "*Helps, governments*": Assistants and positions of leadership and authority.

(I Corinthians 12:31), This verse could be expressed thus:

"You covet earnestly the best of these gifts, but yet I would show you a more excellent way." The graces and fruits of the Holy Spirit are really more important and more to be desired than the gifts themselves. This statement Paul made in readiness for what he set forth in the next chapter which deals with the importance of pure and holy love above every other gift.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Corinthian brethren had been heathen Gentiles, aliens and foreigners to Israel and to God. They had been steeped in idolatry and the immoral ways of darkness. Paul seeks in the scriptures of our lesson today to explain the wonderful body of Christ, His Church, and the various functions of its members. It was one of the several matters that they needed Paul's counsel and instruction in. We must also remember that God still works in His Church on the same principle. He still gives gifts and functions to His saints and ministers today. It is wonderful as well as interesting how Paul compares the body of Christ and its various members to the human body. It is a very good comparison and illustration. Each member has a different function and part to play. But all goes together into one working unit. One thing that Paul stressed was that it is the Holy Spirit who gives the gifts. It is very important that this be true in every one. Proverbs 25:14 says, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Much trouble in the work of the Lord comes from someone who is trying to operate without the real backing of the Holy Spirit. Let us also remember that to have the fruits of the Holy Spirit is more important than the gifts mentioned. Without the love of God the various functions will not work together properly. Consideration and sympathy for the fellow members in the body is an absolute necessity for proper performance.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the purpose of the gifts of the Spirit?
2. What is the body of Christ compared to?

3. By what means are we made into one body?
4. Who decides what gift is to be given?
5. What must we do to have a part in the body?
6. Will we be tempted to feel inferior to others?
7. Should we desire to outdo our fellow members?
8. What must we do to find out what our gift is?
9. Why do not all members have the same gift?
10. Does God give gifts to the Church yet today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Christ Jesus told His followers before He went back to the Father in heaven to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they be endued with power from on high. It was His purpose to send the Holy Spirit from heaven to fill each one of His disciples. The Holy Spirit would give to each one the power and gifts that they would need to carry on in the work of the gospel. Some became apostles who went forth preaching the Word of God in new fields across the vast and far-reaching cities of the world. As new converts would be made and congregations began to spring up here and there the need came for pastors and teachers to nourish and minister to them. And so Christ began to work in His Church much on the order of a body very similar to the way the human body lives and operates. It is a blessed privilege to be saved and born again into the Church of God and be a partaker of God's spiritual blessings. And it is a further and greater joy and privilege to have the Holy Spirit living and working in the heart and be inspired and used of Him in the gifts and functions of the Church. We must seek the Lord to be filled with the Spirit and keep seeking Him to keep filled and anointed with the Spirit. Let us not be so concerned about what gift the Holy Spirit will give us. Let us be concerned and diligent to have HIM, the Giver of all gifts, enthroned in reality in our hearts. Let us seek God for grace to bear the fruits of love, humility, patience, kindness, peace and holiness. If we will be diligent in these things then the Lord can be glorified to work in and through us with one or more of these gifts. Let us keep saved and true to God. If we will keep clear with God He will see to it that we have plenty to do for Him and be blessed with a part of His great work. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There are a number of gifts in the body of Christ. Each one has its place and is very important. When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, he is then given a gift. Many times the devil will be right there to push a person ahead of God's plan for him, and that person many times becomes discouraged. Zeal without knowledge is a hindrance to souls. The Bible says, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." Romans 10:2. Yet, on the other hand, we do not want to dampen zeal. I am afraid that not very many have enough zeal. But zeal is a beautiful work and very profitable when it is according to knowledge. God will give that knowledge, but one must wait in prayer upon the Lord to have it. We notice in the life of the Apostle Paul that after his conversion and being filled with the Holy Spirit, he went into Arabia and spent three years before he went up to Jerusalem. Then he spent fifteen days with Peter and also conferred with the other apostles. God was preparing him for a work. Many times we have seen in the lives of others how God was preparing them for a work that was not known to them, but as they moved on they moved right into greater responsibilities and a greater work for God as they kept humble.

—Marie Miles (Written in 1974.)



MAY 4, 1997

DIVINE LOVE, THE GREATEST OF ALL GIFTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Colossians 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

MEMORY VERSE: And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. I Peter 4:8.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The love of God living and operating in a man's heart and life is the greatest and most important gift that one can have. Without this love every other ability or work is made of no profit or value.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 13:1), "*Charity*": The word "charity," meaning the disposition to think well of others, liberality, and the giving of alms to the poor, is counted by many to be an improper translation of the original Greek word, which is "agape." It is more properly translated "love." Most of the places where the word "love" appears in the New Testament,

comes from the Greek word "agape." But who can define "love?" It is the greatest word on mortal tongue and the greatest thing in the world. God is love. I John 4:8, 16. It can be justly labeled as deep, inward feelings of ardent affection, sympathetic understanding, concern, interest, fondness and benevolence. And even at that, the depth of the meaning of love is not reached.

(I Corinthians 13:4), "*Suffereth long*": Is long-spirited, forbearing and patient. "*Envieth not*": Does not have any feeling of resentment, ill will, or jealousy toward someone who proves to be more excellent. "*Vaunteth not itself*": Is not boastful. "*Is not puffed up*": Is not inflated in mind to be proud or haughty.

(I Corinthians 13:7), "*Beareth all things*": This word "bear" would be more properly rendered "cover, conceal and contain." Clarke comments: "Love conceals everything that should be concealed, and betrays no secret. A person under the influence of this love never makes sins, follies, faults or imperfections of any man, the subject either of censure or conversation. He covers them as far as he can; and if he is the only one who knows them, he retains the knowledge of them in his own bosom as far as he ought." Does this not cause us to pray for more love?

(I Corinthians 13:13), "*The greatest of these is charity*": Faith will pass away before sight, and hope will fade before the fulfillment of hope, but love will not change nor fade away.

