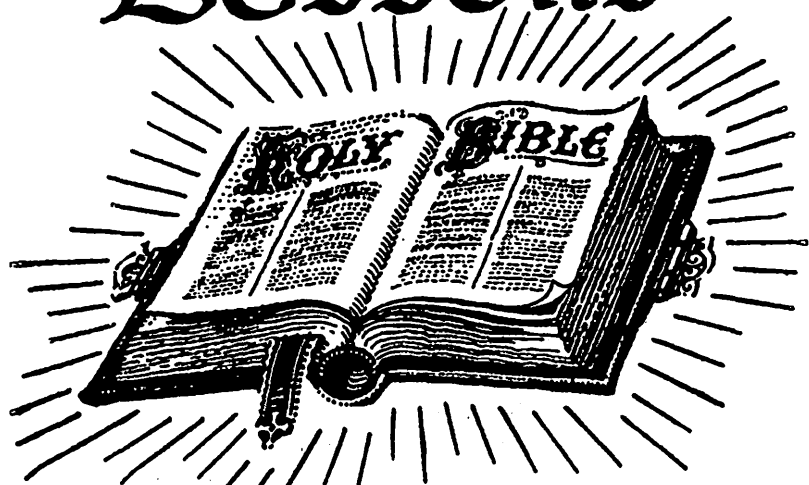


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2003**

For our studies from the Holy Scriptures this quarter we feel greatly inspired to deal with the thought of our worship to God. There are several factors that are vitally important in worshipping God successfully. Just any kind of worship will not do. The apostle Paul saw in Athens many different altars to various gods and objects of worship. He even saw one that said, "To the Unknown God." He decided to tell the people about the God that they were ignorant of. In our world today we have a multiplicity of forms of worship and beliefs. Even in the so-called Christian world there are so many different doctrines and manners of worship. But surely there is a true way to worship the almighty God.

We have sought the Lord earnestly for His guidance in each subject and the scriptures to use. How richly He has inspired and directed our hearts! It has been a great blessing to our souls, and it is our ardent desire and prayer to God that all who work with these lessons will be richly blessed also.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



**OCTOBER 5, 2003**

### **THE ALMIGHTY IS WORTHY OF OUR WORSHIP**

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Amos 5:6a Seek the LORD, and ye shall live.

8 Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.

Isaiah 40:12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

13 Who hath directed the spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he* is strong in power; not one faileth.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

Psalms 104:31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

**MEMORY VERSE:** I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. Psalm 104:33.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The LORD God almighty has manifested His greatness in His work of creating the vast heavens and the earth and the fullness thereof. It is all a testimony to His great goodness and He is worthy of all of our love, devotion and honor.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Rev. 14:7), "*worship*": The Greek and Hebrew words for worship mean about the same. It means to bow down or prostrate one's self in homage, reverence and adoration. To prostrate means to lie with face downward in demonstration of great humility or utter lowliness and submission. Homage means reverence, honor and respect.

(Rev. 4:11), "*pleasure*": will, purpose, and determination.

(Amos 5:6), "*The LORD*": When we see this word capitalized in the Old Testament it is the Hebrew word JEHOVAH, the

Jewish national name for God, which means the self-Existent or Eternal One.

(Amos 5:8), "*seven stars*": This is the Pleiadas, a nebulous cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus. Orion, named also in this scripture is an adjoining constellation that contains the bright, red super-giant star, Betelgeuse. "*shadow of death*": The Hebrew says simply, "deep darkness." This could be the daily change from darkness to the light of morning and it also could refer to God's working in our hearts bringing the light of salvation to a darkened life of sin and wrong. "*calleth for the waters*": God set in motion the process of evaporation of waters into the air and the condensing of them back to moisture to fall on the earth as rain.

Psa. 33:15), "*fashioneth their hearts alike*": God forms the hearts of men unitedly and means for them to live in harmony and peace with each other. All strife and discord that disrupts this togetherness that God planned for men to have is from beneath and is the work of satan. "*considereth*": God understands all that man is doing.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we behold several of the visible evidences of the great manifestation of God's reality as shown in the wonders of the heavens and the earth. We need to open our eyes to these wonderful marvels that are daily visible to us. Yes, they are in plain sight, but too often our hearts fail to see them as the LORD God wants us to see them. Instead of counting them as visible proof of His power and majesty, we casually accept them and enjoy and benefit from them unaffected in heart by the message they show. Psalm 19:1 states: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork." Verse 4 says, "Their line (that is, their message) is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The apostle Paul quoted this in Romans 10:18 and associates it with the message of the gospel of Christ.

Our first scripture comes from part of the great Revelation that Jesus gave to His apostle John on the Isle of Patmos. Here we see the call for us to worship God from the angel who had the everlasting gospel to preach to those on earth. Note the things mentioned that God made: heaven, earth, the sea and the

fountains of waters. We need to appreciate and realize the blessings in these things God created. Where would we be without them? Then in Rev. 4:11 we find the real purpose of God. His good will and pleasure in creating the earth was for our welfare and happiness. We can have this if we will render to Him the worship and devotion that He is worthy of.

Our other scriptures all magnify the greatness and wonderful power of God. Take time some night to go out and look intently up at the starry heavens. Let it not be just a glance, but tarry and be attentive to what is seen there. It will do you much good. How small we are in comparison with those worlds above!

Oh, how we need to love and worship God! May we escape the snare of earthly care and treasures! They will rob your soul and blind your eyes to the truth. Blessed is the man whose eyes are opened to the beauties of creation to inspire awe, reverence and loving devotion to our wonderful Creator!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it important for one to be persuaded that God created all things?
2. What influence will keep us from being affected by this visible evidence of God?
3. When we see these marvels how should it affect our hearts toward the Creator of them?
4. How can we keep from being careless and unaffected by these wonderful things?
5. What could we do to express to God our appreciation for all His wonderful works?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Every day and every night we are surrounded with sights that are undeniable manifestations of God's majesty and greatness. The glorious sun rises in the eastern sky on perfect schedule. Two times in the history of the world the sun has altered its daily course and this was because of an intervention of God in the behalf of His children. Did you ever watch the sun rise? It is worth your time to do so. So many of the humankind give little or no thought to the sun and its value to us. Get a good encyclopedia and read what it has to say about it. It is the same

way with the moon and the stars. Do not take them for granted. Look at them and ponder. Surely they did not just happen to be. A Mastermind planned them and a great and wonderful power brought them into being. Think how the moon so faithfully goes through her monthly changes. Note how soft and beautiful is its light.

Consider how that the LORD Jehovah spoke the world into existence. He stretched out the heavens and measured them. Science has determined that many stars in their distance from earth are not to be reckoned in miles or millions of miles, but rather in *light years*. This means the distance of how far light travels in a year. The speed of light has been calculated to be 186,000 miles per second. Find, if you can, how many seconds there are in a year and multiply that by the speed of light. It will make you feel pretty small. Consider how massive and big the earth really is. It is over 8,000 miles in diameter and close to 24,000 miles in circumference. It is turning around constantly, spinning and making one revolution every 24 hours. Figure up how fast that is. And it is moving in an orbit around the sun, making that trip once a year. What put all of these things in motion? There is but one answer; the LORD God almighty!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In considering the magnitude of this lesson about how worthy God is of our praise, adoration and worship, I am reminded of the statement that the queen of Sheba made about Solomon. After she came and asked him about the questions she had in her heart and saw his wisdom and how his house was conducted she said, "...It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." I Kings 10:6-7.

When the eyes of our spiritual understanding are opened by the quickening spirit of the Lord, our vision is blessed to behold wonderful things about our heavenly Father that one time were obscure and distant to us. The more we see and understand about Him, the more we realize how worthy He is of our praise and adoration.

The children of God will one day be brought into His immediate presence and be able to see and experience firsthand the realities of heaven. The dawning of that blissful day will evoke even greater praise and worship that His holy name deserves.

I have made a very incomplete list of some of the attributes of God that are worthy to be praised. If each member of the congregation spoke for two minutes or less and described one of these attributes it would be an exciting service that would likely fill the entire time with praise to our wonderful Lord. I wish I could hear those comments but I can only be in one place at a time. However, God can hear them all. He said He would be where two or three are gathered in His name.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey

His greatness, His glory, His majesty, His power, His justice, His knowledge, His wisdom, His judgment, His patience, His mercy, His gentleness, His chastisements, His goodness, His generosity, His kindness, His severity, His truthfulness, His righteousness, His holiness, His kingdom, His laws, His wealth, His everlasting Word, His creation, His love, His authority, His plan of redemption, His promises and His faithfulness.



**OCTOBER 12, 2003**

### **THE WORSHIP OF GOD BY SACRIFICE**

Psalms 50:1 The mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

Isaiah 1:11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination



unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Psalm 50:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Isaiah 1:16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which He obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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 sweet-smelling savour.

**MEMORY VERSE:** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51:17.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There was a time when God accepted animal sacrifices in burnt offerings as part of man's worship to Him, but He made it clear that these are of no real value to Him. He is much rather pleased with thanksgiving and praise from the heart, an obedience to His word and a benevolent and charitable attitude to our fellow man in doing good and sharing of our substance with others.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Psalm 50:8), The Hebrew renders this verse: "Not for your sacrifices I reprove you, and your burnt offerings before me continually." What the LORD is saying is that He is not seeking

to correct or re-condition their animal sacrifice system, for it really means nothing to Him. But He is rather seeking for more perfect sacrifices of a spiritual nature from the heart of man toward Him.

(Isaiah 1:11), "*To what purpose?*": The Hebrew says, "Of what use?" "*I am full*": "I have had enough." "*fat of fed beasts*": fattened cattle.

(Isaiah 1:13), "*vain oblations*": useless animal sacrifices. "*calling of assemblies*": going to meetings. "*I cannot away with*": I cannot endure.

(Psalm 50:14), "*Offer*": Sacrifice. "*thanksgiving*": Adoration, appreciation and gratitude. "*pay thy vows*": Give to God in reality what you promise with your lips. Fulfill and live up to what you profess.

