

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Vol. 29, No. 4  
Oct., Nov., Dec.  
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**Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**  
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## **THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1997**

For our Bible Lessons this quarter, we will continue with the writings and teachings of the apostle Paul. First, we will finish studying the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians that we started last quarter. Then we will take up his epistle to the Philippians. And, as a closing study in this series of the writings of the apostle Paul, we will consider his second epistle to Timothy. We trust that the Spirit of the Lord will bless these lessons to the good of everyone who studies from them. We surely desire that every soul will be as enriched from this series of lessons as we have been in preparing them. May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.



**OCTOBER 5, 1997**

### **PUTTING OFF THE OLD MAN**

Ephesians 4:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But ye have not so learned Christ;

21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

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

27 Neither give place to the devil.

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Colossians 3:9-10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The sinful desires and habits that we allowed to dominate our lives, while we were unsaved, must be laid aside and replaced with holy and righteous desires and habits that are pleasing and glorifying to God.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 4:19), "*Past feeling*": The Greek word signifies a throwing off of all sense of shame or pain of heart for committing unrighteous acts. The stubbornness of the human nature will callus the heart and mind to be able to do terrible and evil deeds without a ripple of condemnation. What a terrible condition for one to be in!

(Ephesians 4:20), "*Ye have not so learned Christ*": The Greek says, "Ye are not thus; ye have learned Christ."

(Ephesians 4:23), "*And be renewed in the spirit of your mind*": Adam Clarke comments: "The mind is to be renovated; and not only in its general complexion, but the very spirit of it; all its faculties and powers must be thoroughly, completely and universally renewed." This is to be done by having a willingness to listen and learn of God and His ways through the preaching of the gospel, from the Holy Scriptures, by the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

(Ephesians 4:26), "*Be ye angry, and sin not*": Adam Clarke has a good comment here: "We can never suppose that the apostle gives this as a precept. Perhaps the sense is, *Take heed that ye be not angry, lest ye sin.*" Another way we could say it is, "If ye be angry, do not sin." Anger and mortal wrath is one of the greatest causes of sin and transgression. "*Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*": It is generally taken to mean that if you do allow your anger and wrath to cause you to say or do something hurtful to others or displeasing to God, you should correct your error before sunset. But what if you should let your anger cause you to sin in the early morning? I am convinced, by the light of the gospel of Christ and the holy, burning love of God, that He wants us all to have possession of a deeper meaning here. Let us let the "sun" here signify the countenance and approval of the Lord. Let us have grace to restrain and control our feelings and tongues so that we will not allow ourselves to behave in any way that the Lord would not shine His face upon in blessing.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

As the apostle Paul did in his other epistles, he has in the writing of this epistle to the Ephesians been expounding truth from the scriptures and what all Christ has accomplished in the work of salvation. He has expressed his loving concern for them, and stated at least twice, that his prayers were for them and their spiritual well-being. In the light of all that he has brought out he is ready now to give counsel and commandment. It is not hard to obey God when one rightly understands Him. The Word of God, preached in the gospel of Christ, promotes and provides adequate and abundant light and knowledge of the character and nature of our heavenly Father. When one rightly understands the wonderful truth of God, it is not difficult to obey Him, but when one lingers in darkness and ignorance and seeks not for light and understanding, the powers of Satan will keep him from enjoying the pleasure of living for God. So now Paul is giving in our lesson today explicit and plain teachings of how we are to act and conduct ourselves as followers of Christ. It is all very evident and filled with clear

logic and true reason. The old man, with his unlawful deeds of pride, strife, lust, selfishness and greed must be put away from us. This takes decision and determination on our part. We must actually apply the teachings of Christ in His love and holiness in all practicality and activity to our conduct and ways. It is a great accomplishment for one to successfully and satisfactorily do this. But it can be done, and keeping in mind what Paul has already explained will help temper and condition our thoughts, feelings, attitudes and desires to do the same.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why are Christians not to be like the unsaved?
2. How are we to "put off the old man?"
3. What must one do to be "taught" by Jesus?
4. What does it mean to be renewed in the spirit of your mind?
5. What kind of effort must we put forth to be Christ-like?
6. What kind of conduct do we owe to others to have ourselves?
7. What are the dangers of anger and wrath?
8. What are the ways that we can give place to the devil?
9. Why should we be careful to not grieve the Spirit of God?
10. What comparison is there between the old and new man?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The power of Satan will blind the mind, close the heart, keep a person in error and ignorance, and sow the seeds of sin and iniquity in the life. He does not want the light of God to shine into a man's heart and mind and has many devices to keep a man in the dark. Just as termites and roaches thrive in the darkness, so sin and evil thrives in the darkness and ignorance of man. Let the light of the glorious gospel shine into a man's mind and heart and the fruits of darkness will lose their attraction and value. God sent light into the world through Jesus Christ. The darkness of the sinful ways of

humankind were made to be clearly seen in their vanity and folly. In the light of the truth of God, the way of holiness and righteousness take on an attractive bearing. It all makes sense, good sense, to flee the sinful paths that lead downward to destruction and seek the path that leads upward to heavenly joys. God respects a man's will, and while some are willing to accept the truth of the gospel and walk in its blessed light, there will be others who will rebel against it. It is so foolish to cling to one's selfish and greedy ways when the way of purity and godliness are so rewarding and beneficial! Do we want to be happy, richly blessed and successful? Then let us take the counsel and teachings of Christ and His apostles and find the good and holy way to life eternal! Let us put off the ways of pride and worldliness. Let us deny the ungodly ways of the pleasures and riches of this world. Instead of dishonesty and lying, let us put honesty and uprightness into our habits of life. Instead of slander, cursing and hurtful words let us seek to speak the truth in love to our fellow man. Instead of anger and wrath, let us have patience and kindness. Oh, it is easy to give over to one's feelings in a time of stress and adversity. But where does it get you? It opens the door to Satan and puts you on his side. Is it worth it? Oh, how much better it is to resist the temptation of the flesh, yield to the Spirit of God, and let Him guide us in holiness and the meekness of Christ! As we continue to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and meekness our happiness and blessings will increase through the years of our sojourn here below. Some blessed day we will flee these scenes of trial and tribulation and go to be with the holy and redeemed of all ages in a world where temptations and sin will never come. Will it not be worth it all to be there?

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"But ye have not so learned Christ;..." There are many things people learn which were not learned by observing Christ. What we learned about Christ was that He was a man full of compassion, impeccable in character and with an abhorrence of sin. This is the life which we are to parody. "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 Cor. 3:18.

My father told us that if we saw him do something, it was all right for us to do it also. Parents are for the purpose of setting an example before their children, so they will have a good comprehension of a normal, upright way of life. Christ walked upon this earth for three years so that we could have an understanding of what a Christian is supposed to be like. If He had been crucified and purchased our redemption at an earlier age than he actually did, think of all the valuable information and the literal perception of an icon we would have lost.

The ultimate aim of a Christian is to give no place to the enemy. And this is the example Christ left us. Just before He faced death, He said, "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and **hath nothing in me.**" John 14:30. If there is any bitterness, wrath, anger or evil speaking in our lives, then the prince of this world has a claim to our souls.

Although following Christ requires a closeness in our lives, there is great power in the Holy Spirit to totally fill us with goodness and kindness.

—Wayne Murphey



**OCTOBER 12, 1997**

### **FOLLOWERS OF GOD AS DEAR CHILDREN**

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any



inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

13 But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,

16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Ephesians 5:8, 10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To be the dearly beloved children of God, we must follow Him in His holiness, ceasing from the sins and errors of those who are in darkness.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 5:1), "*Followers of God*": The Greek word for "followers" is the word from which comes our English word "mimic." It means to personate or imitate. Adam Clarke observes: "It is natural for children to imitate their parents; it is their constant aim to learn of them and to copy them in all things; whatever they see the parent do, whatever they hear him speak, that is what they endeavour to copy and imitate; yea, they go farther, they unconsciously copy the very *tempers*

of their parents. If ye therefore be children of God, show this love to your heavenly Father, and imitate all His moral perfections, and acquire the mind that was in Jesus." *"Dear"*: This word is translated from the same word as "beloved" in the Greek text. It means "greatly loved."

(Ephesians 5:4), *"Jesting"*: Speech or words that may seem to be acceptable but can be easily turned to an obscene or offensive meaning.

(Ephesians 5:5), *"Covetous man, who is an idolater"*: A covetous man who is lusting after unlawful and forbidden things such as money and sinful, fleshly appetites is an idolater in the true sense of the word, for he is making these things the object of his love and worship instead of God.

(Ephesians 5:9), *"Fruit of the Spirit"*: The word "Spirit" here really should be "light" because it comes from the Greek word of that meaning. It is alright to use either term for they both come from the same source and work together to produce the same effect. The fruit of the light of the gospel is to enlighten us of the darkness and error of sin and to make known the riches of God's holiness and truth.

(Ephesians 5:15), *"Circumspectly"*: This word comes from the Latin word "circumspicio" which means to look all around and be in every way watchful, wary and cautious, in order to avoid danger. But the Greek word from which this is translated signifies *correctly, accurately, consistently, or perfectly*. Adam Clarke has this to say about it: "Beye, who have received the truth, careful of your conduct; walk by the rule which God has given you; do this as well in little as in great matters; exemplify your principles, which are holy and good, by a corresponding conduct; do not only profess, but live the Gospel. As you embrace all of its promises, be careful also to embrace all of its precepts; and behave yourselves so, that your enemies may never be able to say that ye are holy in your doctrines and profession, but irregular in your lives."