Please note: I would encourage every one who is really interested in this vital subject to read what Adam Clarke has to say in his commentary on this chapter. He has much more to say than what we have space to quote here.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our previous lesson we studied Paul's teachings on the various gifts that were given to the Church by the Holy Spirit. He said in the closing sentence that he would show unto us a more excellent way. This more excellent way is the way of love that he dwells on in today's lesson. This chapter on charity, or love, has been esteemed to be the greatest chapter in the Bible,

a masterpiece of literature. I remember having it as part of English literature in high school. It is wonderful and challenging to study, but takes much more decision and purpose of heart and prayer to God to live up to. To explore into the depths of the apostle's sayings here always stirs one to feel the need of a greater bestowal of the love of God in the soul. And that is what this writing of the apostle Paul is for. It is to stir up our minds and help us to remember what is so easily lost sight of in the normal course of our life in the flesh. We must not allow ourselves to become disheartened if we find ourselves coming up short concerning the behaviour of love. We must pray and seek God for more love and then put forth more effort to let it work in our lives. God will help us for He is love and His presence in our hearts and lives can and will lead us on to higher heights and deeper depths in the love of Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is divine love the most important thing?
2. Is it possible to have faith and not have love?
3. What other than love could cause a person to give his body to be burned?
4. How can a man be charitable and not have love?
5. Will we be tempted to not love?
6. How can we overcome this temptation?
7. Why is love called the "bond of perfectness?"
8. What does love do to a multitude of sins?
9. How is love greater than faith and hope?
10. What are prophecies, tongues and knowledge without love?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Love, pure and warm and tender affection, is something that can slip away from a person very easily. Jesus warned us about the love of many waxing cold. (Matthew 24:12.) To keep filled with the love of God we must always be open for love's reproofs and correction. No one can truthfully say that they have no need for more love. We can be filled with love and yet

we can love some more. We can feel that we do love God and Jesus and our fellow man, but love is constantly yearning and reaching out to be increased. I read a story of a man who had been terribly wronged by another man. He carried bitterness and hatred in his heart and was prepared to kill his enemy if he ever had a chance. But the Spirit of God wrought conviction upon him and He became a new creature in Christ Jesus. This brought a great change in his heart. One morning while he and his family were eating breakfast a tramp came to the door. He instantly recognized his old enemy. A feeling of hatred tried to take hold, but he resisted it. He kindly made known who he was and that he did not hold any grudge or hatred. The poor tramp melted down and asked for prayer and through the love shown to him was brought to salvation. Oh, that we might all have more of the love of God in our hearts! If we have a faith experience and see the hand of God work for us in a special way, that is a wonderful thing. But if we are not careful, right in the time of our triumphant experience of faith we can fail to show the love that we should to our fellow man. He will see and feel that lack of love and it will cast a shadow over our testimony. Let us be diligent and watchful, always praying that God will increase our love and make it more what He would have it to be.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

God's love is the only true calibration that there is for pure love. All earthly love has its "stress point," that place in which it will give way. God's love doesn't.

One unknown writer adroitly observed, "The love of God, like a bridge, spans the gulf of time. It has held up under the heaviest pressure. At different times, such has been the weight of human sins, that the best of men have feared that the bridge would give way beneath the burden. But it has borne all things; and 'suffered long' even until now. In the time of Noah, the Bridge of Love suffered such depression under the weight of the world's iniquity, that for a brief season it disappeared beneath the flood, but still it stood unbroken in the rushing torrent; and ever since that time it has been

reflected in the heavens in the 'bow of the covenant,' the pledge and promise of the abiding character of that which it mirrors forth."

John Donne, the seventeenth century English preacher, said: "One of the most convenient hieroglyphics of God is a circle; and a circle is endless; whom God loves, He loves to the end; and not only to their own end, to their death, but to His end; and His end is that He might love them still."

This is the same divine love that the saints of God are bequeathed as His children. —Wayne Murphey



MAY 11, 1997

**WORSHIPPING TOGETHER
FOR SPIRITUAL EDIFICATION**

I Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

7 And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

9 So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.

12 ...Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he

that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

MEMORY VERSE: For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. I Corinthians 14:33.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Assembling together to worship God is a joyful privilege to the children of God. It should be carried on in the Spirit of the Lord with everything being done with the Spirit and with the understanding, comforting and edifying one another in the faith of the Lord Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(I Corinthians 14:1), "*Prophesy*": The principal meaning of this word is to foretell events, but it also refers to preaching

the Word of God and speaking under the inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

(I Corinthians 14:2) *"Unknown tongue"*: The word "unknown" here is an added word by the translators and is not in the original Greek text. The word "tongue" means a language such as Hebrew, Greek or English. Adam Clarke says here that the difficulties in this chapter of the thought of the tongue is reconciled better with a Dr. Lightfoot in his comments than any he had met with. Lightfoot believed that by the unknown tongue Paul is referring to the Hebrew language. He further supposed that God restored the true knowledge of this language when he gave the gift of tongues. As the Scriptures of the Old Testament were contained in this Hebrew language, and it has beauties, energies and depths in it which no verbal translation can express, it was needful and beneficial that the full meaning of this sacred language should be properly understood. This sounds very likely and understandably to be the case. If it is, it unlocks a mystery which has hung over this chapter and which has given place for Satan to infuse the awful false doctrine of our present age of the modern (so called) gift of tongues.

(I Corinthians 14:7), *"A distinction in the sounds"*: A difference of sounds from one note to another.

(I Corinthians 14:16), *"Amen"*: This is a Hebrew word which means sure, firm, faithful, truth, and the expression, "So be it!" We say "Amen" when we agree and accept what is being said or done.

(I Corinthians 14:20), Using the meaning of the Greek text, Adam Clarke expresses this thought: "Brethren, be not school children in understanding: howbeit in malice be as infants, but in understanding be fullgrown and mature men."

LESSON BACKGROUND

As in the case with human beings in many matters, the gifts of the Spirit in their importance and wonder became an obsession with many of the early morning Church. Paul had given his counsel concerning the gifts of the Holy Spirit, after which he had dwelt so wisely on the importance of divine love

in the heart over and above the gifts. In our lesson today we have collected some more of his counsel concerning the becoming order that the gatherings for worship should have. It is easy to get carried away with something that is spectacular and to overlook the seemingly less spectacular functions. The gift of speaking in a foreign language had become so great and important in the eyes of some. He shows how useless and inappropriate it is for a person to speak in another language if others do not understand. We did not include all that Paul said in this chapter in our scripture text. But he also said that he would rather speak five words with understanding so that he could teach others than ten thousand words in another language that others could not understand. He stresses the need for activity and participation in worship gatherings to be edifying and helpful to one another. Any kind of confusion can kill the effect that God wants the service to have. The gathering together to worship God should be carried on in a manner that is consistent with godliness, holiness and peace. He also stated that the gift of tongues was for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, and that prophesying served them which believe. What a blessing it is to come to service and worship the Lord together in song and in prayer, and in hearing the Word of God expounded! It is to be a peaceful and uplifting time for the soul, not a time of confusion and strife.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is prophecy more edifying than speaking in tongues?
2. How does preaching the Word benefit the soul?
3. What kind of spirit should prevail in worship services?
4. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
5. Do you think that Paul's spirit would agree with the modern so called gift of speaking in tongues?
6. How much malice would we have if we were like little infants?
7. What does it mean for the spirits of the prophets to be subject to the prophets?