(Isaiah 1:16), "*Wash you, make you clean*": The Hebrew says, "Cleanse yourselves, purify yourselves." These are measures we must make in true repentance and reforming of our habits and ways. It is not that we can truly cleanse ourselves, but we must initiate change and reform in our lives. God will forgive and absolve from guilt, but we must put forth earnest effort to change our habits to conform to His will.

(Hebrews 11:4), "*being dead, yet speaketh*": The voice of Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground. (Gen. 4:10.) It is true that a faithful life that is pleasing to God continues to speak even after death.

(Heb. 13:16), "*communicate*": This means to have contact and social relations with, to share, give and be concerned about the needs of others.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Our lesson today is concerning a most important link in the relationship of man with His Maker. As a vital part of our worship to God, there is the matter of what we offer up unto Him in sacrifice. One of the main elements of sacrifice is the foregoing and giving up of something we have in preference to another's sake or happiness. In the case with sacrificing unto God, it seemed from the earliest times to be appropriate and acceptable to offer as a sacrifice the life of an animal, which was doubtless one of the most valuable of their possessions. They apparently understood that the life of an innocent animal was the required sacrifice for them to obtain favor with God and to have their sins

forgiven. We have the account of Abel bringing as an offering unto the Lord of the first increase and best of his flock. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering. From there the system of animal sacrifices seemed to continue to be accepted of the LORD, as was shown in Noah's burnt offerings of every clean beast and clean fowl on the altar. (Gen. 8:20.) The system of worship in the Mosaic tabernacle had a great amount of animal sacrifices.

But in our scriptures today we see that God expresses Himself that He was not really satisfied with the animal sacrifices. It is clear that He is looking for something else, something that He would be pleased with rather than lambs, cattle, etc. Both of our quotations from Psalm 50 and Isaiah show keen dissatisfaction expressed by God about animal sacrifices. What is He looking for in the outreach of our hearts to Him? He is wanting to see our hearts willing to change from the ways of sin to the ways of righteousness and true holiness. He desires to look into our hearts and see true gratitude and praise fervently ascending to Him in prayer and supplication for His great goodness. He wants to see kindness and mercy shown in our hearts for one another and for all men. He wants to see the sacrifice of our own pleasure with His good pleasure in mind. He wants to see that tender love and fervency of spirit to give and sacrifice for those in need. This was the sacrifice that our Lord Jesus Christ made when He offered His body as a sacrifice on Calvary for our atonement of sin. God loves a cheerful giver and is pleased when we sacrifice what pleases us for the sake of someone else and above all for His glory and honour.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did God become weary of animal sacrifices?
2. Why does God want thanksgiving and praise from us?
3. What are some of the vows and promises we need to make and keep to God?
4. Why is it important for us to repent and change our ways?
5. What other sacrifices are pleasing to the Lord?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Just as the LORD God became weary of animal sacrifices and outward ceremonies of worship as expressed in the Scriptures,

so He cannot endure lip worship and service in name and word only. He is looking for the heart of man to read just what is being said and done in outward form. He is really pleased when He can look down in our hearts and see that we are truly grateful and appreciative of His blessings. He loves to see the joyful heart that is thrilled and delighted with His dealings. We want to voice our praise and adoration, but let it not be just in word but also in deed and in truth. Let us be diligent that we have more than just a form, but that we really love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. In other words, we must live our prayers and worship in our everyday life. The service we render to our fellow man must be from pure love and concern for them if it is to be pleasing and acceptable with God. God is pleased with us communicating and sharing with others, even sacrificing our joys and treasures for the sake of others. We must be careful to conform our lives in obedience to His holiness and righteous ways. When we profess godliness and neglect to be diligent to measure to the standard of His Word, we are in danger of being vain in our worship to Him. When we conform to the world, it's styles and fashions and lose sight of what is pleasing to Him, we are hurting ourselves and doing great damage to our souls. It really means much to worship God in the Spirit and have no confidence in the flesh as Paul said in Phil. 3:3. And what we profess with our mouth we must live up to in our actions and ways. Jesus lived a life of sacrifice and self-denial. He calls us to follow Him, and take up our cross daily as He did. People are deceived when they profess godliness and live to the flesh. Let us be wise and diligent to worship, love and truly obey our gracious Father in heaven.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"...Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Eph. 5:2.

In the Old Testament worship after the sin and trespass offerings were offered, there were three kinds of worship sacrifices.

First, the **burnt offering**, a male without blemish was slain. Its blood was sprinkled upon the altar and its body burnt upon the altar. Paul directly points to Christ as this offering and the lesson is made clear—before we can worship the Father, we

must have our sins atoned for by trusting in the offering made for us by Christ. Jesus, as our Sacrifice, is the only way to the Father.

The second step in worship, after atonement, was the **meal offering**, a vegetable oblation. It was always offered in connection with the daily burnt offering. It was never offered alone. Cain attempted to do so and was not accepted.

The original word translated "offering," *minchah*, means offering or tribute; expressing the idea of devotion. Jesus also offered Himself in this devotion and consecration and we enter into this sacrifice also as in Romans 12:1 Paul says, "...Present your bodies a living sacrifice,..." First atonement, then consecration.

The third worship offering was a **peace offering**. It was an animal offering where God, the priest and the one bringing the offering each had a portion, typifying the intimate communion and fellowship we have with God through Jesus. Note that it followed the atonement and consecration. It also was an offering expressing praise and thanksgiving. Only by Jesus' sacrifice for us can we be atoned for, consecrated to God and drawn near to Him in worship, praise and communion. —Sis Angela Gellenbeck



OCTOBER 19, 2003

### COMMUNION WITH THE LORD GOD

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Exodus 25:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.

8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Isaiah 52:6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

Hosea 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

Hosea 6:3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

John 14:15 (Jesus said to His disciples) If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

23 If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God takes great pleasure and delight in having communion and fellowship with man. For us to experience this wonderful communion with God we must be in conformity with His perfect will, following Him faithfully, putting our complete trust in Him. We must keep His Word and always be led by His Holy Spirit rather than the works of the flesh.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Gen. 15:1), "*exceeding great reward*": The Hebrew says, "Your reward will increase greatly."

(Gen. 17:1), "*perfect*": Much is contained in this word, including: entire, with integrity and truth, complete, whole, sound, undefiled and without blemish or spot.

(Exod. 25:8), "*sanctuary*": A special place consecrated to be holy and dedicated to God's service.

(Exod. 25:22), "*commune*": To speak with and carry on conversation in love and fellowship.

(Isa. 52:6), "*Behold, it is I*": The words "*it is*" are added words. The Hebrew expression is: "Behold Me!"

(Hosea 2:19), "*betroth*": to espouse, that is, to engage to be married. There is a true preparation for marriage. Before a man and woman are united in physical embrace, they must be united in heart and spirit. This spiritual union precedes the physical union. Before we can enjoy the final fulfillment of being joined with Christ in eternal glory, we must partake of His Spirit and be united with Him in heart and soul. This is foretold here in prophecy and it is a wonderful and blessed experience that we can have now in Christ Jesus, our loving Lord.

(Hosea 2:20), "*faithfulness*": truth, verity, stability and trustworthiness. "*know*": Several times in our lesson is this word used. It is a common word, but it carries great meaning. Perhaps you can add to the ones we include here: recognize, experience, possess, understand, behold, own, be acquainted with, accept, receive, share, and the list could go on and on. God promised in Jeremiah 31:34, concerning His saints in Christ, "They shall all know me."

(Hosea 6:3), The Hebrew renders this verse: "Then let us know, let us pursue to know Jehovah: His going forth is sure as the dawn and He shall come as the rain to us, as the latter rain and the former rain unto the earth." Adam Clarke has this beautiful explanation of the rain: "As surely as the early and the latter rain come. The first, to prepare the earth for the seed; this fell in autumn: the second, to prepare the full ear for the harvest; this fell in spring. Here is strong confidence. As surely as the sun, who is now set, is running his course to arise on us in the morning, and make a glorious day after a dreary night, so surely shall the Lord come again from His place, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise on our souls with healing in His wings."

(John 14:16), "*Comforter*": One who consoles, comforts and intercedes for our help and safety.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

God, from the very beginning, has found great delight and pleasure in having communion and fellowship with His creation. It is very evident that before Adam and Eve disobeyed His commandment and partook of the forbidden fruit the LORD God walked and conversed with them in sweetness and one accord. It was revealed in God's dealings and in the prophecies He gave that God wanted this breach between man and Himself to be healed. As our lesson today shows, He found in Abraham the kind of spirit that He could commune with. Abraham sought to maintain the spirit of faith and obedience that God was pleased with.

Moses was another one that God could commune with. Speaking "face to face as a man speaketh to his friend" is real good communion, is it not? But God wants to commune with all who will come into His holy place. In Exod. 25:22 He mentions communing with us "there from above the mercy seat." This is in the inner court, the most holy place where the ark of God overlaid with the mercy seat rested. The High Priest entered that blessed place once a year, which signified that the way into the most holy place was not yet opened up. But in Christ, who brought a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, we can enter into the most holy place and enjoy sweet communion with God. This is made possible and available to us through the indwelling Holy Spirit that Christ spoke of to His disciples before He left them to ascend back to the Father.

Today through the Lord Jesus interceding for us at the right hand of God and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the soul we can have and maintain constant communion with the LORD God almighty!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is required of us to be able to have communion with God?
2. What are some of the things that God wants to commune with us about?
3. How close did Moses commune with God?
4. What kind of relationship did Hosea say God would have with us?
5. By what avenue and means can God the Father and His Son Jesus commune with us?



## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Of all the experiences of joy and pleasure that we can have in this life, none are so rich and wonderful as the blessed communion that we can have with the heavenly Father through His Son Jesus and the precious Holy Spirit that He has sent to our hearts! To be able to go to Him in prayer and to experience His response of comfort, inspiration, strength, courage, enlightenment and confidence is life's greatest and most joyous privilege. God can be so real to the humble and willing heart! To hear His Word preached in the anointing of the Holy Spirit and experience the light, hope, courage and peace that it brings to our inner man is true and everlasting pleasure indeed. Earthly pleasures fade to vanity before the glory of this sweet communion with the Lover of our souls. May we each one seek earnestly to experience and enjoy this heavenly fellowship and communion with Him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

How fearfully and wonderfully we are made. The Lord created us with a thinking mind so that He could commune with us. The mind is a very powerful element. Just think of all the inventions created by the human mind. Even more, think of our God who created that kind of complex mind.

A pure mind is a precious gift and should be guarded with great care. There are many passages in the Bible that give instruction on how to take care of our minds, Isaiah 26:3; what to think on, Philippians 4:8; and how to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, Romans 12:2. It is this kind of environment that the Lord can commune with us in.

Take care of the thoughts you entertain in your mind. Be careful of what you listen to and read. Beware of the images you allow yourself to see, whether they be physical images or imaginations. A mind that has not been tended with care is a great tool for the enemy. He knows just how to use a "recall" button to bring back those things you want to forget. How serious to neglect your mind. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Romans 1:28.

I recently witnessed just how great our mental capabilities are in the observation of an Alzheimer's patient. While she could

not remember the time or day, her room or eventually her own children, she could still quote Bible scriptures word for word. That is powerful!

Our mental battles probably far exceed any physical battles that we have to contend with in this day and time. All the more reason to spend time fortifying your mind studying wholesome materials, memorizing scriptures and ultimately, communing with God.

A mind truly is a terrible thing to waste!

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**OCTOBER 26, 2003**

### **FERVENT LOVE AND DEVOTION TO GOD**

Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.

Mark 12:29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

I Corinthians 8:3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Psalms 18:1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

Psalms 116:1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Psalms 91:1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation. Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. James 1:12.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God almighty is a God of love. He has manifested His love and goodness toward His creation and yearns for a return of that love from us. He is worthy of all the love we can possibly flow out in our hearts for Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Mark 12:30), "*love*": There are several terms that are associated with the meaning of this important word. These include: strong affection, attachment, fervent devotion, strong liking, passionate affection, benevolent concern and interest, care, delight, pleasure and adoration. "*heart*": the affections; the center of one's desires, ambitions, inclinations, delights, attitudes and interests. "*soul*": One's life and inner being, the spirit part of us that is part of God Himself, our awareness and consciousness. "*mind*": All of our mental powers to think, ponder, study, learn and pursue in knowledge and understanding. "*strength*": All of our powers, force, abilities, skills and talents. All and every part of these four faculties of our being are really meant to be turned wholly and without reserve to the One who made us and gave it all to us.

(I John 5:3), "*not grievous*": not heavy, weighty, burdensome nor hard.

(I Cor. 8:3), The Greek says, "But if any one loves God, this one has become known by Him." This goes along with what Paul said is a seal of the foundation of God: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." II Tim. 2:19. The Lord God knows and is in no question about who really loves Him. They are fully known to Him.

(Psa. 18:1), "*I will love thee, O Lord*": The word "love" here from the Hebrew means to fondle. To fondle is an endearing

activity of caressing, stroking, or handling tenderly or to pet. This is true with any object of one's love and admiration, whether it be husband, wife, child or pet animal. One's delight and admiration and affection just naturally calls for loving touch, feeling and fondling. God loves to see this kind of warm affection and admiration in our hearts for Him. We can and will have it if we will but see Him and understand Him in the clear light of His precious Word. There was one man who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper and also a repentant woman who washed His feet with her tears, dried them with the hairs of her head, kissed His feet and anointed them with ointment. We have no record that Christ repulsed these gestures of affection, but it seems that they are rather commended by Him. (John 13:23 and Luke 7:44-47.)

(Psa. 116:1), "*love*": To have fervent affection and warm tender feelings of adoration.

(Psa. 91:14), "*set his love*": To join with, cling to and delight in.

(Matt. 10:37), "*love more*": to hold in esteem and importance over and above God and Christ.

(James 1:12), "*when he is tried*": The Greek expression is "having become approved." There is contained in this scripture a clue to the way God works to bring out in us the love that He is desiring. He allows us to be tempted by other attractions. He has promised the crown of life to those who *love Him*. To make full proof of that love He allows us to be drawn away and enticed by other sources. If we will resist the alluring forces of the world, the flesh and sinful attractions and obey His Word over and above everything else, this makes full proof of our love for Him. To endure temptation means that we refuse to allow such enticements to alter or change our love and faithfulness to God.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have gathered from various sources in the Holy Scriptures sayings that are pointing us to a real, tender, fervent love for the LORD our Creator. God is love and He wants to be loved by His creation. It is His nature to love and to desire a return of love from those He loves. To receive the love God bestows and to return that love to Him is life's greatest joy and fulfillment. And to reject and lightly esteem the love of God is man's most tragic and fatal mistake. Paul said in I Corinthians 16:22, "If any man

love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema (accursed) Maranatha (The Lord is coming!). Blessed is the person who finds the love of God and returns that love with full devotion and adoration. Jesus, who in Mark 12:29-30 stated what was the greatest commandment, was the greatest example of love for God, who was His Father. He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, in submission to His Father's will. He loved God more than His own life. We are called to walk in that same love. We can love God but we must reject all other attractions that are beckoning us in this world of sin and evil. God and His Son Jesus are worthy of all the love we can render to them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is it that will inspire and create love in our hearts for our Maker?
2. How much love from us is God really worthy of?
3. What must we overcome to really prove our love for God?
4. What other loves must we keep beneath our love for God?
5. What are some of the blessings we can receive for truly loving God?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

David was one of the great examples in the Old Testament of those who loved his God. He offered praise and thanksgiving to Him abundantly. Abraham was another man who proved that He loved God, even by being willing to sacrifice his beloved son in obedience to God. We can love God just as well as these men and others have. It must be an act of our own will and purpose. Let us open our eyes and behold how good and kind and gracious God is. Survey, if you will, the scriptures that openly declare how great and wonderful God is! He created this beautiful earth and the glorious heavens over our head. All the beauties of nature and the things He provided for man to enjoy show His love so greatly. All who harden their hearts and allow other attractions to captivate their affections from loving God are really foolish and worthy of the greatest punishment. Many allow the love of money and pleasure to rule their lives. It is folly and shame to do so. It shows a shallowness of mind and emptiness of principle and purpose. You look at people who are sinful and vain and you will soon see where their heart really is. It is on this world and the vanities of this present, mortal life. But if a man will set his love

upon God and put forth real effort to serve and please Him, God will reward and bless that person in wonderful ways. It pays to set one's love upon the Lord. Let us open our hearts to the Word of the Holy Bible that clearly makes known the love that God has for us. His love being understood by us will move us to love Him in return. And if we love Him, He will return our love with greater love and the result will be a happy experience of loving and being loved.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

God's love for you and me goes far beyond His words and expressions of warmth and concern. God's love is so great for us that it prompted Him to give His only Son as a sacrifice on the cross that we might know the joy of salvation in this life. Although this love cost God dearly, He will never force it on any of us, but His love is extended freely in mercy to all that will open their hearts and receive it. God does not want a people or a church that serves Him out of fear and obligation. Rather He desires service and obedience that is motivated by nothing but love and devotion.

Love is incomplete unless it is returned. When we return God's love we will find the true peace and joy in our relationship with Him. Our love will go beyond our feelings and emotions of the day and will rest on a more sure foundation of choice and decision. This love brings forth obedience and holiness, and it is this love that makes the cross joyous to bear. We bear it not because "we have to" but because we choose to in response to our love for the Lord.

—Bro. Michael Smith



**NOVEMBER 2, 2003**

### **LOVING ESTEEM FOR THE WORD OF GOD**

Psalm 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

John 14:23 Jesus said, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Colossians 3:16a Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.

II Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

3:16 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.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To really be successful in the worship and service of God one must develop a fervent love and high esteem for the Bible, the Word of God. There is a delight and a pleasure one can have in the Holy Scriptures that goes far beyond the fleeting things of earth. When we love God's Word as we should, the Holy Spirit can bless the Word to our hearts and reveal its deep and hidden meaning.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 1:1), *"walk, stand, and sit"*: These are the three positions that we exercise our souls with in life. It is wise and absolutely necessary for us to take spiritual heed where and how we walk, for what we stand and hold fast for, and for the opinions and attitudes that we allow to reign in our hearts. All of these should be disciplined and wholly turned toward the fear of God and love for His counsel. *"scornful"*: One who scoffs at, derides, or belittles. Isa. 29:20-21 declares that "the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought."

(Psalm 1:2), The Hebrew says, "His delight is only in the law of Jehovah."

(Job 23:12), *"more than my necessary food"*: The word "food" is added and not in the original text. The real expression from the Hebrew is "more than my portion." This is an important point to consider and well remember. We must love God and His Word above everything else in life. Is it not that valuable and important? Of all the commodities in life that we need, the spiritual things of heaven borne to us through the avenue of the Word and the Spirit should always come first and be our number one priority.

(John 14:23-24), *"keep"*: This word is in the sense of guarding, watching and keeping an eye on. The Word of God the Father and the teachings of His holy Son Jesus are so precious and of such great benefit for our well-being and happiness that we should give it all our greatest concern, interest and care.

(Psalm 19:7), *"converting"*: restoring. This means to renew, refresh, relieve and revive. The law of our blessed God and the commandments that proceed from His precious heart have a stimulating, refreshing effect upon the heart of that one who sincerely hungers and thirsts for them. *"simple"*: One who is ignorant and unenlightened, yet open and eager for instruction.

(Psalm 19:8), *"pure"*: The Hebrew word means "clear cut" which means to be without fault; plain and easy to be understood.

(Psalm 19:9), *"true and righteous altogether"*: All the judgments of God unite with one another in every part. There is neither conflict nor confusion anywhere in them.