(Ephesians 5:16), *"Redeeming the time"*: The real meaning from the Greek is "buying up the opportunity." It is taking advantage of the space of time allotted to us to use it for the best advantage for our eternal welfare and that of others.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Today we continue with the discourse of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians in which he is giving counsel and commandments as to how we, as redeemed children of God, should live. Being dear and beloved children of God means changing the way we live. It is reported that Ephesus was a wicked city given over to the lusts of the flesh. Men and women glorified the awful sin of prostitution, for their goddess, Venus, was attributed to be such. Into this corrupted and evil city came the gospel that shone light and knowledge of the displeasure of Almighty God upon such evil. The 19th chapter of Acts records Paul's labours there and the uproar that ensued in the city because of the threat that the gospel of Christ had toward the commerce of the people's idolatry. But the truth of God gained a secure foothold there and many turned to the Lord. Concerning verse 14 there has been much puzzle as to from whence this saying came. I am of the opinion, as also Adam Clarke stated, that Paul is saying here what the Gospel in general terms is saying to all men, that is, to awaken out of the slumber of ignorance and darkness, get up and out of your old way of sin and transgression, and receive the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This we must do if we are to reap and enjoy the benefits of the grace of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible to be children of God, and not be dear?
2. What kind of life must we live if we want to be dear to Him?
3. What are the things that are becoming to saintliness?
4. Why is Paul counselling us to avoid the things mentioned?
5. Can Satan get us to think these things are all right?
6. What effect does the gospel light have upon a person?
7. What does the light of God help us to discover or prove?
8. What is the general message of the gospel to mankind?
9. What does it mean to walk circumspectly?
10. How can we "redeem the time?"

## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

It matters not how people will argue and contend for them to be justified and excused in doing wrong. It still stands, according to the scriptures and according to the writings of Paul, that to be dear children of God we have to quit the sin business and start doing only those things that please the Lord. Real Bible salvation will cause the right fruit to come forth in a man's life. Inward light comes with the gospel of the Saviour. It will reveal sin to the soul. Darkness and ignorance will hide sin. Dim light will make it scarcely discernable. But full light will show up everything. Light makes manifest. The roaches and termites and pesty creatures thrive in the dark. So does sin and wrong thrive in the absence of light and knowledge of God. People in their blindness go about committing sin without remorse or guilt. But when the light of God's law comes shining in, it will bring reproof and condemnation. Children of light are people who have been enlightened by the gospel of Jesus. They see that God is wanting the beauty of His holiness in the inner man. This beauty will shine out. They seek for the true riches of faith, hope and love. Thank God for the light of truth that shows us how to be dear children to our heavenly Father! Oh, what a beautiful life is ours to live and enjoy not only here on earth but up in heaven!

—Leslie C. Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In his dying hours, a heathen king, who was wounded in battle, sent for his trusted servant and said to him, "Go, tell the dead I come." The soldier-servant, without hesitating for a moment, drew his sword and stabbed himself in the heart, with the thought that he might go to the dead before his master, and prepare them for his coming.

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. 5:14. With great sacrifice, the servant of the heathen king went to the dead to announce death. Christ has asked us to go to those who are dead in trespasses and sin, to announce life. What a

superior message! I wonder if we are as quick and as faithful in announcing it as the king's servant was? Perhaps the message isn't given as much respect by the hearers as we think it should be, and so we become discouraged. Yet wisdom teaches us that if the light is made manifest in just one soul, we are redeeming the time, and that this is of greater significance than anything else that can be done in the world.

—Wayne Murphey



**OCTOBER 19, 1997**

### **HUSBANDS AND WIVES, CHRIST AND THE CHURCH**

Ephesians 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

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

19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. Ephesians 5:25-26.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ is related to His saints in the same way as a man is related to his wife. As Christ loved the Church and as we are subject to Him, even so likewise must the husband and wife relate to each other.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Ephesians 5:18), "*Excess*": This word means that which is out of control or reason. When a person is drunk with wine, or any alcoholic beverage, their blood is so charged with alcohol that it addles the brain and renders them incapable of thinking normally and acting with right judgment.

(Ephesians 5:23), "*Saviour of the body*": Just as Christ is the Saviour, Defender, Protector and Sustainer of our souls, so is the husband to be to his wife.

(Ephesians 5:26), "*Washing of water by the word*": Not only are we cleansed by the blood of our Redeemer, there is also a washing that we must experience through obedience to His word. Jesus said in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Hebrews 10:22 says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,

having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." This means that we cleanse our ways and habits of life by taking heed unto His word and obeying it completely. Jesus shed His blood and gave His life that we would be able to do this.

(Ephesians 5:27), "*Spot*": Stain or defilement. "*Wrinkle*": This means a crease or fold in the skin which comes with old age. Christ's Church is eternally young and beautiful with the bloom of youth, even as Christ is. "*Without blemish*": Blameless.

(Ephesians 5:29), "*Cherisheth*": To warm, care tenderly for, fervently foster and shelter.

(Ephesians 5:33), "*Reverence*": If a man will love and cherish his wife as God would have him to, by loving her as himself, it will help to inspire loving respect and reverent awe in her heart toward him.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson today is a continuation of Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. He is giving instructions and mandates of the Christian life and how we as blood-washed saints should live in this present evil world. In this lesson we will consider the counsels that Paul gave concerning husband and wife. We see how he compared husband and wife to Christ and His Church. The two are parallel to each other. As Christ is to the Church and as the Church is to Christ, so is the man to his wife and the wife to her husband. It is a great and glorious truth. If a man and woman would enjoy the bliss of a happy married life they must go by the pattern that Christ set for them. What is said about man cleaving to his wife and being one flesh with her, so Christ is one with us. He has given Himself for us and He wants us to give ourselves to Him likewise. The language of this text of scripture is so sublime and beautiful. It has such a depth of expression that is all divine and so inspiring. He seemed to reach a rapturous height in his expression concerning our relationship with Christ when he said, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." The tender care, the warm and fervent affection, and the faithful devotion that Christ has for those who believe in and obey Him is overwhelming to behold.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is the Lord so displeased with drunkenness?
2. What can we have in Christ which is so much better?
3. Why is it so important to faithfully offer thanks to God?
4. What does it mean for a husband to be the head of the wife?
5. What did Christ do in His love for the Church?
6. What kind of a church does He want to present to Himself?
7. Can a man expect his wife to reverence him properly if he himself is abusive and hurtful?
8. Who has the greater responsibility before God?
9. How should a man relate to his wife?
10. In what way are we members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

God has a beautiful and wonderful plan for man and woman to follow. To live together as husband and wife, in holy and pure affection and in peace and harmony, brings happiness and life's sweetest pleasure. Christ, as the Bridegroom of the souls of men, set the pace and the example for us to follow. He desired the love and devotion of people. And to achieve this He gave Himself for them to save them from eternal ruin and, at the same time, to join them unto Himself in a love so rapturous and strong. A man who wants his wife to love him must pay a price to win that love. Husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved us. If a wife can see that tender and warm affection in her husband, it will help her to have greater love and submissiveness to him. A husband should not be bossy or domineering to his wife. He should be gentle, helpful, understanding, kind, considerate, patient, merciful and cheerful. He must be strong in spirit, in prayer, in wisdom and in faithfulness to God. When a wife sees these attributes in her husband it will satisfy a deep inward craving that she was born with, yea, a deep inner desire for love and closeness that God Himself put within her. The husband desires his wife to be loving, affectionate, dutiful and industrious. Each one must



earnestly and nobly fill the place which God is calling them to fill.  
—Leslie C. Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Christ is the perfect Bridegroom. The question then is: What kind of a companion are we? Sad to say, many are indifferent in their relationships. In order for a marriage to succeed, both parties must work at it. Our spiritual marriage to Christ will not prosper if it is a one-sided affair. It must be maintained.

One of the most important ingredients in a good marriage is communication. Where there is not interaction through sharing and caring, even in the small events of life, the marriage soon becomes rocky.

We must also learn how to show thankfulness. Gratitude should season our conversation with our companions, as well as our prayers to our spiritual Bridegroom.

The very first bride was Eve. Adam looked upon her and loved her because she was a part of him. She was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. When Christ was on the cross, His side was opened. This was a symbol of the creation of His spiritual Bride. Through His sleep in death, God created a Bride suitable for Christ. This means that we, as His Bride taken from His side, have the mind of Christ. When others look upon us they should see a reflection of His image.

—Wayne Murphey



**OCTOBER 26, 1997**

## **INSTRUCTIONS IN HUMAN RELATIONS**

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Ephesians 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Colossians 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Ephesians 6:6-7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Toward all of our fellow creatures of earth we owe loving and faithful service, that we might make manifest by precept and example, the great goodness of God.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21), "Provoke": In these two texts this word is translated from two different Greek words, both of which mean practically the same. It means to stimulate

anger or enrage. Unwise dealings by parents who are not patient, firm, consistent and godly affectionate, will turn children from the truth. *"Discouraged"*: Disheartened; without zeal, passion or fervent desire for God. Blessed are the parents who can so live that their children will catch their vision of love for God and His service.