8. For what purpose do Christians gather together?
9. What does it mean to "sing and pray with the Spirit?"
10. What does it mean to "sing and pray with the understanding?"

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I remember hearing Sister Margaret Eck telling about how the Lord worked in a precious way in a service where she was pastor a number of years ago. She said that there was a professed infidel who had been coming for some time to the services and the saints were praying for him. One night she went to service and felt the Holy Spirit especially impressing her to sit still and not get up to preach. So she told the congregation that she did not have a message, and for everyone to feel free to get up and speak as they were inspired of the Lord to do so. So the saints responded beautifully to the situation. One would get up and read some scripture and comment. Another would testify of some recent special blessing from the Lord. Oh, they had a glorious meeting that night! There were much tears and rejoicing in the Spirit. At the closing of the service the infidel man got up and said, "Every word that was spoken tonight was a message to my own heart!" See how the Lord worked! It is a wonderful privilege that we have to be led by the Holy Spirit in our services. It is a treasure that we cannot afford to lose. Many religious groups and organizations are without this wonderful experience. Oh, they have lots of talent and natural abilities, but to have the Holy Spirit in the hearts to lead and inspire and bless is the way God would have it to be.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When asked by his teacher why the Puritans came to this country, a small boy responded: "To worship in their own way and make other people do the same." Do you see the irony in that answer? As to how much truth it might contain is open for debate, but one sure way to cause confusion in the Church is to require that everyone be predictable and a carbon copy of each other. We must be subject one to another, but anytime

our individuality is restricted, man-rule is involved. Constraints cannot be put upon the Holy Spirit. There have been saints in the church who seemed very peculiar in their mannerisms and viewed God from their own special perspective, yet were very close to God. Everyone should feel a freedom to speak as God has dealt with them. In so doing the whole congregation will be edified and spiritual growth is possible.

The Corinthian church was putting great emphasis on generating the service through what was said, with everybody wanting a vocal part to play, whereas the secret of worship is the fellowship. These two opposing concepts can be termed as emotions verses communion. Some people don't feel like they have had church unless a show of seemingly supernatural ability has been displayed. The spirit goes much deeper than that. Albert Schweitzer tells of a deaf man who never missed worship in his father's church. When asked why he, a deaf man who was unable to hear any of the service, was constantly in attendance, he replied, "The communion of the saints! The communion of the saints!" —Wayne Murphey



MAY 18, 1997

COMFORT, TRIUMPH AND DELIVERANCE IN CHRIST

II Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.

8 For 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;

11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

II Corinthians 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 15:57.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God is faithful to comfort us in times of suffering and trouble, to deliver us from destruction and death, and to cause us always to triumph in living and working for Him.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 1:8), *"Pressed out of measure, above strength"*: As Clarke expressed it from the Greek text: "We were weighed down beyond what is believable, even beyond what natural strength could support."

(II Corinthians 1:9), *"The sentence of death in ourselves"*: Paul lived and worked for Jesus constantly in peril of his own

life and safety. The Jews were after him continually, desiring to kill him. But Paul let it work for his soul's good, taking it that this sentence, or threat, of death was for the sake of his faith to be exercised in believing and trusting in God who had the power to protect him from death and also to raise him up from the dead if such should take place.

(II Corinthians 2:15), "*Savour*": Odor or fragrance. "*Sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish*": By preaching the gospel of Christ and living a righteous and holy life we can make manifest the fragrance of the Lord Jesus to those who will believe and be saved and to those who reject it and are lost.

(II Corinthians 2:16), "*Death unto death,...life unto life*": Souls who reject the Word of God do it being responsible to God and will reap destruction. Whosoever will believe and obey will be quickened to spiritual life and hope of eternal life. "*Who is sufficient for these things?*": Paul constantly had a deep inner sense of his own weakness and inability to do the work that Christ had called him to do. As he said in chapter 3 and verse 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Only by the help of the Spirit of God was he able to accomplish any thing of real lasting good.

(II Corinthians 2:17), "*Corrupt the word of God*": The meaning from the Greek is to be a "huckster" with the Word of God. A huckster is a retailer, one who takes a product and goes out and charges more for it to make gain. Paul indicates here that many use the gospel for personal gain and advantage. Usually the gospel is mixed with inferior teachings in order to gain people's favor and acceptance. Paul determined not to do this, but rather to preach the truth in clearness and purity to please God and not to please the foolhardiness and carnality of man.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The apostle Paul suffered and endured many hard trials of his faith. He was hated and persecuted by the Jews and this present evil world. But he also had the presence of God with him that gave him comfort and strength to endure the

adversities of life. He lived constantly in peril of his life. And according to history he sealed his faith and testimony by being beheaded at the command of the tyrant Roman emperor, Nero. But, according to his testimony, he was trusting in God who raiseth the dead. He experienced the great triumph of faith and was able to give a good witness of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus to his generation. Not everyone who heard him was converted, but he counted it as being the savour of death unto death to those who would not believe. He rejoiced in those who did accept the gospel that he preached so sincerely. We can take lessons from Paul for we today will face similar battles and conflicts with Satan and the world. Let us lean hard on the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. We will find His loving favor will far outweigh the sufferings that we might encounter in the tribulation of the cross of Jesus.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What will we receive from Christ for what we suffer?
2. What are some of the methods that God uses to comfort us?
3. What effect does suffering for Christ have on others?
4. What does the consolation of Christ do for us?
5. How did Paul take having the sentence of death on him?
6. What was the confidence that he had in God?
7. What did God enable Paul to always do?
8. What was Paul's ministry to those who believed?
9. What was his ministry to those who did not believe?
10. Why did Paul feel insufficient for Christ's work?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Jesus said in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." We are thankful to God for the comfort that He gives to the saints in their sufferings and trials of afflictions. There are times when we are persecuted and rejected by those who do not love and see the truth. Reverses and conflicts arise as we endeavor to follow the meek and lowly ways of the Lord. The people of this present, evil world are so

sinful and proud. The way of humility and modesty is repulsive to them. We who are endeavoring to please the Lord with our lives feel this pushoff. But God comforts our hearts and fills us with joy. We are rewarded so much for our sacrifice and obedience to Him. We look on some of the saints and what they had to suffer and go through and we see their steadfastness and cheerfulness in the furnace of affliction. What does it do for us? It encourages and comforts us, helping us to not be fearful of anything that might come to us in life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a hard concept to understand, especially when in the midst of sorrow, but good things can come by passing through trials. It is only natural that trials cause us to seek more fervently a close relationship with God, and this is the right approach to take.

It is foolish to look for ways to suffer in an attempt to get blessings, but neither should we always try to protect ourselves from having to endure those things that may be brought against us.