(II Tim. 2:15), "*Study*": The Greek word means to use speed, i.e. make effort, be prompt and earnest. "*rightly dividing*": To cut it straight and expound it correctly.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we want to bring to our attention a most vital ingredient in the worship of God. And that is the loving esteem we should have for God's blessed Word. No one can get very far in the Christian life without an ardent love and delight in all that has proceeded from the mouth of God. If Eve had retained a careful watch of remembering what God had spoken, she would not have let the enemy trip her up like he did.

In our scriptures we have some vivid expressions that stress the value of loving and cherishing the precious Word of God. David was a good example of one who held dear the holy Word of his God. We have several of his expressions in our lesson and there are many more. We could have used some from the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm, such as verse 97: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day." But what we do have from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Psalms illustrates clearly how vitally important God's word is to us and how we should love it ardently. Our quote from Job shows the esteem that the Word of God is worthy of, and we have the true expression of the Master also. He had just been asked just how He would manifest Himself to His disciples and not to the world. His answer shows the key. "If a man love me, He will keep my words." It is so true that Christ manifests Himself through the avenue of His Word. This is done by the inspiration and enlightenment of the indwelling Holy Spirit. That is why the Word of God is so vital, and it is so important for us to love it and follow it always.

Then we have the apostle Paul's charge to young Timothy. It is so important for us to rightly apply the Holy Scriptures. You can take parts of the Bible out of context and use it to substantiate any thing. The devil, in his temptation to Christ, used a passage from Psalm 91 to give cause for Jesus to jump off the pinnacle of the temple. But in Christ's answer He said, "It is written again." So we need to be very attentive to the Holy Spirit and let Him guide us in rightly dividing the Word. Oh, may we love it, follow it, keep it and cherish it all our days!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why must we have a fervent love for the Word of God?
2. How does Christ manifest Himself to us?
3. How can a person become lovingly attached to the Word of God?
4. What is the result of not rightly dividing the Word of truth?
5. What happens to the soul who fails to properly esteem God's Word?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Of all the books and magazines that are published, the Bible far outshines them all. There is nothing so sweet and enjoyable to a person than to have the Holy Spirit living in the soul opening up the Scriptures and revealing their blessed meaning and application. People would find much more fulfillment and pleasure in their life if they would give themselves to the Lord and live a life of prayer and seek for the truths of the Bible to be inscribed upon their hearts! How much better this world would be if people hungered and thirsted for spiritual knowledge, wisdom from the Holy Spirit and the Word than from the television and video! I would like to encourage everyone to take time to read and study the Word of God and find the delight of it. And pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit will open up and reveal the truth to you! You will find that life's greatest joy and pleasure is found in Christ and revealed in His precious Word. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

In the first chapter of the book of Genesis, after it described the conditions that existed in the beginning, it says, "And God said...." When God gave the command things began to happen. Light shown forth, the firmament separated the waters and the dry land appeared. Powerful forces began to move at His Word and He brought into existence the universe and the earth that we now behold and enjoy. The laws of nature were established and the earth and the heavens complied with His Word.

In the second chapter of Genesis it said, "And the Lord God commanded the man..." Sadly, man did not obey the Word of God and brought on himself much trouble and death. He was facing the wrath of almighty God, but through the plan of salvation God sent His Son who made a way for man to be redeemed and restored into His fellowship.

While man has been given the option to obey or not to obey, he cannot escape the consequences of that choice. It is so much better to make the right choice and carefully follow the Word of God. It is perfect and will bring much joy and peace to the heart of the man who diligently makes it an integral part of his life. One day God will say the final Word and our eternal destiny will be sealed. Make God your choice and follow His Word today!

"Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye." Prov. 7:2. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**NOVEMBER 9, 2003**

### **FEAR AND REVERENCE FOR GOD**

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.

89:6a For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him.

Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

18 For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Proverbs 8:13a The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy.

Philippians 2:12b 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.

Hebrews 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

II Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Romans 11:20b Be not highminded, but fear.

22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Isaiah 66:2b To this man will I look, (saith the LORD), *even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes 12:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The LORD God is so great, powerful and good, and His wrath against sin and evil is so great that it is wise, for the sake of our own safety and well-being, to be very reverent and exercise great respect and fear before Him all the days of our life.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psalm 33:8), "*fear*": reverence, respect, and utmost care and regard. Reverence is defined by Webster as a feeling or attitude of deep respect, love and awe, as for something sacred by reason of age, dignity, character or position. "*awe*": a mixed feeling of reverence, fear and wonder caused by something majestic and sublime (noble, beautiful and grand).

(Prov. 23:17), "*be thou*": The Hebrew text reads: "Do not let your heart envy against sinners but only in the fear of Jehovah all the day." The fear of God must be in our deep interests and affections.

(Verse 18), "*an end*": The Hebrew word here is "hereafter." When we are persuaded that there is to be a hereafter where we will meet and give an account to God for our lives here, it brings soberness and causes fear and care to take possession of us.

(Prov. 8:13), "*arrogancy*": The Hebrew word means "loftiness," which means being lifted up and highminded.

(Phil. 2:12b), "*trembling*": quaking with fear, hesitancy and an ultimate sense of carefulness.

(Isa. 66:2), "*look*": to regard with pleasure, favor or care. "*poor*": The Hebrew says, "afflicted," but includes in its meaning also the depressed, poor, needy and lowly.

(Eccl. 12:13), "conclusion": The final statement, summing up the observation and the facts presented and coming to an ultimate conviction.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our lesson today we want to consider the importance of godly fear and reverence. From both the Old and the New Testaments we are instructed to fear and tremble before the great almighty God who created the heavens and the earth and us. There are people who try to maintain that there is no God, but they are overlooking a mountain of evidence. But for us, who are persuaded there is a Supreme Being, an eternal and self-existent Personage who has all power and control, there is the logical conclusion that we need to have a deep, reverent love and adoration for such. We have the testimony of many people in the history of the world who have found great happiness and satisfaction in being reverent and submissive to God. And it has been the blessed experience of such people to reap great rewards and benefits by believing and trusting this precious LORD and Creator. So we have selected various scriptures on this subject for our lesson text, and they give a clear testimony that is worthy of our consideration.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some of the evidences of the existence of a Supreme Being?
2. What are some of the characteristics of God that merit godly fear and reverence?
3. What are some of the results of a lack of godly fear in a person's life?
4. What are some of the rewards for serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear?
5. What are we all going to have to meet at the end of life's journey?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is very wise and beneficial for us to choose the fear of the Lord and let it be the guiding light for our journey through life. No action or word should transpire in our conduct that is void

of the fear of God and the respect for His honor and glory. As we behold the wonders of the heavens and the earth in their beauty and order we cannot help but be persuaded that there is a great almighty God back of it all. When I consider the sun and her faithful, daily course across the sky, I know that such could not just happen to be. I know that there is a God who put it there and keeps it going. When I study the lovely moon in her changes and beauty, I see the power and wisdom of that loving God who created her and put her there for us to admire and enjoy. I think of the majestic trees that adorn the landscape, the grasses so numerous and the lovely flowers. I consider the fruits and the vegetables, the nuts and grains that provide the needed food and nourishment for our health and strength. Surely there is a Master mind behind it all, One who is wise and thoughtful of us and our happiness. Oh, how it causes admiration and wonder to fill our hearts as we realize that it was and is a wonderful, loving Creator who made it all and set it in motion.

Such recognition in our hearts of the presence of such a great God causes us to fear and tremble in our spirits before Him. We are awakened to our weakness and insufficiency. How little and insignificant we are in comparison to this great Creator! At our best state we are altogether vanity. It causes us to want to be submissive and obedient to this holy and righteous God. He is all-wise and all-powerful. It does not pay to strive against His purpose. The best thing we can do is to say "Amen" to His will and strive to please Him with all of our hearts!

We would do well if we would seek after this wonderful God with all our hearts. He created us for this purpose that we should seek Him and feel after Him. He wants our love and devotion as well as our fear and reverence. He wants us to want Him. It pays great dividends, regardless of what it may cost us, to be obedient to Him.

He is a God of rewards. He will reward the vain and stiff-necked and rebellious. But He will heap great blessings on the humble and obedient soul who sacrifices personal desires and pleasures with respect to His good pleasure. It will pay to submit to Him and resist the devil and his influence. We gain nothing by taking our own selfish way in life. It testifies over and over in the wretched and miserable lives of the foolish. Let us be reverent and faithful to obey the will of God as revealed in His Word and let His Spirit lead us to those living fountains of water for the good of our souls!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Here are seven rewards for having Godly fear with knowledge as applied to everyday situations—education, marriage, work, child-training, etc.

**Wisdom:** "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Prov. 9:10. (Psa 111:10.)

**Happiness:** "Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Psa. 128:1-4.

**Protection by God's angels:** "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psa. 34:7.

**Spiritual and physical health:** "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." Prov. 3:7-8.

**All needs supplied:** "O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him." Psa. 34:9.

**Friendship with God:** "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." Psa. 25:14.

**Victory now and through eternity:** "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." Rev. 15:1-4. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**NOVEMBER 16, 2003**

**LIVE AND WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD**

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Galatians 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

**MEMORYVERSE:** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Romans 8:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** For our worship to God to be acceptable to Him we must live according to His Word and follow the leadings of His Holy Spirit. We must put to death the sinful flesh life and live and walk according to that which is in harmony with the Spirit of Christ.



## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Gal. 6:8), "*corruption*": decay and ruin. To let the desires and the appetites of the natural man rule and have pre-eminence in our lives will bring upon us spiritual decay and ruin.

(John 4:23), "*in spirit and in truth*": The worship of God must be inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit and in accord with the Word of God. Jesus said in John 17:17 to His Father: "Thy word is truth."

(John 4:24), "*must*": necessary and binding. The same Greek word is used in Christ's statement in John 3:7, where He said, "Ye *must* be born again." It is an absolute decree with no other way. God will accept no other worship except that which is through the indwelling Spirit of God according to His Word. A true worshiper lives and conducts himself according to this holy ordinance.