(Colossians 3:22), *"Eyeservice"*: The Greek word means *"sightlabour,"* which refers to work that needs to be watched or supervised. It is for a person to work and serve others faithfully, whether being observed and in the presence of the employer, or whether alone. *"Menpleasers"*: One who does service to win praise and admiration of others. *"Singleness"*: Sincerity without pretence or self seeking.

(Colossians 4:6), *"Grace, seasoned with salt"*: Let our words be spoken with consideration and tenderness for those to whom we speak, endeavoring to make our speaking attractive and with a pleasant taste. The salt we want to use with this is the Holy Spirit.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will continue in our study of the apostle Paul's teachings concerning our relationship with others. In the light of the truth that he has brought out about Christ, his counsel points us to a life of humble and loving service to our fellow man. He began in the previous chapter with husbands and wives, and today he continues with children and parents. God wants to turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers. (Malachi 4:6.) In his counsel to the children, Paul quoted from the ten commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:1-17. The first four commandments concern our relationship with God and the last six commandments concern our relationship with man. The first of these last six says, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Paul expressed it, "long on the earth". The words "land" and "earth" are used often interchangeably in the scriptures. God gave to Israel the "land" of Caanan for their possession. Jesus said, quoting from Psalm 37:11 that the meek would inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5.) The Canaan land

was typical of our spiritual inheritance in Christ of the blessings of the Holy Spirit and full salvation. In this way we inherit the earth, but it will also be fulfilled in the obtaining of eternal life in the new heaven and new earth which is to come. Honour and obedience to one's parents will pay off in great dividends. Dishonour and disobedience to one's parents will bring woe and damnation. Service to God begins at home with a right and submissive attitude to those in authority. So many children and young people do themselves great damage by rebelling against their parents. Thus parenthood is a great responsibility.

And not only are we to be subject as children, but we are also enjoined to have a submissive and cooperative attitude toward those who employ us. God has the counsel and planning for every phase of our life. Through prayer and submission to God, we can be in every activity and function of life the fulfillment of God's perfect will. —Leslie C. Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it so important for children to be obedient to their parents?
2. What is the promise given for obedience?
3. How can a father provoke his children to wrath?
4. What is meant by the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
5. What is the proper attitude one should have toward working for others?
6. What is the proper attitude one should have toward those working for him?
7. How does watching with thanksgiving go with prayer?
8. What did Paul want the saints to pray for Him about?
9. What kind of salt do we need to season our words with?
10. How important are these instructions given by Paul?

#### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

There is and there always will be the requirement of obedience to certain rules and laws in pleasing God and being right with Him. We are not under the law of Moses, but we are under the law of Christ. The spiritual qualities of the law of

Moses are carried over into the New Testament but are to be observed and obeyed with a much greater love and submission to God. We have the example of Christ in His submission to the Father's will. We must also be submissive to the counsel of the holy apostles and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. While the law commands us to honour our father and mother, Paul details it a little clearer with the word "obey." It is a great responsible work for parents to teach their children obedience. For it to be successfully carried out, the parents must be fully submissive and obedient to God. It will not work very well for parents to try to discipline and bring their offspring into subjection if they themselves are not obedient to God. They will not have the grace and wisdom to carry it out as they should.

The counsel of Paul proceeds to servitude. Now in our time this includes employment, that is, working for others on the job. It really is important for a Christian to learn submission and cooperation on the job. One can really let his light shine by being the submissive and cooperative employee that God is pleased with.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"...but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. 6:4.

Some years ago, a native Greenlander came to the United States. It was too hot for him here; so he made up his mind to return home, and took passage on a ship going that way; but he died before he got back. As he was dying, he turned to those who were around him, and said, "Go on deck and see if you can see ice."

"What a strange thing!" some would say. It was not a strange thing at all. When that man was a baby, the first thing he saw was ice. His house was made of ice. The window was a slab of ice. He was cradled in ice. The water he drank was melted ice. The scenery about his home was ice. And when he became a man, many a day he stooped over a hole in the ice to spear any seal that might come there. He had always been accustomed to seeing ice, and he knew that if his companions on the ship could see ice it would be evidence that he was near

home. The thought of ice was the very last thought in his mind, as it was the very first impression made there.

The earliest impressions are the deepest. Those things which are instilled into the hearts of children endure for ever and ever.

—Taken from *New Testament Anecdotes*.



**NOVEMBER 2, 1997**

### **PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD**

Ephesians 6: 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. I Thessalonians 5:8.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The powers of this present evil world in its sin, wickedness and error, are forces that oppose the gospel of Christ and His holiness. We are going to meet their opposition if we take our stand for the truth of God. But God

has provided us special weapons to use in the Christian warfare. It is for us to take these mighty weapons and wield them against the powers of the devil.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Ephesians 6:11), *"The whole armour of God"*: The full or complete armour for defense and offense.

(Ephesians 6:12), Let us read this from the pure Greek text: "Because to us is not wrestling against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual powers in the heavenlies." This clearly shows that the Christian warfare is a spiritual conflict with spiritual powers. This word *"high places"* is the same word as *"heavenly places"* in Eph. 1:3 and 2:6. It is referring to the eternal and invisible realm of the soul, above the fleeting, carnal realm of the flesh. Satan is entrenched in the soul of man that should be God's domain. The power of the gospel of Christ is to dethrone Satan from the soul of man and put Christ in His rightful place.

(Ephesians 6:13), The Greek text reads: "Because of this, take up the full armour of God, that you be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand, having accomplished all things." We cannot expect to overcome if we have not accomplished all the will of God that He has revealed to us. In any warfare there are certain duties and procedures to follow.

(Ephesians 6:14), *"Loins girt about with truth"*: The literal armour contained a girdle of mail or strong metal which was wrapped about the hips to protect the vital organs of the middle. Paul labels this in the Christian armour as TRUTH. He said in II Cor. 13:8, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." Truth is that which is genuine, real, authentic; not deceiving nor hypocritical. *"Breastplate of righteousness"*: The chest and trunk area was protected by a metal plate fitted and strapped to the soldier. Paul labels this for the Christian as righteousness. This must be the right kind of righteousness. It cannot be self-righteousness nor the righteousness of the law. It is the righteousness of faith and obedience to Christ which produces a life of purity, uprightness, honesty and godly control of the life we live in the flesh.

(Ephesians 6:15), "*Shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*": Having bound to our hearts a readiness to preach, promote, proclaim and share with others the good news of the kingdom of God. Paul said in Romans 10:15, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" The gospel of Christ IS a gospel of peace. It proclaims that God's will is to be at peace with man through His forgiving love and the blood of His Son.

(Ephesians 6:16), "*Above all*": This means in the Greek "*more important than anything else.*" The literal shield was often an oblong apparatus that was long enough to shield the entire body below the head. It was to ward off the arrows of the enemy. Paul labels this shield for the Christian as "the shield of faith." And how true this is. Faith is believing God and if the devil can get us to doubt God's love and mighty power to save, to sanctify, to heal, to keep, or whatever else we have need of in life, that is to his advantage.

(Ephesians 6:17), "*Helmet of salvation*": Our memory verse says, *hope of salvation*. Being fully saved and keeping saved and up-to-date with God will shield our minds, our vision, our hearing, our smelling and our taste and powers of speech. This is all spiritual. It means much for a person to really have a born again experience with God, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to keep walking in the light and to constantly stay up to par with the Lord. This is our helmet. "*The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*": This is our offensive weapon that we must wield to defeat the devil and overcome the threatening forces of this evil world. Grasping the promises and keeping them in our purposeful minds of faith and trust is one way of wielding the sword of the Spirit.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

This is the final lesson from the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. He gives us, in this lesson, an object lesson of the Roman soldier's armour compared to the armour of the soldier of Christ. I like to think of Paul studying the soldier that guarded him in his own hired house. (Acts 28:16, 30.) He visualized each part of his armour or uniform as symbolic of



something spiritual, something vital to the child of God in his Christian warfare. And with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he was able to label the parts of the armour with things that we need to have and abound in that we might be able to withstand the opposing powers of Satan. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is the Christian not to wrestle against flesh and blood?
2. What kind of warfare are we, as saints of God, engaged in?
3. What does "put on" and "take unto you" imply?
4. How does the "truth" preserve our spiritual life?
5. What does it mean to have on the breastplate of righteousness?
6. How is the gospel of peace a weapon of defense?
7. What are some of the fiery darts of the wicked?
8. What does the helmet of salvation protect?
9. How is the sword of the Spirit to be used?
10. Why is prayer, supplication, watching and perseverance so important?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

If a person is going to be a successful Christian, he or she is going to have to be a fighter. We are in a great conflict in the world between good and evil, between the power of Satan and the power of God. And we have to have an understanding of this conflict and what it really takes to fight in this battle. Within the heart and the mind is where the battles are fought. Contending for the truth and the true righteousness, we are to resist the feelings of anger, wrath, bitterness, resentment and strife. We are to resist the temptations of the flesh in its appetites and indulgences. We are to beware of false doctrines and store up in our hearts the teachings of the Word of God that we can draw from them when we meet with false teaching. Many battles are fought and won in the secret closet of prayer. The battle is not ours but the Lord's. We win not in our human strength or intelligence. We win it through humility and

submission to God. Oh, to be a triumphant Christian soldier!  
It is the noblest place in life to fill. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Not only is it important to have the proper armor in this warfare, but it is also essential to notice the proper posture of the Christian warrior. The stance is to "stand."