A story is told of a missionary in Africa on furlough. He bought a sundial to help African village people tell the time of day. He set it up in the midst of the village, but his people were so filled with admiration and wonder that straightway they built a roof over it to protect it from sun and rain.

These villagers inadvertently and unwisely ruined the purpose of what the sundial was for since they did not understand its workings. Likewise, it is possible to distance ourselves from trouble and completely annul the purpose God had in letting it take place. Rather than seeking direction from God in their lives, some people let problems come between them and Him. We will not be so prone to do this if we realize the consolation God has for His people in the midst of trials.

A relationship with God brings comfort, for God is a merciful God. Abraham Lincoln once told a friend, "I have not suffered **by** the South, but I have suffered **with** the South." This is how God views our trials. He suffers **with** us. When God

is perceived in this manner, it brings great consolation to a troubled heart.

—Wayne Murphey



MAY 25, 1997

THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT

II Corinthians 3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

3 Forasmuch as 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.

4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

11 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech.

13 And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

16 Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

MEMORY VERSE: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. II Corinthians 3:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The giving of the law of God through Moses was glorious in a visible and outward show, while the glory of the Spirit of God in the gospel of Christ is an invisible and inward glory which we behold with an open heart through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 3:2), "*Epistle*": A written message.

(II Corinthians 3:3), "*Fleshy tables of the heart*": The tender and receptive heart of man upon which the Spirit of God impresses the laws of Christ. This is from Ezekiel 36:26 where God prophesied that He would "take away the stony (hard and stubborn and unimpressionable) heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (a tender heart that is easily touched and moved to loving obedience).

(II Corinthians 3:16), "*When it shall turn to the Lord*": The apostle here is drawing a parallel between the glory of Moses as recorded in Exodus 34:29-35. When Moses came back down from the mount Sinai after the second time of being in the presence of God for forty days and nights with two new tables of stone containing the written law of God, the children of Israel were afraid to come near him for his face shone with the glory of God. So Moses put a veil, or a covering, over his countenance while he spoke with them. When Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off, but put it back on when he came out to the people. Paul here in our lesson states that the real veil is upon the hearts of the people, a blindness and lack of spiritual perception that keeps them from understanding and seeing the glory of God. This same veil is upon all of us until we "turn to the Lord."

(II Corinthians 3:18), "The Greek text renders this precious verse: "But we all in a face having been unveiled, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are transformed to the same image from glory (the outward glory like that of Moses) to glory (the inward and spiritual glory of Christ), even as from the Spirit of the Lord." As we open our hearts and behold with the eye of love and faith the glory of Christ we are changed to be in His blessed likeness. Oh, glory be to God!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the previous chapter Paul had been speaking about how God was making his life a sweet savour of Christ through the sincere and unadulterated preaching of the gospel. In our lesson today he speaks of not needing letters of recommendation to give to other people, but rather that the ones who believed and obeyed his message were a much greater advertisement for him. The change that comes in the life of a genuine convert to Christ is a great message that can be easily read and known of men. He then speaks of this Holy Spirit ministration of the gospel upon the tender souls of men, and compares it to the ministration of the law of God in Moses and the glory it had in outward brilliance by the face of Moses glowing with the glory of God. As Moses put a veil over his face so the children of Israel could look upon him, Paul states that the real veil is upon the heart, and that it was still upon the heart when the Old Testament was read. He shows how the Spirit of the Lord removes that veil and gives the soul wonderful access to the spiritual things of the New Testament in Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Paul's best letter of recommendation?
2. How is the Word of God written in the heart?
3. What is meant by "fleshy tables of the heart?"
4. How does the "letter" kill?
5. How does the "spirit" give life?
6. Why was the outward glory of Moses done away?

7. Where did Paul say that the real veil was?
8. How is this veil to be taken away?
9. What kind of liberty does the Spirit give us?
10. What happens when we behold the glory of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, the veil that is upon the heart of men and women! It is hanging there upon the mind and heart, keeping them from understanding the Lord Jesus and what He has for them. The veil is fleshly and carnal desires for the lusts and pleasures of this life. It is the love of money. It is the lack of trust and faith in God. It is selfish aims and purposes. These passions throw a veil over the mind. Even the ideas and beliefs that one has in God are sickled over with these woeful imaginations and desires. In these things the heart becomes gross and hard and unimpressible. What a sad condition for one to be in! It hung on the hearts of the Jewish leaders and caused them to hate Jesus and want to kill him. It was upon those who hated Paul and sought to kill him. It is still upon the hearts of all enemies of the truth today. The carnal mind is enmity with God and cannot be subject to the law of God. There must be a change from the outward and dim to the real presence of God which is a spiritual experience given by the Holy Spirit. When we turn with simple faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus we are transformed into a condition of heart that the Holy Spirit can begin to reveal the true glory to us. May every one obtain this blessed experience!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." II Corinthians 3:16.

The following parable was addressed to an assembly of Jews, by Mr. Moritz. "A poor Jew wanted very much to be rich; he therefore put a bandage on his eyes, that he might pray to Mazal (or Fortune), and went everywhere through the streets, looking up to heaven, and crying, 'O Mazal, Mazal, make me rich!' At length Mazal threw down a great bag full of precious treasure, which fell right before him. The poor man did not

take off the bandage, but ran on, and stumbled over the treasure. neither did he turn back to see what it was, but went on, still crying, 'O Mazal, Mazal, make me rich!' Mazal, seeing her gift neglected, took it up again into heaven, and the Jew remained a beggar as before."

The Jews who were present requested an explanation of the parable which he gave them, by referring to Isaiah 9:6 and the second Psalm. A deep silence followed. At last, some young men asked, "And will the bandage always be on our eyes?" He told them to pray that the Spirit of God might take it away. Five of these young men received Christ that evening.

—Taken from *Anecdotes Illustrative of New Testament Texts*.



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JUNE 1, 1997

THE TRIUMPHANT MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL

II Corinthians 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

MEMORY VERSE: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The light of the gospel shining out in this present evil world will overmaster the powers of darkness and wrong for all who will let it enter into their hearts.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 4:2), "*Commending ourselves*": Setting ourselves forth in such a way that we will win the confidence of those to whom we preach the gospel.

(II Corinthians 4:3), "*But if our gospel be hid*": We will strive to live so blamelessly and beyond reproach so that we will not dim the luster and glory of the gospel. If the gospel is hid from anyone it will not be because we have failed to bring forth the visible fruits of it. It will be hidden because the god of this world, Satan, and the powers of darkness, has blinded the minds of the unbelievers.