(Phil. 3:3), "*have no confidence in the flesh*": The Greek says simply, "not trusting in the flesh."

(Gal. 5:16), "*walk in the Spirit*": The Greek expression here is "conduct one's self and follow in full devotion to the Holy Spirit."

(Gal. 5:17), "*lusteth against*": The desires of the flesh and the Spirit are foreign and opposed to each other. They cannot and they will not work together. One or the other must be in control. "*ye cannot do the things that ye would*": This means that if we are going to be led by the Holy Spirit, we cannot do the things that we would ordinarily do if we were going by the impulses of the natural man.

(Gal. 5:24), "*crucified the flesh*": This means to fasten our desires and appetites to the cross of Christ in conformity to the pattern of His life. It is to extinguish and subdue the desires of the natural man to the perfect will of God, as Paul said in I Cor. 9:27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

(Gal. 5:25), "*walk in the Spirit*": This expression, verbatim to what he said in verse 16, has a varied meaning in the Greek. Here it means to march in rank and keep in step with the Holy Spirit.

(Rom. 8:10), "*the body is dead because of sin*": Because to give reins to the desires of the flesh will bring about sin, we are called upon to bear about the principle of dying to those sinful tendencies and to bring our flesh into perfect submission to the will of God.

(Rom. 8:11), "*quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you*": For us to have hope of being in the resurrection with Christ at the last day we must have His Spirit living in us now. The indwelling Spirit of God is the source of the quickening that must take place in these bodies if we are to be saved from the second death.

(Rom. 8:12), "*debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh*": This means that we are under no obligation to live to the sinful ways of the flesh. Through Christ we can bring our desires and passions into perfect submission to God and His holiness.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we will consider the vital truth of the Holy Spirit ruling in our lives as the basis for our worship to the heavenly Father. Self-devised worship and fleshly grandeur and honor God will not accept. It is sad to see the religious world in such strife and confusion. This is because of what carnal minded men have introduced into professed worship of God. Great cathedrals, literal musical instruments, finery of furniture and style, along with many other things including doctrines that allow for sin and transgression of God's Word renders it all vain. The true worship of God is that which is inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit. Man likes to have a program and things organized and set in order beforehand. But the Holy Spirit is the only true means of producing worship that will smell a sweet smell in the nostrils of God.

Jesus identified the true worship of God as that which is by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God's truth. He spoke this to the woman at the well when she made mention of the worship of God and where it should be, whether in the mountain near her dwelling or in Jerusalem where the Jews went. Jesus let her know that it was not the geographical location that mattered, but the presence of the Holy Spirit inspiring and blessing the inner man and making contact with God's Spirit.

It is a wonderful experience to make contact with God in the Holy Spirit and have Him to bless and respond to our worship to Him! The outward ceremonies that we might devise are but vanity without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Let it be our desire and purpose to ever seek the Holy Spirit inspiration and guidance in all of our worship to our heavenly Father.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why can we not have the flesh and the Holy Spirit together?
2. Why must the Holy Spirit direct and inspire our worship?
3. What must we do to have the Holy Spirit in our worship?
4. What must we do to the flesh so that the Holy Spirit can rule?
5. What really makes us the sons of God?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It is important to really crucify the flesh with the affections and desires thereof. This is part of the sacrifice that we must daily make. We must restrain our physical desires and bring them in line with what is loving, kind, merciful, considerate of others, and above all, to what glorifies and honors God. A person whose life is completely consecrated to the will of God and is filled with the Holy Spirit has the greatest treasure that one can ever have in this life. To be in the Spirit on the Lord's day, lifted up above the physical and natural surroundings, is a blessing so sweet and precious. We have to disregard what appears to be and allow the Spirit of the Lord on the strength of His Word, to lift us up to the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

God wants us to be more than just animal creatures living in this world. Sad to say, the majority of people live no higher in mind and spirit than the beasts of the field. Satisfying their hunger for food and material wealth and security seems to be the paramount thing. God is looking for the person who will subdue his or her natural desires and have respect unto what is pleasing in his sight. It takes sacrifice and self-denial to do this, but it is really worthwhile. The blessings of the Lord that we experience as we worship Him in the Spirit far outweigh any thrill and gratification of this corruptible being. Let it be the desire and purpose of each heart to live and walk in the Spirit and thereby find true satisfaction for the soul. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

I remember our family visiting the Mormon Tabernacle on one of our vacation outings. This was a very interesting building with such attention to detail—inside as well as outside. Pillars were made to look like marble; the gold plated angel at the top of the Mormon Temple; carvings on the building. After observing all of these fine elements, we never once experienced the

presence of the Lord. We left that place singing this song:

Not in the temples made with hands,  
Thou beautiful by art;  
But God in mercy condescends  
To dwell within my heart.

No more I think of God afar,  
But see thee, Lord, within;  
Oh, shine in me, thou Morning Star,  
And keep thy temple clean.

O Lord, enshrined within my breast,  
My constant joy and peace;  
My soul can now forever rest,  
Secure in thy embrace.

Oh, glory to Jesus so sweet in me;  
My body, thy temple shall forever be.

How special it is to know that our Lord is not interested in dwelling in beautiful edifices but chooses instead to dwell within our hearts!  
—Sis. LaDawna Adams



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**NOVEMBER 23, 2003**

### **GOD IS GREATLY TO BE PRAISED**

Psalm 48:1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

Psalm 33:1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

Psalm 147:1 Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

Psalm 149:1 Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

8 To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 148:13 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 50:23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

Psalm 117:1 O praise the LORD, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people.

2 For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

**MEMORY VERSE:** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Hebrews 13:15.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Our LORD God is so great, wonderful, good and wise that He deserves all the praise, honour and glory that we can give to Him and His blessed name.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psa. 48:1), "*greatly to be praised*": to be praised vehemently, that is, with great fervor, passion, and intense feeling.

(Psa. 33:1), "*comely*": suitable, becoming, beautiful. It is the same as in Psalm 147:1.

(Psa. 147:1) "*praise*": The Hebrew meaning here is "to be clear, to shine, to make a show of, to boast and celebrate. It is also to commend the worth of; to express approval or admiration of."

(Psa. 149:5), "*be joyful*": to exult, which means to be jubilant and leap for joy and gladness.

(Psa. 149:6), "*high praises*": In the Hebrew it means simply the exaltation or lifting up of God. We are to lift Him up by honouring Him with our lives and the conversation that we follow.

(Psa. 149:9), "*the judgment written; this honour have all of his saints*": The holy saints of the most high God will bring judgment upon this wicked world, even as Noah condemned the world by preparing an ark to the saving of his house. (Heb. 11:7.) Paul said in I Cor. 6:2, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"

(Psa. 148:14), "*the horn of his people*": This is the prevailing power of the saints, the abundant grace in Christ that enables us to reign in life. (Rom. 5:17.) It is this triumphant victory we have in salvation that causes the praises of God to come forth.

(Psa. 50:23), "*ordereth his conversation aright*": The Hebrew says, "He who sets or prepares the way of the LORD to come into his heart and life. In Isaiah 62:10 it says, "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." Also remember that John the Baptist preached repentance to prepare the way of the Lord, for the people to be prepared in heart for the kingdom of God.

(Psa. 117:1-2), "*praise him*": To address God in a loud tone. To laud (Rom. 15:11) and commend loudly. "*merciful kindness is great toward us*": The Hebrew says simply, "His mercy is mighty over us."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have chosen the various scriptures that exhort us to offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to our great and wonderful God. It is right and proper for us to exalt and lift up the LORD God with our voices and by living to please Him. It is fit

and suitable, becoming and lovely for us to live our lives to the praise of the Almighty. He is so good and gracious and it is so profitable to love and obey Him. And God is pleased for us to lift Him up and glorify Him before our fellow man.

David, the author of numerous Psalms, was good at exalting his God. God that made the world and all things therein is worthy of all the adoration and worship that we can render to Him from our hearts. We are to be thankful unto Him and bless His name for He is good. We are to show forth a manner of life that exhibits happiness, contentment and serenity as we profess to be the children of God. Many souls have been won through the influence of saints who lived a life to the praise of God.

Rather than murmuring and complaining and finding fault with everything and everyone, we would do well to take heed to living on the sunny side of life and offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually and make giving thanks to His name the fruit of our lips. It is one of the attributes of a true child of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is God justified in desiring that we be faithful to offer praise unto Him?
2. Who benefits the most for being thankful and offering praise to God continually?
3. What honour is conferred to the saints who glorify God in this world?
4. What are some of the reasons why we should praise the Lord?
5. How else can we render praises to God other than by our lips?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Many times in life we fall short of the happiness and victory that God wants us to have simply because we do not exercise our hearts and minds to be thankful and offer the praise to God that He is so worthy of. Too often we look at the dark side of life and become negative to everything. We magnify the faults that we see in others and dwell on those things in our conversation. This is a dire mistake and it is very costly to us, but too often we fail to realize it.

I think of a lovely poem that goes,

“Sitting today in the sunshine that touched me with fingers of love,  
I thought of the manifold blessings God scatters on earth from above.  
And they seemed as I counted them over far more than we merit or need,  
And that all that we need is the angels to make earth a heaven indeed.

The Winter brings long pleasant evenings, and Spring brings a promise of flowers,  
Which Summer breathes into fruition, and Autumn brings glad golden hours.  
The woodlands re-echo with music, the moonbeams ensilver the sea;  
There's sunlight and beauty about us, and the earth is as fair as can be.

But mortals are always complaining: each one thinks his own a sad lot.  
And rather than praise give the Giver, goes mourning for those he has not.  
Instead of the star-spangled heavens we look at the dust at our feet;  
We drain out the cup that is bitter, forgetting the one that is sweet.

We mourn o'er the thorn in the flower, forgetting its odor and bloom.  
We pass by a garden of blossoms to weep o'er the dust of the tomb.  
There are blessings unnumbered about us: like the leaves of the forest they grow.  
And the fault is our own, not the Giver's, if we have not an Eden below.”