The grey heron has a very peculiar mode of defense. When attacked by the eagle or falcon, it simply stands quiet and firm, using its bill as a sword, allowing the enemy to pierce himself through by his own force. The Christian's defense is the same. Sometimes it is a real temptation to take the Word and try to chase down gossip, false doctrines, etc. But what havoc can be wrought with the Word of God when it is mishandled. If a person gets to the place where they feel they are an authority with the Word, and able to use it at will, it is likely they will not only hurt others who are innocent, but inflict great wounds upon themselves. When in the midst of the conflict, it is good to do as song #270 says in our *Evening Light Song Book*, "Hold the true position, standing firm." Just stand still and see what great things the Word of God can do. —Wayne Murphey



**NOVEMBER 9, 1997**

### **TENDER LOVE AND FERVENT DESIRE TOWARD OTHERS**

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath

begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

12 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;

14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. 1:6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There is a holy bond of tender, fervent affection that binds true believers together in unity and loving concern for one another. True saints, who live by the faith of Jesus, long for one another and pray fervently for one another's spiritual welfare.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 1:1), "*Bishops and deacons*": Overseers and ministers. It could also be called pastors and trustees.

(Philippians 1:6), "*Perform*": Finish.

(Philippians 1:7), "*It is meet for me to think this of you all*": The Greek text says, "It is righteous for me to think this of all of you." Paul counted his fervent desire for these people's spiritual welfare a righteous work well-pleasing unto God.

*"Defence and confirmation of the gospel":* Paul sought to plead and speak out for the promotion and acceptance of the gospel. He also sought to see the gospel established in people's minds and hearts. *"Ye all are partakers of my grace":* The Greek text says, "You all being sharers with me of the grace."

(Philippians 1:8), *"The bowels of Jesus Christ":* The inward affection and tender mercy of Christ.

(Philippians 1:9), *"Knowledge and all judgment":* The Greek text says, "Full knowledge and all perception."

(Philippians 1:10), *"Approve things that are excellent":* The Greek text says, "To test and discover things that are different, or surpassing." It is a great accomplishment for a person to hear and receive the gospel and learn about a way of life that is different and higher than the vain and carnal way that he knew while in sin.

(Philippians 1:13), *"My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace":* Paul's imprisonment was clearly revealed and made known in all the praetorium, which was the Roman Emperor's courtroom.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The epistle of the apostle Paul to the congregation at Philippi in Macedonia was written from Rome in about A. D. 62 during Paul's imprisonment there. In the 16th chapter of Acts, we read where Paul and Silas had gone there to preach the gospel after having a vision of the call for help in that place. A work for God was established there and this congregation of saints was very attentive to the apostle Paul as he reveals in this epistle. They communicated with Paul and supported him when others did not. Their support of him meant very much to Paul. His fellowship with them in the gospel from the very first was sweet and genuine. We find in our lesson today the expressions of his loving delight in them. He appreciated their stand for truth, for the gospel truth, that was so different from the wicked city in which they lived. His prayers for them were with joy and gladness for what they meant to him. He was in prison in Rome and he longed to be with these brethren again. And he wanted them to know that what had happened in his

imprisonment in Rome was working for good and for the advancement of the great cause he was engaged in. These people were sharers with him of the grace of God and the bond of love between them was a sweet and unbreakable tie which is still true today with all the saved in Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What things did Paul say that showed his tender love for the Philippian church?
2. What does "fellowship in the gospel" mean?
3. What was the "good work" that God had begun in them?
4. What caused Paul to have these people in his heart?
5. What was his expressed inward feeling for them?
6. What was his prayer to God concerning them?
7. How are the things of spiritual life in Christ so excellent?
8. How did he want them to be until the day of Christ, and why?
9. What does being "filled with the fruits of righteousness" mean?
10. What had been the effect of Paul's imprisonment in Rome?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

In the world there are activities and enterprises that require those participating to be united and in full cooperation with one another. In the sports world, teamwork and harmony are so vital to success. In the business world, working together is so important. But in these things there is much room for corruption and failure to take place. In military operations, soldiers become very close to those who they fight side by side with. The perils and dangers of combat require discipline and faithful devotion to duty. But even in that area of mortal activity, there is much place for evil and corruption to work. But there is one great field of labour and warfare which affords an opportunity for service which is attended with the sweetest and most wonderful association and fellowship among its

members, and that is the work of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. To be anointed and empowered to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God is a wonderful vocation. It is the highest and most noble of all endeavors. The relationship that develops between the minister and those who are being ministered to can be a most delightful and rewarding experience. This bond of love, found in the gospel of Jesus, is the only power that does not corrupt the one who uses it. If a young person wants to enter a field of labour that brings happiness and a retirement that is out of this world, he or she needs to step forth and consecrate for the service of God. There is joy in the service of the Master.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The apostle Paul had suffered much in Philippi, but what a masterpiece of glorious truth is written in this letter to the Philippians. Though he had suffered much to bring them to Christ, his love for them was great. Even the thought of them caused his heart to be filled with thanksgiving to God for their love for truth and for him. They were included in all his prayers and he thanked God for their fellowship from the first day he met them until the time he wrote the letter. He was confident that the work of Christ in their souls would increase more and more until the day that Jesus would call them home. The apostle Paul wanted them to continue to increase and be filled with all the fruits of the Spirit and of righteousness, and that their whole soul and life be always occupied with doing that which would bring glory to Christ.

Let us take heed to ourselves to see if we are letting the love of God "abound more and more" in our lives. What God has begun in us, through Christ, we want to let grow and grow. When we were first saved, our love for Christ knew no bounds. Is it that way today? Is the same desire and tenderness there to please Him? What about the zeal that we had to tell others about our new found Friend and the joy of sins forgiven? Oh, we want all that Christ began in our lives to remain right up to the day of Christ's coming.

—Marie Miles (Written in 1978.)

**NOVEMBER 16, 1997**

**TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN**

Philippians 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife: and some also of good will:

16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;

26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:21.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** No matter what opposition or adversity we meet in this time world, by the help of the Lord we can turn it all toward our salvation and the blessed hope of being with Jesus forever.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 1:15-16), "*Some preach Christ of envy and strife:... of contention*": There were those in Paul's time who believed and taught that Jesus was the Messiah, but they held to keeping of the old law, especially that of circumcision. They were very much against Paul because he held that circumcision and the keeping of the ceremonial part of the law was no longer necessary. "*Some of good will*": But then there were those who stood with Paul in his teachings of Christ, believing that God had raised him up as a herald for the new faith of salvation in Jesus.

(Philippians 1:17), "*I am set for the defence of the gospel*": Paul was persuaded that he had been appointed and placed by the Lord Jesus as a herald for the truth, and it was his responsibility to uphold it and defend it against all error and false doctrine.

(Philippians 1:19), "*This shall turn to my salvation*": The Greek says, "This shall result in my salvation." "*The supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*": Through the prayers of the saints and the contributing power and working of the Holy Spirit, it will all work out for the best. God can turn adversity and the foolish resistance of ignorant souls around to make it all a blessing and a promotion for the truth.

(Philippians 1:20), "*Earnest expectation*": The meaning from the Greek is "intense anticipation."

(Philippians 1:22), "*I wot not*": I perceive not. Paul was willing for the Lord to have His way. He would rather be gone from this vile temple of clay and its suffering and hardship to be at rest in paradise with Jesus, but, on the other hand, as long as he tarried in the world, he would still have Christ in the Spirit and would be able to help his beloved brethren.



(Philippians 1:28), "*Evident token of perdition*": The Greek says, "a proof of destruction." The very fact that these enemies of the truth opposed the preaching and lives of the saints of Christ was a proof of their unworthiness and disqualification to be a partaker of the salvation of God.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

As we saw in our previous lesson, Paul's imprisonment at Rome had created quite a stir in that capital of the Roman empire. It was a challenge and inspiration to the saints and ministers to have more courage and boldness to proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ. In our lesson today, Paul reveals something else that was going on there. There were those who were preaching Christ, and yet were trying to work against Paul and his teachings. These were probably Jews converted to believe in Jesus as the long awaited Messiah, but held to the keeping of the traditions of the old Mosaic law. Because Paul laid no stress on the importance of circumcision and the various Jewish rites, he was counted their enemy. But we see the sweetness of Paul's attitude to such a condition. He was glad that Christ was being preached even though some were preaching Him and working against what he, Paul, stood for. He rejoiced anyway because he knew that it would all come out good for him in the end as the Spirit of the Lord and the prayers of the saints to Almighty God would prevail. Such is to be our attitude today. No matter what people do for us, or against us, it is God who is standing with us as we follow His truth, and He will bring us out. We do not need to be fearful and bothered by those who oppose the way of holiness. They oppose to their own destruction. We must remember that there will be opposition and adversity for us to meet along with our faith in the Lord. We just need to see to it that we are conducting ourselves as the true citizens of Zion, the true Church of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How did Paul feel about those who preached Christ of envy?
2. How was this going to turn to his salvation?