(II Corinthians 4:6), "*God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*": No man can really see and appreciate the light of God unless they become aware of the darkness they are in. Isaiah 9:2 prophesied of the light of the gospel: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." II Peter 1:19 said we would do well to take heed to the more sure word of prophecy, "...as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." This shows that no one will appreciate and place any value on the light of the gospel unless he senses and is aware of the spiritual darkness he is in.

(II Corinthians 4:10), "*Bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus*": To bear in one's body the dying of the Lord Jesus can involve at least two points. First, we must be dead with the Lord Jesus from sin and the rudiments of this present, evil world. Then there is that point that many, many Christians (including Paul) who professed Christ did so at the peril of their physical life.

(II Corinthians 4:15), "*Redound to the glory of God*": To

increase and abound excessively, to superabound. Through the adversities and hardships that one suffers for the sake of Christ, the grace that is manifested reflects out to win the love and joy of other souls who respond with thanks and praise to God, lighting up the dark path of this life with glory and beauty.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the only cause in all time and history that is truly a triumphant one. We who are engaged in the work of the Lord experience a joy and a treasure that goes far beyond this fleeting world of greed and toil. We are working for an incorruptible crown. We are but servants, earthen vessels of not any real value except what God works in and through us. The brunt of the load is on the Lord and not on us. We have a message that everyone needs, but not everyone is aware of the need of it. Paul speaks here about the god of this world. It is the power of Satan to deceive and blind the mind of a person to keep him from seeing the real Christ and who He is and what He is. But regardless of who or how men reject the message of Christ it is still a triumphant cause. It is so often at a disadvantage down here, but it will triumph over all in the end. Troubled, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down is often the state of affairs with those who love the Lord. But His grace sustains them, and they are kept from being distressed, not allowed to give in to despair, always knowing that they are not forsaken, and never destroyed. Paul quotes in verse 13 from Psalm 116:10 which is a beautiful and sublime Psalm of Christian victory. Paul applies it here to the spirit of faith that foresees victory and triumph in the sufferings of a child of God. "I believe, we also believe!" What do we believe? We believe that God is going to bring us out to victory now and always. The ultimate victory will come when we will share with Christ His glorious resurrection to life immortal and be presented with all the holy redeemed of all ages to the Father in that last great day. Praise the Lord for the triumph of the glorious gospel of Christ!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What must we do to please God and help souls?
2. Is it possible for us to cause the gospel to be hid?
3. Who is the "god of this world"?
4. How does he hide the gospel from men?
5. Why are we counted as but earthen vessels?
6. Why has God caused the light to shine in darkness?
7. What keeps us from distress and despair?
8. What does it mean to bear the dying of the Lord?
9. What does the spirit of faith enable us to do?
10. How will the grace of God through the thanksgiving of many abound to the glory of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Satan beguiled our foreparents in the beginning and got them to incline their hearts toward his ways, he became the god of this world, this present evil world. His chief work is to blind the heart and mind against the truth. It is as a veil which Paul spoke of before. It is a veil that hangs over the heart. The prophet spoke thus in Isaiah 25:7, "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." Christ can and will take away the veil that is spread over the heart. He will take away the carnal mind and give us His mind, a mind which will enable us to clearly see and understand the things of God. But, unless we turn to the Lord, this veil will not be taken away, but will remain as a blinding agent to keep us from beholding the beauty of the Lord. It seems strange that a person can be in such gross darkness and not be aware of it. Jesus said in Matthew 6:23, "...If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" If the ideas and beliefs that one believes to be right and truth is error and iniquity and he or she is content and happy with that, you have a condition that the light of God cannot penetrate. God's light can only be discerned in darkness, that is, a state where a man senses and bemoans his darkness. This is the conflict that the gospel engages, that is, the power of light shining against the darkness and ignorance of the humanistic and carnal ways of

men. But it is a triumphant light, and whether or not a man receives the light, makes the light no less triumphant or beneficial to those who will receive it. God help us all to be open to the light and walk in the light lest darkness come upon us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." II Cor. 4:6.

A summer's sun, even when beclouded, yields more warmth to the earth than a winter's sun that shines its brightest. The warmth and comfort of the Spirit of God, even when beclouded by troubles and problems, are far superior to the joys that this world can give to the one who has rejected Christ. When a child of God is perplexed, his inward peace is still much greater than the wrongdoer's when his mirth is overflowing all bounds.

One person has prayed, "Lord, I had rather take the worst from Thee than the best from Thine enemy. Only do Thou graciously shine within me, and let mine outward condition be as dull as Thou pleases."

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 8, 1997

BENEFITS OF BEING A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST

II Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is

God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II Corinthians 5:17.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: When we truly repent of our sins and believe with our whole heart in Jesus we are made a new creature with a purpose to live acceptably with God and be heirs of eternal glory with Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 5:3), "*If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked*": This is very serious language here. This mortal body likened by the apostle unto a tent or a temporary dwelling will soon be taken down. We will have to vacate this mortal shell. We are going to need another body, or house, to move into. Otherwise we will be naked and destitute for eternity. Paul presents this hope of the resurrection as not only a reward or a goal to reach toward, it is something also that we need.

(II Corinthians 5:4), "*Clothed upon*": We are not wanting to be unclothed or stripped of our mortal body, but rather are yearning for this mortal to be swallowed up by immortality.

(II Corinthians 5:5), "*Earnest of the Spirit*": The word "earnest" here means a pledge, or part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest. Paul said in Ephesians 1:13-14 that the Holy Spirit "is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Just as we put money in escrow as a pledge and assurance that we will pay the rest later, even so the Lord has given us who believe and obey Him the Holy Spirit as a pledge and assurance of what will come later when He gives us the glorified body like that of Himself.

(II Corinthians 5:14), "*The love of Christ constraineth us*": It causeth us to love as Christ loved.