Many times we pray and we hinder the answer to our prayers simply because we do not count God faithful and we offer no praise or thanks to Him in advance. We wait for the answer to materialize before we thank Him and count it so. We do not count God as willing and ready to supply our needs. This is another costly error. We should pray and believe that God will answer and give Him the credit for it in thanks and praise from a loving heart to Him. We should learn to rest in His love and let His blessed assurance fill us with joy and gladness. We cannot stress enough the value and importance of offering the sacrifice of praise that we really do owe to Him. It is a sacrifice to go against sight and feeling and offer the thanks and praise to God anyway. “In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I Thess. 5:18. “Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise YE the LORD!” Psa. 150:6.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The enemy hates for God to be praised and for the name of Jesus to be lifted up. We freely acknowledge that God is truly



worthy of our praise and adoration. At the same time we also acknowledge that the devil tries to stifle and put a damper on that praise—not only in our private lives but also in congregational worship services. In the last few years the giving of praise has been exalted among secular churches. To a large extent it has been praise with the lips and not the life. This is not pleasing to the Lord, but at the same time the enemy would like to steal from the saints what is rightfully theirs. If anyone has the right and the privilege to give God praise, it is the true saints of the most high God. Individuals who lift up Christ in their lives should also praise Him with their mouths. God has done so much for all of us and is so worthy of our praise and adoration. Let us be faithful to our Lord and Savior in praise and worship.

Let the gates of praise be open,  
Sounding forth the joy within;  
Shout and sing, the Lord hath spoken,  
For he saves and keeps from sin.

Praise him in the sanctuary;  
Praise him in our song and prayer;  
Praise him day and night adore him,  
Praise him, praise him everywhere.

—Bro. Michael Smith



**NOVEMBER 30, 2003**

### **THE BLESSING OF PRAYER**

Matthew 6:6 When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.  
12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.  
Amen.

Psalm 5:2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

Psalm 102:16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Proverbs 18:23 The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly.

Philippians 4:6 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.

I Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

I Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** What a privilege is ours to carry every thing to God in prayer! Communion with God in prayer is our greatest resource for power and grace to be successful and victorious in this life in preparation for our eternal home.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Matt. 6:6), "*pray*": To implore, beseech, entreat; to beg and to ask for humbly and earnestly. "*shut thy door*": This means to close out of our mind all else and give God our undivided attention.

(Matt. 6:7), "*vain repetitions*": useless repeating and many words.

(Matt. 6:9), "*Hallowed*": Sanctified, revered, sacred and holy.

(Matt. 6:10), "*Thy kingdom come*": This is a plea for the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit to draw near and have complete and absolute control of our life. It is a surrender of our will to allow the will and purpose of God to be fully accomplished in every detail of our life and being.

(Matt. 6:12), "*debts, debtors*": A debt refers to something we owe, come short in, or have in fault. Our debtors are other people who owe us, come short of our pleasure and are at fault with us. After the close of this prayer Jesus emphatically stated that if we would have forgiveness from God for our trespasses we must also forgive those who trespass against us.

(Matt. 6:13), "*lead us not into temptation*": This is a plea for Providential guidance and protection from the perils and dangers, both spiritual and natural, that infest this mortal life.

(Psa. 5:3), The Hebrew says, "Jehovah, in the morning You will hear my voice, In the morning I will arrange and set myself in order for You, and I will look up."

(Psa. 102:17), "*regard*": turn to. "*destitute*": the poor, needy and helpless."

(Prov. 18:23), "*entreaties*": The Hebrew meaning is "earnest prayer."

(Phil. 4:6), "*supplication*": making requests for, to petition earnestly.

(Phil. 4:7), "*passeth all understanding*": This means that the peace of God goes far beyond what we can even fathom or take in.

(I Thess. 5:17), "*without ceasing*": without distraction, interruption or omission.

(Eph. 6:18), The Greek text reads as it is connected to the previous verse, "(Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God) through all prayer and petition, praying at every time in the Spirit, and to this same thing watching in all perseverance (persistence and determination) and petition concerning all the saints.)"

(I Pet. 4:7), The Greek text reads: "But the end of all things has drawn near. Be disciplined, then, and be sober and alert to prayer."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

The practice of prayer to the Almighty is one of the most important things that man has engaged in since the beginning of the creation. It is very wise and good for us to sense our deep need of God's help and favor and to earnestly entreat Him for it. Abraham built an altar just about everywhere he went and he called upon God for help and guidance. Moses was also a man of prayer and communion with God. We are certainly without resources for success and to prosper on our own. But through prayer and seeking the LORD God with all our hearts we can find all that we need. It is wise to pray often and earnestly address ourselves to our Maker. One said of old, speaking of those who compassed him with words of hatred and fought against him without a cause, "For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer." Psalm 109:4.

From the Old and New Testaments we have gathered several expressions of counsel and exhortation concerning the blessing and the dire need we have for earnestly praying to God. We begin with our blessed Saviour's own teaching about the beneficial practice of prayer. He was a true and worthy example of a prayerful life. Luke 6:12 tells us about a time when "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." He also tells us in Luke 9:28-29 when "he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." Luke 18:1-8 records the parable of the unjust judge and the poor widow and how through her perseverance she was able to break down the judge to give her what she was requesting, speaking the truth that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Prayer is a vital part in our worship to God. It opens the door to the most wonderful experience we can have in this life. We must take the initiative to pray and come before God. The greatest error men make is to neglect and/or omit prayer. Prayer must come from the heart and it must be accompanied by unwavering faith and steadfast confidence. It is indispensable for every child of God to develop and maintain a faithful and consistent life of prayer and communion with God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of prayer does the Lord regard and turn to?
2. Why is much speaking in prayer not important?
3. Who is the main person that benefits from a life of prayer?
4. What are some of the things that hinder people from praying as they should?
5. Why is it important for us to engage in secret prayer?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

One must take time to pray. In our busy world, with so much going on and pressing duties and cares, there is a great temptation and tendency to neglect prayer. Paul counsels us in Romans 12:12 to continue "instant in prayer." This means to steadfastly keep prayer as your main occupation. There may be much work to be done, but without prayer it will not prosper. There may be many places to go, but without prayer it will be vanity. People are so engaged in making money and seeking for worldly gain and pleasure and are so charmed by the world and its thrills that they go through this short life neglecting the most important thing. But those who are wise and realize that they need God's help and grace above all else will be attentive to seek the Lord daily and continually. Prayer is a privilege, the most valuable and beneficial privilege we have. We should often come with confidence and assurance to the throne of grace. "Prayer is the key on the bending knee, and its blessed hold is a crown of gold." so says the poet. "So let us ever humbly watch and pray, seek oft with tears the Saviour's lovely face: Come boldly with your needs for every day, blest mercy's waiting at the throne of grace."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Many times when calamity and tragedy strike, people begin to call on the Lord for mercy. That is exactly what they should do. The Lord is merciful and He will hear and answer prayer frequently in those situations.

Jonah found himself in a bad predicament. He was running from the Lord but he couldn't escape. "Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly." Jonah 2:1. Jonah repented and prayed humbly and earnestly and the Lord gave him another opportunity to do His will.

I appreciate the mercy the Lord has on wayward souls when they call on Him, but He would also like to help people in their daily affairs of life. Talk to the Lord about the decisions you need to make even though they may not be considered "major." We are given the invitation to "come boldly to the throne of grace." Commune with Him about the good things as well as the bad. Share with Him your happiness and joy, your hopes and your dreams. Thank Him for your blessings. Include Him in your life. Then when a major need arises you will already be acquainted with Him and doing His will. It won't be necessary to make all kinds of promises in an attempt to coax the Lord into hearing prayer because your life will already be His and your need can be completely committed into His loving care.

In communing with the Lord don't forget to be quiet and allow Him an opportunity to speak. Remember, He is God and He has some words of instruction and counsel that would be of great benefit to us.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**DECEMBER 7, 2003**

### **THE VALUE AND BENEFIT OF FASTING**

Matthew 9:14 Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Matthew 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

II Corinthians 6:4 In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

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

II Corinthians 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Isaiah 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day;

11 And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** There are great blessings and rewards for sincerely laying aside our food and seeking the LORD earnestly in prayer and fasting. The purpose of fasting is to bring us closer to spiritual realities and to temper the soul to humility and awareness of the Spirit of God. Our burden in fasting and prayer should be to see souls loosed from the bondage of satan and sin, heavy burdens lifted and every oppressive yoke broken that the blessings of the LORD might abound.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Matt. 9:15), "*bridegroom shall be taken*": Christ is referring to the time when He would be taken from this earthly realm into the heavenly places and His disciples would be left in this world of sin and evil. Thus shall fasting and prayer be a great source of power and strength to endure and overcome the sorrows and adversities encountered by His people in this wicked world of sorrow and trouble. "*fast*": To abstain from partaking of food.

(Isa. 58:8), "*shall be your reward*": The Hebrew meaning here is that the LORD God would receive them and gather them up to His embrace.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Fasting has been established in the Holy Scriptures as an activity that has been carried on by God's people and is a great benefit to them. Moses, Elijah and our Lord Jesus Christ all went 40 days without food. Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. (Luke 2:37.) Esther, the queen, and her people fasted for three days in the days of impending destruction by the wicked Haman before she went in before the king to plead for their deliverance. (Esther 4:16.) King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast in Israel in the face of the great host of the enemy coming against them. (II Chron. 20:3.) The apostle Paul and those on the storm-tossed ship abstained from food for many days before they were delivered from the sea. (Acts.27:21.) The Roman centurion, Cornelius, was fasting and praying when the angel appeared and instructed him about contacting Simon Peter. (Acts 10:30.) The early morning Church was ministering to the Lord in fasting and prayer when the Holy Spirit directed them to send forth Barnabas and Saul for the work.