3. What lesson is there in this for us today?
4. What was Paul's earnest expectation and hope?
5. How can Christ be magnified in our body by life?
6. How can Christ be magnified in our body by death?
7. How would it be gain for us if we die?
8. What would Paul prefer to do, and why was it far better?
9. What is the evident token of perdition in some?
10. What are some of the things that Christians have to suffer?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Were it not for the intense anticipation and hope that we have in living for the Lord, it would be much harder to endure the hardships and sufferings that we, as saints of God, encounter along our pilgrim way. The Lord is so dear, His saints are so dear, and the pleasures we enjoy in the Christian way seem to make our faith worthwhile even if there were no hereafter. But sometimes the load gets so heavy and the trials and sufferings in this mortal body become so severe. It is then that this sweet hope of Christ cheers us and helps hold us fast as an anchor of the soul. The yearning to be gone from this life can be a reality, and sometimes it can be an obsession. We must be careful about this; however, we cannot leave this world until the Lord says so. Let us keep our intense anticipation and desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better, but let us also find the joy of God in service for His cause, and be willing to stay just as long as He wills for us. Let us make it our rule that for us to live will be Christ and for His sake. As Sister Martha Beisly, of Coffeyville, Kansas, said not long before she was taken from us, "I am eager to go and be with the Lord, but I am willing to stay here just as long as He wants." I heard her say that, and I have remembered it through the years. When we get to weighing up the value and blessings of our hope in Christ, we are overwhelmed and full of joy. We want to be with Him now in the Spirit, in harmony with His Word, and with His people and His cause. And with this confidence and grace, we can surmount life's woes and problems and live victoriously.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

History has recorded that once in a private meeting with some of his friends, the great evangelist, George Whitefield, referred to the difficulties of the gospel ministry, and said that he was weary of the burdens of the day, and was glad that in a short time his work would be done and he should depart and be with Christ. All the ones present said they had the same feeling, with the exception of a man by the name of Tennant. On seeing this, George Whitefield tapped him on the knee and said, "Well, Brother Tennant, you are the oldest man amongst us; do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand when you will be called home?"

Mr. Tennant bluntly answered that he had no wish about it. Being pressed for something more definite and decided, he added, "I have nothing to do with death. My business is to live as long as I can, and as well as I can, and serve my Master as faithfully as I can, until He shall think proper to call me home." This proved to be a word in season for the great evangelist, helping him to more calmly and patiently continue on.

—Wayne Murphey



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**NOVEMBER 23, 1997**

**BLAMELESS AND HARMLESS, THE SONS OF GOD**

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

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

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

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

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

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

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

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

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Philippians 2:3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** All who profess the name of Christ should live as He lived in obedience to the will of God, and in loving and humble service to one another.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 2:1), "*Bowels and mercies*": The Greek meaning for these words is "deep inward affections and pity."

(Philippians 2:3), "*Strife*": Faction, trying to outdo one another. "*Vainglory*": Glorifying and lifting up one's self.

(Philippians 2:6), "*Thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": The sense of this text from the Greek is: "Esteemed not equality with God to be held on to."

(Philippians 2:8), "*He humbled himself*": Christ had already condescended from heights of glory down to this sin-blighted earth. But in this low, mortal estate, He condescended even lower when He willingly submitted to the will of God and became willing to suffer death, especially the humiliating death of the cross.

(Philippians 2:9), "*Wherefore God hath highly exalted him*": For this cause and consequently. As a reward for Christ's humility and obedience to the Heavenly Father in submitting to the horrible death of the cross, God raised up Christ from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come!

(Philippians 2:16), "*Holding forth the word of life*": Hold fast to the gospel of Christ, uphold it and be ready to present it to others as the only means whereby they shall be saved. Let go of the gospel and you relinquish the only hope that you or anyone else has.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The background of this wonderful lesson today is the sweet indwelling Spirit of the holy God of heaven in the heart of the apostle Paul. Nothing but this mighty Holy Spirit could have inspired such words of wisdom, comfort and challenging truth. Pointing us to the example that our beloved Saviour showed us, Paul instructs us to humility, tender love, compassion and faithful service. Of all his writings, what he says here seems to me to be the most beautiful and praiseworthy counsel ever written or uttered. Surely it means much for us to follow His words of wisdom.

In referring to every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, he draws from Isaiah 45:23, which says, "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Paul applies this to Jesus Christ, and so it is. He uses this to stress the need of us all being very diligent and obedient to God, doing all that is required to effect the salvation of our precious soul.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was Paul's joy that he wanted them to fulfill?
2. What was the mind of Christ he wanted them to have?
3. How far did Christ come down to accomplish our salvation?
4. How did God reward Christ for His humility and obedience?
5. Why should we be so careful and diligent to work out our salvation?
6. How does the working of God in us stimulate our wills?
7. And how does this working enable us to do His pleasure?
8. How will murmurings and disputings hinder God's work in us?
9. What does it mean to be blameless and harmless?
10. What are the various ways that we can service others in their faith?

## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The Christian life is a life of service. It is a life of service to God and to the souls of men. Service is a wonderful word with a wonderful meaning. We are here to serve one another. Even in the world of business, we see the law in action of humanity serving others. Each does something for his fellow that his fellow cannot do for himself. And in turn his fellow can contribute service that is needed. It is such a beautiful attitude and so well pleasing to God for us to do service to others with the thought in mind that we are thereby serving God. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. He said in Matthew 20:28, "...The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He came to service our souls. One can only find true happiness and satisfaction in the service of the Master. Jesus laid aside His equality with God and condescended to human level in order to do us a great service. It was to pay the price for our release from the awful taskmaster of Satan and sin. It called for the blood of an innocent victim, and He was the only One who was innocent. But He willingly offered Himself without spot to God to pay that price and win our release. In that the reward of God exalted Him to the right hand of glory, His mission of serving is not over. He still is serving us as the minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.

—Leslie C. Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The apostle Paul made a paradoxical statement when he said, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love...." The Scriptures tell us that "God is love." Many times we accord love as an attribute of God, but John said He is love. (I John 4:16.) So there is no question about whether there is any comfort of love in Him. God is a spirit, and that spirit is love, so if that spirit dwells within our hearts, we will have love. "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

Likewise, "...if any bowels and mercies." In Bible times, the philosophers believed that our bowels were the deepest

seat of our affections. This belief is understandable if you consider that when you hear something which affects you deeply, you feel it in the very pit of your stomach. The apostle Paul was saying in this Philippian letter that the greatest depth of feeling possible to have should be one of mercy. People of our time have varied, intense feelings, with politics and religion topping the list of things they hold sacred. If we are not careful, we also can make these the platforms for our deepest passion, and lose sight of the greater principle of mercy.

—Wayne Murphey



**NOVEMBER 30, 1997**

### **THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS**

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.



17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

**MEMORY VERSE:** I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In the gospel of Christ Jesus, we have a great invitation to share eternal glory with Him. There is a goal that we should daily press toward if we would qualify for the heavenly prize. It is to know and possess Christ, His righteousness, His resurrection power, His suffering and the reproach of His cross, and a share in His death. We must never become self-satisfied, but ever be reaching forth toward higher heights and deeper depths in Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 3:10), "*Know him*": To be acquainted with and to be in fellowship with everything about Jesus. "*Being made conformable unto his death*": Being made like or similar to His death. If we would live with Christ we must die with Him. Christ was dead to this present evil world. He was dead to sin and self. He suffered the anger of the crowd and died at their hands. We must not draw back from participating in any of these likenesses of His death.

(Philippians 3:12), "*Not as though I had already attained*": Paul never allowed himself to become self-satisfied with what he had with the Lord. Instead he was constantly reaching out for more. The goal was shining in the distance and he was constantly striving to reach it. Let us read this from the Greek

text: "Not that I already received or already have been perfected; but I am pursuing, if also I may lay hold, inasmuch as I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." The Christian life is a constant and ever eager pursuit of the Christ life. It is error to suppose that it is all fixed and unchangeable as far as we are concerned. We are still in probation and it is for us to daily pursue the Christ life and keep working at our faith and relationship with Him.

(Philippians 3:17), Let us read this from the Greek text: "Brothers, be fellow-imitators of me, and mark those thus walking, as you have us an example."