(II Corinthians 5:18), "*Reconciliation*": The bringing together of two sides who were disjointed, that is, the restoration of lost humanity to fellowship with God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the wonderful truths about our hope as new creatures in Christ who have received the Holy Spirit as a pledge, or earnest money, for our eternal dwelling in glory. All this has come about because God was in Christ, coming into the world, to bring us back to His fellowship and favor. He accomplished the great reconciliation of God to man and man to God. And now He gives to us this ministry to preach the good news that provisions have been

made for every soul to be reconciled and brought back into God's favor. Through Christ's atonement and the price of His blood, God has brought Himself near and gives out the loving entreaty to man to come and be reconciled with Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our mortal body likened unto?
2. Why do we need the hope of another body?
3. Why are we groaning in this body and what are we hoping for?
4. What does it mean to be at home in the body while being absent from the Lord?
5. What would we rather our situation to be?
6. What do we strive and labour to be?
7. Who should we really live unto?
8. What happens when a person is made a new creature in Christ?
9. How did God bring about reconciliation with us?
10. What do we have to do as our part in being reconciled with God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Young people are not as fully aware of the decay of nature and the frailty of this mortal "tent" that we live in now. But as we grow older we begin to feel the breaking down of the physical powers and abilities and are made to see the value and blessing of the hope Christ gives us. This old tent is going to fold up one of these days and we will have to vacate it. We are going to need another house to inhabit. We are not meant to be just a disembodied spirit. We need a house to live in. When we die our spirits will be taken by God to a safekeeping place in His paradise above. This is where Lazarus went when, as Jesus said, he died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. It is a temporary place for the present. But the day is coming when the mortal body will be resurrected to immortality and that redeemed spirit will inhabit that new body. This is the hope of the gospel of Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit

is an earnest of in our hearts. By the work of the Holy Spirit we are born again and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. The old things of sin and self are passed out of our life. We have new interests and desires. We want to pray, sing, worship the Lord with the saints, help others, and do things that will bring honour to the name of Jesus. Our hopes are no longer in the vanities of this present life, but on things above. We walk in newness of life, being constantly refreshed and renewed in our inner man. Oh, how different we are from what we used to be!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." There are some who feel that since man has been given the ministry of reconciliation, it gives men the power to absolve other men's sins. When we consider closely the meaning Paul had, we understand that the ministry of reconciliation is the message of the gospel. II Corinthians 5:19 tells us what that message is. God was in Christ while He was on this earth and He forgave men of their sins, which means all was clear between God and repentant man. Since Christ is now at the Father's right hand it is up to us to tell others what He can do. We are ambassadors for Christ. We do not fill His role, but we are spokesmen for God, beseeching people to find His forgiveness.

There is no greater One to whom we can bring souls, than to God. He can do far more for a person than any other. After Mark Twain had made a triumphant tour through Europe, where he was honored by great universities and kings, his daughter said: "Daddy, I guess pretty soon you will know everybody except God." If we should be acquainted with all the important people of our time and yet fail to seek God and His forgiveness, we will be in great distress on the day of judgment. No one will be able to aid us then.

An account recorded in the Scriptures tells of an infirm man who laid a long time at the pool of Bethesda. He was unable to get into the water when it was troubled to receive his healing. When Jesus asked the man about this, the reply was, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into

the pool." John 5:7. Likewise there are many in the world today who have no one to help them into the forgiving fountain of Christ's blood. We have quite a ministry of reconciliation to fulfill.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 15, 1997

APPROVING OURSELVES AS MINISTERS OF GOD

II Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

II Timothy 4:5 ...Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

MEMORY VERSE: Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II Timothy 2:3.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In every adverse situation of life we must, by the help of the Lord and the spiritual resources that He provides, make full proof of our heavenly calling to be the children of God lest a blot or reproach fall upon His sacred cause.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 6:1), "*Receive not the grace of God in vain*": This means to accept Christ's atonement and provision of grace and not to fail to allow it to accomplish its intended effect of holiness, victory over sin, and faithful service for Him. It is also to be sure to not fail to conduct one's self in a manner that would bring honour and praise to God in the hearts of others.

(II Corinthians 6:3), "*Giving no offence in any thing*": The Greek text shows a stronger expression: "Not in one thing giving an occasion of sin." How often has the cause of Christ suffered because of a minister who yields to the flesh and transgresses the doctrine that he once upheld!

(II Corinthians 6:4-5), "*In much patience, in afflictions, etc.*": These are the situations of life in which we must exhibit the reality of our profession as saints and ministers of God. Notice that each one of these things mentioned are difficult and adverse to the flesh. But it is under the strain and adversities of life that we prove what we really are.

(II Corinthians 6:8), "*By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*": The Greek says, "Through glory and disgrace, through bad fame and good fame." We must be just as true and faithful to God when we are degraded and talked to the ground as when we are praised and set on high. We must know what we are and who we are in Christ and not be moved by human observation or ridicule.

(II Corinthians 6:9), "*As unknown, and yet well known*": The Greek says, "As being ignored and duly appreciated."

(II Corinthians 6:12), "*Straitened*": To be hemmed in or cramped. "*In your own bowels*" In one's own feelings or inward affections. The apostle's language is: "You are not cramped in

our love and feelings for you, but rather it is in your own minds that you feel this way."

(II Corinthians 6:13), "*For a recompence in the same*": Paul is evidently saying this to these brethren: "To ease the uncertainty and strain your hearts are in, let me encourage you to rest in the Lord and be assured of our love and confidence in you."

(II Timothy 4:5), "*Do the work of an evangelist*": Work as one who proclaims glad tidings. "*Make full proof of thy ministry*": Fully perform your service.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today the apostle Paul is exhorting and comforting the brethren who have turned to God through the gospel of Christ. He is also challenging them to set true examples, by their lives, of the gospel. He quotes from Isaiah 49:8, which says, "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee:..." He adds to that the blessed truth that the acceptable time and the day of salvation is NOW. Seeing that this is the day of salvation offered to all men, and that we are given the word of reconciliation to be the ambassadors of Christ, how careful we should be to keep our lives free from doubt and question! A shame it has been so many times in the history of Christianity when men who have professed so highly and held such positions of reputation and honour have spoiled it by unfaithfulness. The Lord wants us to be enlarged, comforted and strengthened to victory and joy in Him. We do not have to be down under a stress and strain. God's grace is sufficient for us and abundantly able to give us all we need for success.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we receive the grace of God in vain?
2. When is the accepted time and the day of salvation?
3. What should this mean to us?
4. Why does it take adversity to make proof of us?
5. By what things do we approve ourselves?

6. How can we be unknown and yet well known?
7. How can we be sorrowful, and yet rejoicing?
8. How can we be poor, and yet make many rich?
9. How can we be dying and yet living?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God makes proof of us not only to others but to ourselves. He wants us to feel good about our status with Him. One of the ways that He brings this about is through adverse situations and trying times of pressure and discouragement. It is by holding fast and being faithful to the Lord in adversity that our hope is increased and assurance builds up in our relationship with God. As we discipline ourselves to be strong and true in the face of opposition and hard things we find our experience becomes more real and rewarding. Paul learned to take pleasure in infirmities and tribulations of the flesh. Anyone can claim to be a Christian when skies are fair and no peril is involved. But let the storm of persecution and heavy trials come and it will show who really loves the Lord. Now the way we overcome is by availing ourselves of the spiritual resources that God has provided in the fulness of His grace. Peter said that "...his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,.... Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,..." II Peter 1:3-4. We must be diligent to seek the Lord in prayer constantly for these things to be in us. We must be always keeping an open mind to the knowledge of God. There is always something for us to learn. By knowledge the chambers of our heart are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. (Proverb 24:4.) People are spiritually destroyed for lack of knowledge many times. The devil takes advantage of people's ignorance and keeps them suppressed and cowed down.