Down through the years the true saints of God have experienced great blessings and spiritual benefits by laying aside their food and devoting themselves to seeking the Lord in prayer. It is a part of the Christian life that is voluntarily carried out according to one's own personal conviction and responsibility. But those who really enter into it by the Spirit of the Lord find great and wonderful blessings in consistent seasons of self-denial and the laying aside of food for a season.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

I will quote a few excerpts to the question of fasting written by Bro. D. S. Warner from the November 15, 1886 edition of the Gospel Trumpet. I find his application of this subject very sound and edifying. "Fasting is taught in the New Testament, but it is more by example than by any direct precept. It is consistent with the nature of the New Testament that it does not enjoin, by positive commandment, any stated fast. And yet, in the absence of any positive precept, which would make fasting a necessary condition of a good conscience toward God, there are some good reasons why saints should at certain times practice fasting.

"It might be profitable to state that there are natural reasons why fasting is a help in special efforts to ascend higher into the hill of God's presence. In the human body the blood and magnetic forces of the body concentrate their powers more fully in that part of the system when an extra force is needed. Accordingly, after a pretty full meal has been taken into the stomach, the mind becomes sluggish, while the blood and energizing magnetism of the body are now concentrated at the stomach because of the task that must be accomplished there in the digesting of the food taken in.

"Now upon this power of concentration of the blood and life forces of the human system is based the physiology of fasting. By abstaining from food all the digestive organs of the body have a delightful holiday. And as the mind and the moral and religious organs of the brain are in lively exercise, the leisure forces come to the field of religious action, and greatly reinforce our powers of mind to apprehend God; as well as our faith in and devotion to Him. It is like trying to meditate and commune with God in the midst of a large factory during the noise and confusion made by the humming of motors, turning of belts and running of various machinery. How much sweeter that meditation and communion with God after all the machinery and noise of the factory has become silent. So the human body is a wonderful machine shop. During the holy fast all the physical and animal machinery are quieted down, and in the deep quietness that reigns, the soul is undisturbed in its communion with God. O how still, how sweet, how high above the fogs of this world our spirit wings its flight

among the celestial beauties when all but the Spirit is hushed in the holy fast unto the Lord."

Personally I have found this to be true. In a two or three day fast the body assumes a holy quietness that is not felt nor known during the normal eating schedule. The Lord becomes more real, His voice more distinctly heard and the spiritual blessings more rich and enjoyable. There is also a physical benefit to the body in fasting. It gives the digestive organs a much needed rest, which proves to be a benefit to their function. Science of health will agree to this. May the Lord help each one to venture forth into a consistent schedule of fasting that would please Him and benefit the inner and outer man. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Perhaps another perspective on fasting would be from a person who is weak physically and not able to fast from food without becoming very sick. When this type of individual desires to fast, he does so knowing that he may not be able to carry out some of the normal everyday functions. The spiritual lessons learned during this time are very valuable. The individual is made acutely aware of his inability to function without God. During this time of physical weakness his spirit can more deeply sense that he does not live by bread alone, that the word of God and work of God are to be esteemed more than his necessary food (Job 23:12, John 4:34.) and that the situations for which he is burdened during his fast are entirely hopeless and dead without God's intervention and deliverance.

The Lord can use fasting to break the hold that food may have upon an individual's life, reveal addictions that one may not have discerned and bring the whole life back into the temperance that God desires. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**DECEMBER 14, 2003**

**ASSEMBLY OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD**

Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

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

Psalm 100:2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

Psalm 96:8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

**MEMORY VERSE:** God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. Psalm 89:7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** It is pleasing to the LORD God and of great spiritual benefit to our souls to gather together and worship Him with songs, prayer and the ministry of His Word.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Psa. 95:1) The Hebrew says, "O come, let us sing for joy to Jehovah; let us shout to the Rock of our salvation."

(Psa. 95:2), The Hebrew says, "Let us come before His face with praise; with songs let us shout to Him."

(Psa. 95:3), "*above all gods*": The word "gods" here refers to other gods that people might worship other than the true God. It also is occasionally applied to magistrates and rulers.

(Heb. 10:24), "*provoke*": This means to incite, which is defined as to set in motion, to urge to action, to stimulate, to rouse, or stir up.

(Heb. 10:25), "*exhorting*": The Greek meaning is to call near and invite by earnest pleas and tears, encouraging counsel, or comfort and cheer. "*the day approaching*": The great day of the coming of the Lord drawing near.

(Col. 3:16), "*psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*": The Greek meaning of these three words are as follows: "*psalms*": Words and music to be sung in the worship of God. "*hymns*": Religious songs composed with words and music with special timing and harmony. "*spiritual songs*": These are songs with words that carry a spiritual message.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In Deuteronomy 12:11 the LORD God pointed Israel to the time when they would inhabit the land of Canaan, and instructed them that there would be a place that He would choose to cause His name to dwell there, and to that place they were to bring their sacrifices and offerings and vows, and there they would rejoice in Him.

It is very evident that He wanted His people to have times of assembly and special gathering together. We find a touching scene in Nehemiah 8 where the people gathered themselves together to hear Ezra, the priest, read from the law of the LORD. All down through the ages it has been a blessed time for people who love and worship God to come together for the express purpose of worshipping God and to edify one another. In the New Testament Church it was that way. The people gathered together to hear the Master teach and to be healed of Him. And we have

different scenes in Acts that show the gatherings of those who were converted to Christ. And it has been the practice ever since for people redeemed by the Lord Jesus to come together to serve and worship their Lord.

We have chosen various scriptures that express this invitation and encouragement for people to come together to worship God and to exhort one another. The writer in Hebrews 10:24-25 warns us explicitly to never leave off this important matter. The manner or custom of some was and still is to forsake the assembly of the Church, but it proves to be an unwise venture. We need each other and when people pull off from the congregation and take on an independent attitude, it is not good. Oh, of course, they think they have a good reason for doing so. But in reality it gives room for satan to sow error and spiritual detriment in people's heart.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

#### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What are some of the benefits of assembling together to worship the Lord?
2. What causes godly people to want to be in meetings with other saints?
3. Why is it not good to forsake the assembling of ourselves together?
4. What are some of the results of neglecting the assembly of the saints?
5. What are the various things to be carried on in a congregational gathering?

#### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

I, for one, can bear witness of much spiritual good received from attending the gatherings of the Church through the years. I was born of a godly, devout mother who saw to it that she was faithful to attend the services of the local congregation of the Church of God and also camp meetings, assembly meetings and revival meetings throughout the year. I was born just a few houses down from the saints' chapel on West Warner in Guthrie, Oklahoma, and I am sure that as soon as my mother was up going again she carried me with her to services. On up through the years of my childhood and youth this was the pattern.

Sunday morning and night, Wednesday evening, and whenever other services were scheduled such as Bible Study or cottage prayer meetings we would go. I never felt any resentment in my heart against going to meeting, although I am sure as a child I would get very weary at times. I remember being relieved in my mind when I saw the preacher close his Bible because I knew he was about finished. But as far as having thoughts of rebellious attitude against church services, I thank the Lord that I had none.

I attended Sunday school quite regularly as a young boy and I can say that it was a wonderful benefit to me in causing me to be attracted to the love of God. I had a Sunday school teacher that I loved very dearly. Her name was Ozayl Wyatt. She portrayed in her teachings the beauty of Christ so vividly. I will never forget how red her eyes would be as they brimmed with tears as she brought out the truths of Jesus. It influenced my heart greatly to be tender toward the Lord and to want to be saved and live for Him.

My mother drove our pickup and took us children to Monark Springs Camp Meeting in 1950. There I tasted the blessing and the joy of the gathering of the saints. I remember the beautiful singing of the saints as they worshipped the Lord in the songs of Zion. I loved to sit with my mother in the service. I don't remember much of the messages, but I remember the children's meetings which were directed and taught by Bro. Salvatore Didio. I was fascinated by him. He told so many stories that went along with the Scriptures.

I was born again in the summer of 1956 and consecrated my life to the service of God. Since then I have experienced many, many blessings of being in the service of the Lord with the saints of God. Their holy and modest image of purity and godliness I will never depart from, by the help of the Lord. I never want to forsake the assembling of the saints of God. There are blessings and help obtained in worshipping with the people of God that one does not get any other way. There are times for private and secret devotion and prayer, but to meet with other people who are true and pure in their lives for God brings special blessings that we will cherish forever.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What a privilege we have to live in a country where we have the freedom to worship together whenever and wherever we desire. We are not hindered or persecuted in any way. Yet, so many people neglect the opportunities availed to them. Just look in on a congregation on a Sunday night or Wednesday night service and you will notice a great decline in attendance.

I have often wondered if these absentees would attend if they knew that Jesus was going to attend services also. And yet, Matthew 18:20 says, "Where two or three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them." What a precious opportunity to be in the presence of the Lord with His people.

Every person has something to offer in an assembly together. Whether it is a selected song, a prayer, a testimony or just simply being there. We need each other's input. This is our chance to be fortified in the Lord.

Christ gave His life for us. Isn't it worth our time for Him?

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**DECEMBER 21, 2003**

### GLORIFYING GOD

Jeremiah 9:23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

I Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

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

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

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

6 That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

9 And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

I Corinthians 6:19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

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

I Peter 4:15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matter.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:16.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Whatsoever we do, whether we eat or drink, or in word or deed, we should seek to have it all be as well pleasing in God's sight and such as would lift Him up and bring glory and honour to His name.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Jer. 9:23), "*glory*": The Hebrew word means to clothe with ornaments, which means to make beautiful, honourable and majestic; to lift it up in praise and acclaim.

(Jer. 9:24), "*glorieth, glory*": This glory means to shine,



make a show of, boast about, celebrate. We should do none of this in ourselves or in our accomplishments and abilities. We owe it all to God and He is the only One worthy of the glory.

(I Cor. 1:30), "*made unto us*": generated or caused to be for us.

(Rom. 15:5-7), "*be likeminded*": In verse 4 Paul spoke of us having hope through patience and the comfort of the scriptures. He prays now, in verse 5, that the God of patience and consolation (from the same Greek word as "comfort" in verse 4.) would help us to be that way to one another, that is, have patience with and be a comfort to each other in accord with the Spirit of Christ. In verse 6 he stresses that by this spirit of patience and comfort we can be so united in one mind and mouth that we may glorify God our Father. He tells us farther in verse 7: "For this cause each one should take each other to himself in friendship, love and hospitality. *"glorify"*: To render or esteem as beautiful, glorious and honourable. It is pretty well the same meaning as to "glory in."