(Philippians 3:20), "*Conversation*": The real meaning here is "citizenship". Our real hopes and treasures are not in this world. This world is fleeting and soon to perish. Our earthly ties will be sundered and our earthly citizenship will end. But we are citizens of the heavenly country.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the first part of this 3rd chapter of Philippians, Paul rehearsed some of the things that he once trusted in and felt were so important. It was concerning his life in the Jewish religion wherein he really prospered before he was made aware of the truth of Christ. He said in another place that he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. (I Tim. 1:13.) He warned them of dogs and devouring spirits, and of the concision, or the spirits, who would cut them off from the truth through their falsity and deceit. He stated that the true saints are circumcision of the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. Then he enumerated those things that he once trusted in, which, he says, was of the flesh. He said he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He was the real thing, in Israel, of the flesh. He also was a Pharisee, a member of a powerful sect of the Jews. His zeal in persecuting the Church and standing in the law was the big thing. That was all of the flesh and was consumed by the brightness of the revelation of Jesus Christ to him. What of those things were gain and of such value to him were consumed in the face of Jesus. We have the testimony of a man who had done his best to stamp out this new religion. But as he lay on the ground on that road to Damascus and heard that

voice from the heavens speaking so clearly, he was persuaded of the existence of that Man that he had kicked against. In our lesson today we have his sublime testimony and noble determination expressed of his love for Christ and the joy he felt in receiving an invitation to share eternal glory with Him. These words have challenged and encouraged my soul many times. May we all line up with the apostle's word and grasp the vision of the glory of the wonderful invitation Christ is giving also to us today.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How did Paul feel about everything outside of Jesus?
2. What were the things that Paul purposed to have in Christ?
3. In what way did Paul want to "know" Jesus?
4. What was Paul desiring to attain to?
5. What was the goal that Paul was constantly reaching for?
6. Why did Paul not allow himself to become complacent and self-satisfied?
7. What was the prize he was hoping to win?
8. What are the things that cause people to be enemies of Christ?
9. Where and what is our real citizenship?
10. What are we expecting Christ to do for us at His coming?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

No matter how high we soar in the realm of human ability and the wisdom of this world, we are doomed to come crashing down one day in disappointment and eternal contempt. How blessed we are if we can come to realize the vanity of everything outside of Christ before this happens! But regardless of how much we have to cast away to be able to lay hold of Christ Jesus, it is worth it all to gain the excellency of the knowledge of Him! There is so much to seek and strive for in the Lord Jesus. We want to gain Him for our Saviour and Friend. We want to actually possess Him for our very own. We have to lose

all to gain it, but the gain far exceeds the loss. We want to be careful to have His righteousness and not our own. We must be diligent to keep the right attitude toward everything that we do for Him. May it not be our own self-rising, but rather the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit which He gives us. We should seek to know Him and experience His work in our hearts. We should seek always for a closer walk with Him and to become better acquainted with His person. We should ever feel our need of His quickening power to generate His life in our souls that we might be triumphant over the powers of sin and death. Let us also bear in mind that we must all bear our part in the sharing of His reproach and suffering. There is a cross for everyone to individually bear. We must not draw back from it. This is an everyday affair. This pressing desire for His nearness and working in our lives must be constantly in action. We must never once think the victory won nor at ease sit down.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” Psa. 19:5. This is how the Christian should be about running the race of life. When a bridegroom emerges from the anteroom and moves toward the front of the chapel to wait for the entry of his bride, his face is aglow and he is there to claim what has been pledged to him. He is not in the frame of mind to be denied or to leave without his bride. When a professional runner approaches the starting line, he does so with the carriage of one that bespeaks confidence and eagerness. But have you ever seen a Christian who had to be coddled, cajoled, prodded and begged to keep going? It goes without saying which of these two demeanors the child of God should have.

We do not want to leave the impression that we should never feel the buffeting of adverse winds. Paul said, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” However, with the Lord by our side, we can press with enthusiasm, for we know the heavenly prize, at the end of this earthly pilgrimage, will be beyond our greatest expectation.

—Wayne Murphey

**DECEMBER 7, 1997**

**HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT IN CHRIST**

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** All fear, anxiety, gloom and worry is eliminated from the heart of the man who has found the happiness and contentment that there is in fellowship with Christ. And this holy and quiet way of godliness and honesty will be a light to shine out before the world.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Philippians 4:4), "*Alway*": at all times. "*Again I say, Rejoice*": I repeat; I say it again, Rejoice! Paul stressed the importance of keeping a joyful and happy spirit. If the devil succeeds in getting a person to cease from being joyful and rejoicing in the Lord, it will open up a space for some of his devices.

(Philippians 4:5), "*Moderation*": Adam Clarke says: "The Greek word here means mildness, patience, yieldingness, gentleness, clemency and unwillingness to go to law or contend." He quotes from a Dr. Macknight who said that "Moderation means meekness under provocation, readiness to forgive injuries, equity in the management of business, accuracy in judging of the characters and actions of others, sweetness of disposition, and complete control of one's passions and desires." This also includes moderation, simplicity and modesty in dress. A Christian is to dress simply, without fancy show. The body must be covered and the lustful showing of the flesh is to be avoided. This kind of spirit is a true testimony of the truth of Christ, and produces the good works that Christ told us to let shine before men. (Matthew 5:16.) "*The Lord is at hand*": Or, The Lord is near. We are to live with confidence that God is taking care of our state and we need not employ our human strength or wisdom to defend or promote our cause. Let come what may, we will not allow our hearts to be troubled, for our faithful God will only permit what is best.

(Philippians 4:6), *"Be careful for nothing"*: Do not be anxious nor distracted by any thing. Worry and anxiety cannot change nor improve anything but will rather damage our souls. Take every thing to God in earnest prayer, always with thanksgiving and praise.

(Philippians 4:7), *"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds"*: When we are able to commit all things to God in prayer and faith, not worrying nor fretting about anything, we will know the blessedness of happiness of heart and health of the mind. Much of the mental sickness upon humanity comes because people do not know of the peace of God that comes through prayer and faith. This peace of God surpasses the carnal thoughts of men who are not acquainted with God's way. It takes the Spirit of God to enlighten the mind of the real way to happiness, contentment and peace.

(Philippians 4:8), *"Virtue"*: Manliness, strength of character and excellence.

(Philippians 4:9), *"Do"*: Practice, that is, perform repeatedly and habitually.

(Philippians 4:17), *"Your account"*: Every one of us has an account with God. God is going to reckon with us and take an inventory of our lives. Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 that we will give an account of every idle word in the day of judgment. Paul said in Romans 14:12, that "...every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." May we all make sure that our account is settled with God and let us keep it clear and in good order.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Paul addressed these brethren as dearly beloved and longed for, as his joy and crown. He wanted them to stand fast in the Lord and be of the same mind in the Lord. He encouraged them as true fellow bearers of the yoke of Christ to help those who had laboured with him in the gospel, whose names were in the Book of Life. It is very evident, as we have stated before, that these Philliopian brethren were very, very close to the heart of Paul. They had ministered to him often of their

substance, and it was not their gift that meant as much as their spirit of love and helpfulness that he knew would cause fruit to abound to their account in heaven. There were times when these Philippian brethren were the only ones who communicated with Paul in giving and receiving. Paul remembered when he was in Thessalonica how these saints had sent once and again unto his necessity. Their sacrifice and giving to him he knew was an offering with a sweet smelling savour acceptable and well pleasing to God. Thus, He was confident that God was going to bless and reward them, and from His bountiful storehouse of blessing and provision He would meet all of their needs. It still holds true today. If we will be diligent to share what we have been blessed with, in the spirit of love and concern for others and the work of God, we will be richly blessed in our souls and all our needs will be bountifully met. Paul had learned the great lesson of trust in God and being content with whatever condition God permitted him to be in. It is a lesson that is vital for every child of God to learn also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Of what value is it to keep a joyful spirit in the Lord?
2. What kind of spirit does God want us to show the world?
3. Why is it important for us to know that God is at hand?
4. What must we do to have the peace of God?
5. How will the peace of God benefit the mind and heart?
6. Why should we think only on things that are true, honest, just, lovely, etc.?
7. What does it mean to really be content in any state?
8. Why was Paul glad that these brethren had given to him?
9. What does it take for an offering to be acceptable and well pleasing to God?
10. Why was Paul confident that God would supply their need?



## **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He said further in this sermon on the mount in chapter 6 and verse 1, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." What then are the "good works" that He wants men to see in His children? It involves this "moderation" that we have in our lesson today. This holy manner of faith and trust in God without any fear, care, or worry is a great witness that God wants us to manifest in our lives. And we can let this kind of light shine without "putting on a show" or "cutting a shine". It is said that John Wesley, on his voyage back to England from America where he had gone to preach to the natives, saw a calmness and quietness in certain Christians on board during a terrible storm. It was a confidence and trust that they manifested which he knew that he did not have. It was one of the things that God used to help him see that he needed real salvation. This confidence and quietness of spirit, in meekness and humility, is a great witness of the grace of God. That is what will shine out in our lives. One brother manifested a sweet spirit of love and humility toward certain agitators on his job that so struck them to the heart that they knew he had something they did not have. When we do not covet money, and when we refrain from the sinful practices of this lustful and dishonest world, and when we keep kindness and forgiveness toward those who do us wrong, we are letting a light shine that will glorify our Heavenly Father. When we do not worry or complain or manifest bitterness and strife, people will notice that quicker than anything. We do not have to push or press our religion on people. But we can live it on them. Being honest in business affairs, at our expense, will cause people to wonder what kind of people we are. When the store clerk short-changes himself and we are quick to show it to him, it will make an impression on him. And this peace of God that we gain when we learn to pray and commit things to God will guard our hearts and minds from breakdown and oppression.

When we learn to be meek and sweet-spirited to others and not be always fussing and flying off the handle, it will help keep us in mental and spiritual well being. God's way is best and to go His way, according to His word, is for our good. A true Christian, who follows Christ in every detail of His Word, will stand out in the midst of this evil world. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"...in every thing by prayer and supplication...." We are to take everything to God in prayer. It seems much more common to take our big problems to the Lord than our little ones. Big problems have a way of driving a person to their knees, but it is the little problems that give so much trouble sometimes. They can pile up and create discouragement.

One of the most cruel torments of the Inquisition was the "water treatment." This was when the poor victim was tied under a trap, where cold water was allowed to drip on his head, drop by drop. The dripping was hardly felt at first, but the monotony of the water on one spot, and the eventual anticipation of each drop, became almost unbearable. Little cares of life can work the same way. They tend to produce irritation and a case of nerves that make life unbearable.