We must watch old Satan on all sides. If he cannot get you to compromise he will seek to cause you to become fanatic. If he cannot crush you he will seek to inflate you. But by keeping a good watch, and remembering what is written, we can safeguard ourselves against all the inroads of the devil.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What is the importance to a worker for God of the scripture which says, "...in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,..."?

One young boy in school wrote this explanation across his test paper. "It is very difficult to express on paper to another, ideas which one does not have in his head." Likewise, it is hard for a minister to effectively minister from the pulpit what he has not experienced and had the victory over in himself. If his own heart doesn't understand the concept of the gospel, how can he with conviction convince another heart of its truth? Richard Cecil, an English clergyman, once wrote, "The world looks at ministers out of the pulpit to know what they mean when in it."

Our lives should be on the same par as our public ministering. It was said of one man who preached very well and lived very ill, that "when he was out of the pulpit it was a pity he should ever go into it; and when he was in the pulpit, it was a pity he should ever come out of it."

Approving ourselves as the ministers of God does not mean that we use our mind to justify our qualifications to be a minister. It means to experience the affairs of life that God lets come our way, and then with a meditative heart, see that our conscience is clear towards Him and toward man.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 22, 1997

THE JOY OF EDIFYING THE BRETHREN

II Corinthians 7:2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.

4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.

5 For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.

6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revengel In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

12 Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.

13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

15 And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.

16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.

MEMORY VERSE: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. II Corinthians 7:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: To receive the counsel and spiritual instruction given by the servant of God edifies everyone concerned and promotes holy love and unity in the Church.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 7:3), *"Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you"*: The Greek says, "You are in our hearts in order to die together and to live together." What did the apostle mean by this? There are two deaths that a Christian must experience. The first is the death to sin and this present, evil world. This involves suffering and persecution at the hands of wicked and unreasonable people who do not have the faith. Paul is willing to share this kind of death with those to whom he ministered. With this death comes spiritual life and consolation through the indwelling Spirit. Then there is the physical death that so many of those early Christians suffered on account of their faith. Paul was willing to suffer this death along with all the rest. But in this suffering of death there was the bright hope of the resurrection and life eternal.

(II Corinthians 7:5), *"Troubled on every side"*: The Greek says, "in everything being distressed." *"Fightings"*: Strivings and controversy. Paul was opposed by the majority of the people and they withstood greatly his preaching. *"Within were fears"*: Fright and alarm is something that rises up in our thoughts as we face the perils of life and labour. But these fears we can and must overcome through the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the help of our fellow saints. There is also a fear and reverence before God which must be constantly within our hearts, a helpless sense of our need of His guidance and grace, feeling our uselessness and inability without it.

(II Corinthians 7:8), *"Though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent"*: The letter Paul is referring to here is the First Corinthian letter in which he had to straighten them out on several issues and lay the truth down to them. The Greek says, "If I grieved you by the letter, I do not repent, if indeed I did repent." This means that Paul was sorry that he had to make them sorry or grieved by the letter of reproof he wrote to them, but really he was not sorry because

he saw what a spiritual blessing his earnest efforts for their edification had brought to them.

(II Corinthians 7:10), Let us read this from the Greek text: "For sorrow according to God works out reformation for salvation that is not to be repented of." These people were truly sorry for their error and wrong and were fully willing to change and obey the truth that Paul gave them.

(II Corinthians 7:11), "*Carefulness*": Diligence. "*Clearing of yourselves*": The Greek word is "apology," which means a plea to clear one from fault or blame. There is no better way to clear ourselves than to acknowledge the truth and confess where we have been wrong. "*Indignation*": Anger and displeasure against what is unworthy, unjust, dishonest or base. "*Revenge*": The carrying out of justice and righteous judgment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today is a wonderful example of the loving care of a true minister of God toward his children in the gospel. Paul had written a letter to this congregation at Corinth in which he had instructed and reproved them concerning various things that were lacking in their faith and knowledge. He had evidently sent Titus and another brother down there to Corinth to visit the congregation and feel them out as to what their minds were to him, especially in regard to the letter that he had written to them. As Paul said, he was filled with joy and comfort to receive the report that the church at Corinth still loved and appreciated him, and even were longing to see him and were so zealous for his welfare. Paul was having quite a time in Macedonia but with the coming of Titus and his good report of the brethren in Corinth he was greatly comforted. It rejoiced Paul's heart to see how that the dear ones had received his letter and had accepted his counsel and were abiding by it. It is a lesson for us today. Sometimes the ministers have to bring forth the Word that will reprove and bring correction. The Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. (II Timothy 3:16.) If we will listen and take heed without being

offended we will be blessed, the minister will be blessed, and love and unity will abound. We can clear ourselves and have the fellowship of the holy brethren along with the overflowing blessings of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Paul rejoicing so in the Corinthian church?
2. How did God comfort Paul when he was cast down?
3. What did Titus tell Paul that brought him comfort?
4. What effect did Paul's letter have on the brethren?
5. What does it mean to sorrow after a godly manner?
6. What all did this godly sorrow work out in them?
7. What did it cause the brethren to have and to do?
8. What should we do if we feel reproved by the Word?
9. Does being reproved mean that we are not saved?
10. What was Paul's feeling toward these brethren?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The ministers of the gospel of Christ have feelings and deep emotions that are difficult for many people to understand and relate to. They are called many times to give out instruction and counsel from the Word of God that they know will cut across many people's ideas and ways. No one knows how they suffer in their mind and heart concerning this. A word of encouragement and cheer from one of their flock will mean so much.

One minister was quite concerned in his mind concerning a certain member of the congregation he was ministering to. He was wondering if this individual was receiving any good or help from his ministry of the Word. He received a loving note from this person in a Christmas card that told him how much he was appreciated and how his messages were so uplifting and helpful. Words could not describe what that little message meant to him. There is a great tie that binds the minister to his flock.

We have the story of the minister and his wife who were resigning and leaving their little flock to go to a larger congregation. When the day came for them to leave and their

goods were loaded in the wagons, here came the congregation weeping and mourning for them that they were leaving. It broke their hearts. The minister told them to unload the wagons, that they were staying. From this beautiful experience came the inspiring hymn, "Blest Be The Tie That Binds."

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." II Cor. 7:9.