(Rom. 15:8,9), "*minister of the circumcision*": Jesus came first to the nation of Israel with respect to the truth that God had manifested to them and through them to the other nations around them. And God was also opening the door of faith to the Gentiles, which means the nations of the world. God knew that the Gentiles would be glad and rejoice to be granted the salvation that Christ came to bring. This they did as was reported in Acts 13:48 concerning those to whom Paul and Barnabas had preached in Antioch in Pisidia: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we want to consider another important part of our worship toward God, and that is the need to glorify Him and make Him attractive to other people by our conversation in this world. God alone is worthy of any glory that is to be rendered. He said in Isa. 42:8, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."

In Acts 12:23 we have the account of Herod who did not give God the glory as he should have when the people lifted him up

as God, and how the angel of the Lord smote him and he was eaten with worms. Romans 1:23 spoke of men who changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest," at the birth of Christ. Jesus, as He was facing the death of the cross, said, "Father, glorify thy name!" And God spoke from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." John 12:28. When Judas left the table and went out to negotiate with the rulers to betray Christ, the Lord said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway (at once, or very soon), glorify him." John 13:31-32. Jesus prophesied in John 21:19 by what death Peter should glorify God. And then we have our beloved brother Paul's concluding testimony in II Tim. 4:18, "And 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. Amen."

All these and many other scriptural references point us to glorify God here in our mortal flesh. If He can get glory to Himself through our suffering and adversity we can know that our reward will be great in heaven. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Is man inclined to glory in himself and his works?
2. Why is such an attitude wrong and displeasing to God?
3. What are some of the ways we can glorify God in our body?
4. Why is having one mind and one mouth so necessary in glorifying God?
5. For what reason should the Gentiles glorify the Lord God of Israel?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We live in a world dominated by man and his achievements. The men who hold the positions of honor and remembrance are those who climbed the ladder of service to mankind in the material and earthly realm. We have in our scripture in Jer. 9:23-24 three different areas where man can and does glory in and falls short in giving glory to God. These three are in wisdom, might and wealth. Worldly wisdom abounds today. Colleges and

universities are turning out graduates by the millions that are educated for all kinds of work and business. Man has developed every kind of gadget and invention imaginable, and they are still devising more and more. Money is flowing everywhere and there are many millionaires to be found. How many of these people are glorifying and honouring God with their wisdom, might and wealth?

Our scripture in I Cor. 1:27 tells us that God chooses to work with things the world counts as foolish and weak. This is because in working with such there is no flesh that can assume the glory and honour. This is talking about people. God wants to be glorified so He chooses to work and use vessels, earthly vessels, that have no glory in themselves, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man. (II Cor. 4:7.) But actually, even in the best of humanity, there still is nothing for man to glory about. "Man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psa. 39:5. Thus we can plainly see that we, as frail human beings, need to put the glory and praise where it should be, and that is to the LORD God almighty, who gave it all to us in the first place. In Him we live and move and have our being, and without Him we can do nothing. (See Acts 17:28 and John 15:5.)

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It should be the desire and purpose of every child of God to glorify the Father in heaven. That which will bring glory to God will not be found in those things that exalt our ways, our thoughts, our piety and ourselves in any fashion. True glory will be found in those things that are like God Himself. We should strive to be a reflection of the purity and righteousness of God in every word, attitude and action. We cannot attain that reflection by our works alone or by our religion, but we can attain it as we receive of Christ Himself. As we acquaint ourselves with the Lord, we will become more like Him. The more we become like Christ, the greater glory God will receive.

Humility is a primary key to glorifying God. The more humble the individual, the more Christ will shine in the life. Humility will cause our life to become less about "me" and more about God. This doctrine is contrary to the mind-set of the world;

but the blessings and peace that we attain far outweigh anything that the world has to offer when we glorify God rather than ourselves.  
—Bro. Michael Smith



**DECEMBER 28, 2003**

**WALKING HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD**

Micah 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased;; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

James 4:6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you,

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud. Proverbs 16: 19.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** It is just, wise and right for us to get down low and humble ourselves before God, submitting entirely and without reserve to Him and His perfect will, and faithfully carrying out His precious counsel in every phase of our lives.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Micah 6:8), The Hebrew reads: He has declared to you, **man**, what is good: and what is Jehovah seeking from you except to do justice, and to love grace (kindness, mercy, piety), and to humble yourself to walk with your God?

(James 4:6), "*He giveth more grace*": In the verses above this James has asked the question: "Do you think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth (is enticed or tempted) to envy (jealousy, ill will, spite)?" He answers it with this affirmative reply: "But He giveth more grace." In other words, we do not have to yield to this temptation or any other temptation to do or be wrong, for God has triumphant grace that will enable us to conquer.

(James 4:8), "*double-minded*": Undecided, without decisiveness, wavering, not firm or certain, divided.

(Phil. 2:5), "*Let this mind be in you*": Exercise your mind after this manner; entertain and have this sentiment and opinion; be mentally disposed; interest and concern yourself.

(Phil. 2:6), "*form*": shape or nature. "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God*": Did not hold on to be equal with God.

(Phil. 2:7), "*But made himself of no reputation*": The Greek says simply, "He emptied himself." "*form of a servant*": He relinquished being in the form of God and took upon Himself the form of a servant.

(Phil. 2:8), "*he humbled himself*": Christ had already condescended from the form of God down to the form of a servant in the likeness of men: now He humbled Himself down even farther and became obedient to God in subjecting Himself to

allowing those evil lustful men who thirsted for His blood to murder Him by crucifixion.

(Phil. 2:9). *"Wherefore"*: For this reason. Because Christ had faithfully humbled Himself to obey the Father's will in permitting Himself to be thus treated so shamefully and with such suffering and humiliation, God rewarded Him with a position of power and glory at His own right hand in the heavenly places. In like manner God rewards all who humble themselves to obey Him.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our final lesson in this series of studies concerning our worship to our heavenly Father, we will consider the importance of humbling ourselves before Him and being faithfully obedient to Him. It was the temptation to be lifted up with pride, to be as gods, that our foreparents in the garden fell a prey to, plunging the human race into the depths of sin and transgression. And history shows that this disposition has followed the course of humanity all along the way. All who made it with God had to go against this tendency of pride and self-promotion. All who yielded to it paid the price of destruction. There was Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel and others who were blessed of God for their humility and obedience. Others like Cain, Pharaoh, Saul and Judas Iscariot reaped a harvest of shame and everlasting contempt.

It does not pay to stiffen and harden one's heart against God. There is a tendency or temptation in this mortal state to do this. By an act of our own will we must go against this temptation and resist its influence. We do not have to be a victim to its snares. God has grace, more grace, to enable us to overcome this threat to our eternal welfare. All of our scriptures in our lesson today are pointing us to humility, lowliness, meekness and obedience to the will of God. There is no other way to happiness and success. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty (self-sufficient) spirit before a fall. Prov. 16:18. We have Nebuchadnezzar's own confession after his seven years of being humbled for his pride: "Now I praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Daniel 4:37. Let us diligently consider

what our Lord said that whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased. That is the way it is and there is no alternative. If you humble yourself to obey and walk with God you will be richly rewarded. But if you refuse and rebel you will be destroyed, for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who is responsible for humbling one's self before God?
2. What is God's attitude and feeling for those who will humble down before Him?
3. How does God relate to the proud and haughty?
4. How can we keep from being caught in this terrible snare?
5. How was Jesus such a good example and what was His reward for His humility?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It does not pay to push ourselves with ego and conceit;  
to feel sufficient to direct the pathway of our feet.  
We need to sense our need of God, and bow our hearts in pray'r  
for Him to work His sovereign will and for us ever care.

It is for us to be steadfast His way to always choose,  
and trust and wait on Him lest we our precious souls will lose.  
All who in hist'ry had success and blessings from above  
were those who learned to just obey and trust their Father's love.

Dear precious, faithful Abraham proved well this to be true  
in sacrificing his desires the will of God to do.  
And think of Noah who obeyed and moved with godly fear  
to build an ark to save his house and all that he held dear.

There's Moses who gave up the throne in Egypt's sinful land  
to suffer with God's people and with them to take his stand.  
And how about Elijah who withstood old Jezebel  
And took a fiery chariot ride to gloryland to dwell.

We have examples such as these to show that we can take  
the true way of obedience for our dear Saviour's sake.  
—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The truth brought out in this lesson on humility reveals one of the most important secrets for a successful relationship with God. The devil has made this "classified information" and hidden it from multitudes of people today. The lack of humility, pride, is the primary reason people are lost. But you may say, "I thought it was sin that separated us from God." Yes, that is true but Jesus made a way through repentance and humility that our sins can be forgiven and now pride remains to hinder people from seeking repentance.

An humble person will have a tender heart before the Lord and can receive instruction and admonishment from Him, but a proud person has hardened their heart and has effectively barred out the dealings of the Lord.

There are many blessings that come to those who have a humble heart. The Publican went to his house justified because of the humble way he prayed. The Prodigal son greatly improved his situation when he became willing to humbly return to his father's house. The woman of Canaan's daughter was made whole because she manifested faith and responded humbly to Jesus implying she was a dog. Naaman almost missed being cured of his leprosy because he didn't want to wash in the Jordan River as the prophet instructed, but when his servants entreated him and he humbled himself, he was healed.

Jesus sent word to John the baptist, who was in prison, saying, "And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me." If we allow pride and self-pity to creep into our life, something will come up to cause us to be offended in the Lord and we will lose His grace out of our heart.

Walking with the Lord in humility will allow us to be drawn close to the heart of God and we will enjoy many wonderful things in His presence.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey





# FAITH<sup>AND</sup>VICTORY

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