"...let your requests be made known unto God." This implies an often coming before God, which is a great privilege. In the vestibule of St. Peter's, at Rome, is a doorway which is walled up and marked with a cross. It is opened only four times in a century. Every 25 years, on Christmas Eve, the Pope and his retinue of cardinals open the door and make a processional up toward the altar in the cathedral. For many people, the opportunity to see this grand entry occurs only once in their lifetime, and three times in one's life would be about the most to expect. How would you like to be able to go before God only every 25 years? We can count ourselves blessed to have the opportunity of going before Him many times in one day.

—Wayne Murphey



**DECEMBER 14, 1997**

**THE BLESSING OF GODLY PERSUASION**

II Timothy 1:7 ...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

II Timothy 2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

3 ...Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. II Timothy 1:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Being fully persuaded of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will give us confidence and courage to face the opposing powers of Satan in this present, evil world, and overcome them.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Timothy 1:12), "*He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*": The Greek says, "He is able to guard my deposit unto that day." What was Paul's deposit? That which he had committed unto Christ for that great day of the Lord. Surely it was more than just a head-profession of Christ. Paul had suffered the loss of all things that he might gain Christ. Christ became his all in all. Paul deposited in heaven's bank, his life, intellect, strength, hopes, ambitions, joys, sorrows and complete trust. He was persuaded that Christ accepted his offering and would guard it and reward him with eternal life in that last great day.

(II Timothy 2:3), "*Endure hardness*": Undergo hardship, affliction, adversity and difficulty.

(II Timothy 2:15), "*Study*": The Greek says, "Use speed." This implies being prompt and earnest, making diligent effort. "*Rightly dividing*": The Greek says "To make a straight cut, to correctly expound."

(II Timothy 2:16), "*Profane and vain babblings*": The Greek says, "Empty soundings, fruitless discussions." It is called profane because it comes from unregenerated hearts of people who approach the Word of God to take hold of it without the holy inspiration of the Spirit.

(II Timothy 2:19), "*Seal*": The Greek meaning is: "A signet to guard and protect from misuse and dishonest dealings, and also a stamp impressed as a mark of privacy and genuine-

ness." The sureness and unfailing work of the Almighty has a double seal. The first seal is the truth that God recognizes, without fail, every soul who truly belongs to Him. The second seal is the strong and undeniable requirement that all who profess to be followers of Christ are to depart and cleanse themselves from all iniquity and all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Regardless of what man says and does concerning God and religion, these two seals remain intact and unchanged. It is wise for us to recognize their importance and serious worth.

(II Timothy 2:20), "*In a great house*": In a large or important household. We can take this to mean the Church or the realm of our earthly existence. The object lesson is basically a literal household where a family dwells. In such a house there are many vessels for various uses. There are valuable cups, bowls, pans and pitchers that are used to store and serve food and drink. These are for honourable purposes. They must be clean and fit for human use without fear of contamination. Then there are other vessels for less honourable purposes, such as the trash can, the garbage pail or the slop bucket.

(II Timothy 2:21), "*Purge himself from these*": Paul had just spoken about profane and vain babblings which will increase unto more ungodliness, whose word will eat as a canker or cancer. He mentioned two proponents of these vain doctrines who had erred from the truth teaching that the resurrection is already past and had overthrown the faith of some. These are revealed to be vessels to dishonour, for they have allowed their hearts and minds to become contaminated with false doctrine and erroneous ideas about the scriptures. A man must purge or cleanse himself from these evil influences and every other pollution of sin and the flesh. He must be clean if he is to be a vessel for the Lord. God will only use sanctified, or holy, vessels that are meet, or fit, for His use.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we are drawing from Paul's second letter to Timothy truths that are so good and full of spiritual wealth. Timothy was the apostle Paul's dearly beloved son in

the faith. This second epistle to Timothy was sent from Rome not long before Paul was put to death. We find splendid expressions of Paul's confidence in God and his hope for the future. He encourages us to be strong as good soldiers for Christ, enduring the hardships we encounter in life as children of God. He warns against false teachers and evil influences against the truth. Paul knew that as far as God was concerned no earthly power would change His position and counsel. We are the ones who are liable for corruption and change. Thus he challenges us to purge ourselves and keep ourselves clean from all the contamination of this evil world so that we can be vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Saviour's use.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of spirit does God give to us?
2. What are some of the afflictions of the gospel?
3. What are we to be persuaded of concerning Christ?
4. What hardness will we be called upon to endure?
5. What must we do with Christ if we hope to live and reign with Him, and why?
6. What should we "study" and seek to do and be?
7. What does it mean to "rightly divide the word of truth"?
8. What is the seal on God's foundation and what does it mean?
9. What does it mean to be a vessel unto honour?
10. What are some of the things that are spiritually put in vessels to dishonour?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

The Lord is counting on us to take hold of His covenant of grace and have the courage and determination to go forth for Him in this life and be faithful to the end. He wants us to be brave and valiant in the battles of the Christian life. He has given us a glorious invitation to share eternal life with Him in that beautiful world to come. Is it not worth suffering and fighting for? Christ has abolished death and made life and immortality within our reach. He wants us to glorify His gospel

by receiving it, obeying it, and fervently promoting it. We must not draw back from suffering affliction for the sake of our faith. We prove ourselves unfit and unworthy of His fellowship if we do. If you are going to be a real Christian, you must fight valiantly, be brave, be courageous and strong in spirit. There are many things that He will allow to come against you to try your faithfulness to Him. He does this to prove your love for Him and it will make sweeter and brighter the joy that we will have in His presence. The spiritual blessings are made more real and precious when they are gained through adversity and sorrow. Let us be aware of the powers of deception and darkness that are around us in the world. We will invariably meet up with them. The best way to recognize counterfeit money is to be fully acquainted with the true currency. The best way to detect wrong spirits and false doctrine is to acquaint ourselves with the true Holy Spirit and have Him enthroned in our hearts and permit Him to reveal the real truth from the Holy Scriptures to us. —Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Paul wrote Timothy that "...God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." II Tim. 1:7. This is important to us so that we will be able to avoid profane and vain babblings, or fruitless discussions. There are some things which we will never understand until we pass from this world into the celestial realm, yet some will argue these irrelevancies to the point of strife.

An ancient Turkish story relates the experience of a certain man who went to a wise man and proposed three questions. First, "Why do they say God is omnipresent? I do not see Him in any place; show me where He is."

Second, "Why is man punished for his crimes, since whatever he does proceeds from God? Man has no free will, for he cannot do anything contrary to the will of God; and if he had power, he would do everything for his own good."

Third, "How can God punish Satan in hell fire, since he is formed of that element; and what impression can fire make on

itself?" In response to these three questions, the wise man took up a large clod of earth, and struck the questioner on the head with it.

The man went to an acquaintance and said, "I proposed three questions to a certain wise man, who threw a clod of earth at my head and made my head ache."

The acquaintance, having sent for the wise man, asked, "Why did you throw a clod of earth at his head, instead of answering his questions?"

The wise man replied, "The clod of earth was an answer to his speech. He says he had a pain in his head; let him show me the pain, and I will make God visible to him. And why does he exhibit a complaint against me? Whatever I did was the act of God; I did not strike him without the will of God. What power do I possess? And as he is compounded of earth, how can he suffer pain from that element?"

And thus, the fool was answered according to his folly.

—Wayne Murphey



**DECEMBER 21, 1997**

### **THE PERILOUS TIMES OF THESE FINAL DAYS**

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

II Timothy 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,



3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me.... what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. I Timothy 6:11.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The last days of this wicked world will prove very difficult for the righteous. The darkness of men's minds and the corruptness of their stubborn nature will cause resistance to the preaching of the gospel as well as persecution and suffering to those who stand for the real truth.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Timothy 2:23), "*Unlearned questions*": The Greek says, "uninstructed questionings." These are questions and arguments that come from the carnal reasonings of man, ever

doubting and probing from a humanistic standpoint the precepts of God's holiness. Man who is unenlightened by the Spirit of God will have a lot to say against the real truth. We are not to allow ourselves to be troubled or dismayed by these oppositions of false science, nor be intimidated when their proponents cannot be answered to their satisfaction. "*Gender strifes*": Generate or produce quarrels.

(II Timothy 2:25), "*If God peradventure*": The Greek says, "If God perhaps". We must show kindness and patience toward opposers of the truth and give them no occasion to stumble over us showing a wrong attitude or spirit. No arguing can convince a person who is not illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Speak the truth plainly and in love and then commit them to God. There is a chance that God will deal with them, and bring them to repentance. If they ever do repent and acknowledge the truth, it will be because God granted it to them in His mercy. That is the only way any of us can find the truth.

(II Timothy 3:3), "*Without natural affection*": Having no feeling of cherished love for those who are close of kin. This includes parents, husband or wife, children, brothers or sister, etc. "*Trucebreakers*": This is the same word as *implacable* in Romans 1:31. It means to be impossible to appease or satisfy. "*Incontinent*": This means to be powerless and without any control of self and its passions and desires.

(II Timothy 3:6), "*Silly women*": The Greek says, "Little women". But it does not mean little in a good way, but rather means depraved, foolish, ignorant, vain, weak spirited and easily beguiled.

(II Timothy 3:8), "*Jannes and Jambres*": These are generally believed to be the Egyptian magicians who stood up against Moses and performed miracles in competition with what God did through Moses. (Exodus 7.) "*Reprobate*": The meaning of the Greek word is "Unapproved, rejected and worthless."