To repent is to be sorry for our sins, it is often said. It is nothing of the kind. It is quite distinct from it. "...ye sorrowed to repentance:..." Here sorrow is spoken of as something quite apart from repentance, though leading up to it. Mere sorrow is not repentance. If so, then what about Esau? "...he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Heb. 12:17. Judas, the betrayer of our Lord, was filled with sorrow and remorse on accomplishing his dastardly work, yet he went out and hanged himself.

Repentance simply means a change of mind. This was the first great truth that Luther discovered, and from which the Reformation came. It means a change of mind leading to a change of heart and purpose. First, a change of mind about myself, about my spiritual state, and the right object in life. I discover that instead of being all right I am all wrong. This will most assuredly lead to great sorrow, and if my eyes do not weep, my heart will. Secondly, there will be a radical change of mind about sin. Sin that seemed so light a matter before, is seen as a hateful thing, something to be detested and dreaded. Then there will be a change of mind about God. I shall see God as an outraged Being: a Divine One of infinite love and compassion.

—Taken from, *Handfuls on Purpose*.



JUNE 29, 1997

THE JOY AND BLESSING OF GIVING

II Corinthians 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

II Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minis-

ter bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

MEMORY VERSE: Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. II Corinthians 9:7.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God wants every child of God to experience the joy of being liberal with their earthly means by giving to the poor and to the financial support of the work and furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Corinthians 8:1), *"We do you to wit"*: We make known to you. *"The grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia"*: The Greek text reads: "The grace of God that has been given by the congregations of Macedonia." The grace of God so affected the congregations of Macedonia, three of which were Phillipi, Thessalonica, and Berea, that they were very liberal in their giving to the ministers and to the saints.

(II Corinthians 8:2), The Greek rendering of this is good: "That in much trial of affliction the abundance of their joy, and in their deep poverty, abounded to the wealth of their liberality." These were the congregations raised up on Paul's journey there in response to the vision in Acts 16:9 when a man of Macedonia appeared to Paul, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Their response to the gospel brought persecution upon them, besides that of being very poor. But their faith was so real and their new found joy was so great that it worked great love and zeal in their hearts for ministering to the saints and to the work of the Lord.

(II Corinthians 8:3), The Greek text says, "Because according to their ability, and beyond their ability of their own accord (of their own free will).

(II Corinthians 8:4), The Greek text says, "With much earnest entreaty asking of us the favor, even the participation,

of the service of that for the saints." They were not asked to give, but pleaded for the privilege to give. They were willing to give up their necessities for the sake of those who had not. No wonder Paul was commending them!

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have some of Paul's wise counsel on the importance and blessing of being liberal with what God gives us for the help and benefit of others who are in need. He had some saints to point us to who proved to be outstanding examples of this grace of giving. The congregations of Macedonia gave liberally in the midst of poverty and affliction. This they did because they had first given themselves to the Lord. It really follows this pattern that when a person gives himself wholly to God he is moved in his heart to be liberal to others. He who gives freely and cheerfully finds such a joy and blessing in it that he wants to do it some more. It surely is the plan of God for us to give and help one another. In a part of the text we did not include with the printed portion of our lesson, Paul brought out how that the abundance of some would be a supply for the want, or lack, of others. He quotes from the scripture in Exodus 16:18 where Israel in gathering the manna doled it out with an omer (which was a little over a tenth of a bushel) for each person. Some gathered more than that and some gathered less, but they balanced it out so that everyone had a proper share. "...He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack;..." This is the plan of God for His people today. Some have more than enough and some have not enough. Those who are blessed with more are constrained by the love of Christ to share with those who have not enough. It causes praise to swell in the heart when God uses a consecrated soul to help fill another's need. And this praise and thanksgiving is very precious and dear to the heart of our heavenly Father. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did the churches of Macedonia show God's grace?
2. What did they first do?

3. How is liberality and giving like the love of Jesus?
4. Why should a poor person not be afraid to give?
5. What natural law of life does Paul apply to giving?
6. Why should a person not give grudgingly or just because they have to?
7. Why does God love a cheerful giver?
8. What is God able to do as a reward for liberality?
9. What is said about the man who gives to the poor?
10. What else does giving do other than satisfy needs?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There's a joy in helping others, freely giving of one's store,
In one's bountifulness sharing with the needy and the poor.
Turning from this world of evil in its pride and lust so vain
To lay up a better treasure in that home of lasting gain.

Christ constrains us for He gladly all for us so freely gave,
From the realms above a sharing, dying mortals all to save.
So must we so gladly, gladly, give and never, never grieve,
For God loves a happy giver who will all His Word believe.

Sad so few here are the wiser; givers are for the most part
Those who are not rich but with a kindly, loving, tender heart
And the rich who have a plenty to be helpful to the poor
Are not of a mind for giving, selfish, holding to their store.

Heaven is to many people just a fable and not true,
So with riches do they barter for the earth and all its due;
As the more is got together so the more they seek to gain
And into the great beyond at last they go where all is pain.

Sadly, sadly many wander, craving for earth's fleeting gold,
From the poverty about them they deliberately withhold;
No foundation for them laying for that fearful time to come
Soon to leave this life forever for a sad eternal doom.

Let us heed this precious lesson, learn the joy of giving all:
First give all yourself to Jesus and upon His mercy fall.
Then live always ever ready to give out to others' need;
Working in the golden harvest, help to sow the gospel seed.

God will be in all your giving, He will all your need supply,
And a hope will fill your bosom of your riches in the sky,
Give, it will be given to you, bags that never will grow old,
And upon you will our Jesus place a crown of purest gold!
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Giving is an affair of a person's heart and mind. It seems that people give in some ways, but in others they just aren't moved to give. One person observed that when people are at a social gathering, and a bill for the food and service rendered is presented, it almost becomes a contest as to who can pay first. But when it comes to supporting a gospel effort, it becomes a contest as to who can pay last. Perhaps it is because the reward for giving to others in the social circle is readily realized by making the giver look benevolent, while giving to the Lord doesn't have the same results. Although we are asked to give our alms to the Lord in secret, we shall still reap bountifully.

The story has been told about a widow woman who had two children to support. One Sunday this woman dropped a certain amount of money in the offering box. A deacon standing by saw how much it was and questioned the woman if she could really afford to give so much. She affirmed that she could. The deacon took the money out of the box and gave it back to the lady, and told her to take it home, think about it, and if she still wanted to give that amount she could send it to him the next morning. The next morning came and along with it a note to the deacon with twice the amount of money. A man who was with the deacon asked him if he was going to keep it. "Of course I shall," he said. "I know that good woman well. If I send this back, she will send four times as much next time." This lady had to have had rewards from giving that no one knew anything about. It was the sweet peace that attends the heart of the one who trusts in God. —Wayne Murphey



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