(II Timothy 3:13), "*Seducers*": A pretender or imposter.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We continue today with our study of Paul's second epistle

to Timothy, his beloved son in the faith of Christ. The instructions and warnings that he gave to Timothy in this epistle are still vital for us in this time, for we are living in the last of the last days. The conditions in the world today are probably much worse than what Paul comprehended. People are following the same course that the Spirit of prophecy directed Paul to forewarn us about. But, along with the sad note of the terrible conditions prevailing, we have Paul's gentle reminder of the noble and excellent example that had been shown in him by the grace of Jesus. We are to expect afflictions and persecutions from the world and sinful mankind. God wants us to be strong and brave to face the opposition of darkened and deceived men. Paul mentions Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who stood up against Moses when he appeared before Pharaoh and demanded a release of the children of Israel. When we consider the supernatural power they showed in opposition to God in changing rods to serpents, turning water into blood, and bringing up frogs, then we ought not to marvel at the deceptive power of Satan today. These magicians went so far and no farther. When God brought lice from the dust of the ground to plague Egypt, the magicians tried to duplicate it with their enchantments, but could not. They then acknowledged unto Pharaoh, "...This is the finger of God:..." Exodus 8:19 God let them go just so far. And so He will to the powers of darkness today, for His holy servant's sake. Let us be strong and of good courage. As God was with Moses, so will he be with us in these perilous times of the last days.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some of the youthful lusts that we should flee?
2. Why does it not pay for the Lord's servant to strive?
3. Where does man's repentance come from?
4. Name some of the things Paul foretold in the last days that are abounding in our present time.
5. How can a person have a form of godliness and yet deny the power thereof?
6. How can we keep from being led away with various lusts?

7. With all of their learning and knowledge, what is keeping men from the knowledge of the truth?

8. For what reasons do real saints today suffer persecution?

9. What has God promised to do for us about persecutions?

10. What is to be expected concerning evil men and seducers?

### **ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

When a young person is overcome with the temptations of the various youthful lusts, he will not be able to face up to the greater conflicts that one will meet later in life. Youth is a time of keen appetites and desires. Emotions and feelings are high. The lust of pleasure is one of the greatest temptations of youth. And in our wicked, sensual world there are many attractions to indulge in the physical cravings of the flesh. The desire for the opposite sex is about the greatest attraction. It is a snare that catches so many. There is so much corruption in the world concerning this. It is wise for a young person to get this desire consecrated wholly to God and in subjection to Him. Then there is the lust of money and wealth. It starts in on a person early in life. The love of gain grips a person with pinchers of discontent. No matter how much money is gained, the lust for more keeps pushing and pushing. The craving is never satisfied because money cannot satisfy the deep, inner hunger of the soul. It is not money that we really want, it is fellowship with God and the riches of the inner man of faith, holiness and peace. Instead of the lusts of the flesh, we should follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, charity and peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Only then can we stem the tide of these youthful lusts and be able to overcome in the great battles of life that lie ahead.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Youth holds unique opportunity, and there have been those who have enthusiastically pursued it, such as Alfred

Tennyson who wrote his first book at the age of eighteen; Columbus who was twenty-eight when he announced his plans to find India; John Smith who staked out a colonial empire in Virginia at age twenty-seven; Joan of Arc who was a heroine at age nineteen and Patrick Henry who cried, "Give me liberty or give me death," at age twenty-seven. Even Christ was but a young man of thirty when He began to preach a salvation message that turned the world upside down.

But youth can also hold folly. There are many examples around us daily of young people who have already ruined many of the wonderful opportunities life presents. Our society is full of those who have dropped out of school, left home to live on the streets, and who are bound by drugs and alcohol. Many have children out of wedlock, and are even in jail for various offences. Youthful lust is the cause for many of these sad situations.

God is willing and eager to strengthen those who will flee youthful lust. He desires to use the energy of young lives in a way that will bring happiness to the individual and a blessing to many others.

—Wayne Murphey



**DECEMBER 28, 1997**

### **BEING VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH UNTO THE END**

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of; knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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

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

II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. II Timothy 4:18.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Regardless of how people turn away from hearing the gospel of Christ, we must still preach it and live it out in our lives. There is a crown of eternal life laid up for us if we will be faithful to God all the way.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(II Timothy 4:1), "*I charge thee*": The word "thee" is added by the translators and not in the original Greek text which reads: "I earnestly or solemnly witness." "*Quick*": Living.

(II Timothy 4:2), "*Be instant in season, out of season*": The Greek meaning is: Be present and available for service at every opportunity and when there seems to be no opportunity.

(II Timothy 4:3), "*Having itching ears*": The Greek says, "Tickling the ears." It is a disposition to want to hear fine and eloquent speaking with little or no thought of depth of meaning or obedience.

(II Timothy 4:4), "*Fables*": The Greek word is "myths,"

which are fictitious tales that have no truth or spiritual value.

(II Timothy 4:5), "*Make full proof*": The Greek meaning is: Carry out fully and entirely accomplish.

(II Timothy 4:6), "*I am now ready to be offered*": The Greek text says, "I am already being poured out." The sentence by the court of Nero against Paul had already been given. Probably by the time Timothy received this letter, Paul would have poured out his blood as a final witness of his faith in Jesus. History says that he was beheaded.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have in our lesson today Paul's comforting words to Timothy not long before he sealed his testimony with his own blood. When Paul was put on trial when he first came to Rome, he was acquitted. But later, the tyrant, Nero, who was emperor at the time, recalled Paul, and this time he was pronounced guilty and sentenced to be beheaded. We have Paul's solemn instructions and his beautiful and inspiring words of confidence and hope concerning what was before him. He encourages Timothy to be faithful in the ministry of the gospel, and not to be daunted by the stiff necks of those who would turn away from the faith. These instructions are encouraging to us today, for we see the same things taking place in people's lives all around us. But we must press on in the service of the Lord and look forward to the crown that awaits us at the end of the race. As we have loved and received the Lord Jesus and His truth from His first appearing, we shall love and admire Him at His second coming also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How are we assured of the reality of the truth?
2. Through what avenue can we be made wise unto salvation?
3. What is the inspired Word of God profitable for?
4. What blessing is there in the preached Word of God?
5. Why do so many despise and belittle the preached Word?
6. What was Paul expecting to soon come to pass?

7. What three things had Paul accomplished in his life?
8. What was he looking forward to receiving?
9. Who was to give him that crown and when?
10. Who are those who will really love Christ's appearing?

### **ADULT'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS**

"I am ready to be offered," said this Christian soldier brave,  
 As he faced the coming execution and a martyr's grave.  
 He was finished with life's journey, he had fought a faithful fight,  
 He had kept the faith unfailing, ever walking in the Light!

All those years of toil and labour, watchings, fastings, tears, and  
 pain,  
 To his joy and consolation had brought heaps of lasting gain.  
 And though soon he'd be beheaded by the judgment of old Rome,  
 He was looking for his passage to a bright and better home.

Oh, if we could see the future and the Christian's triumphant end,  
 And how much would mean a life that for the Saviour we  
 would spend,  
 We would not draw back in folly for the earth and all its fun,  
 We would live our lives for Jesus 'til the sinking of life's sun.

Let's be wise unto salvation, search the scriptures, feed on them,  
 Make their counsel and instruction life's most cherished  
 diadem.  
 Seek to be a faithful worker doing as His Spirit leads,  
 Praying always in the Spirit, trusting God for all our needs.

Be on guard against the forces who are set against the right,  
 Who are turning unto fables rather than the Words of Light!  
 Be not daunted by their coldness and their stubborn evil way,  
 Hold the truth in holy living, faithful service give each day.

For there is a crown of glory, and of righteousness so true,  
 Which the Lord the righteous Judge will give to us when life  
 is through,  
 Fight the fight of faith, don't waver, keeping ever for Him pure,  
 And you'll have a home in heaven that will evermore endure!

—Leslie C. Busbee



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is always a special pathos about the last words of loved ones. Such are very frequently a revelation of the inner character and life. It is so with this final message from the pen of our beloved apostle, Paul. As we bow our ear to catch this message, as it were from his dying lips, we are not left to faintly guess what he means. There is a telling ring in his voice, his mind is clear, his words are empathic and speak out volumes of truth.

His words speak of perfect resignation. He who had poured out his life in the service of the Lord, Jesus Christ, was now ready to have his poured out as a sacrifice for Him. At one time he was in a strait about this (Phil 1:23), but now he was ready. He was like one who had everything packed up in readiness to step on board that ship which was to take him to a better country.

His words speak of assured success. He was perfectly confident that his life and testimony, as a servant of the Lord, was no failure, but that the will of God, in calling him to His work, had been fulfilled in him. As a warrior he had fought and conquered; as a racer he had abode in the course and honorably finished the race; as a custodian he had firmly kept the faith delivered to him.

His words speak of joyful hope. The Lord, who was his righteous judge, had this crown laid up for him, although Nero, the unrighteous judge, had laid up for him a sword. In view of his crowning day, Paul could joyfully sing: "O death, where is thy sting?..." I Cor. 15:55. The Lord always lays up treasure and honor for those who faithfully serve Him now, in the day of His rejection at the hands of men. (James 1:12.)

—Taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*.



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