

GN

The Good News

HOW TO REALLY
UNDERSTAND
THE
BIBLE

“GOD LOVES
A CHEERFUL
GIVER”

LEADERSHIP
IN
GOD'S
CHURCH

THERAPY FOR
AILING
MARRIAGES

DO YOU
HATE YOURSELF?

AUGUST 1975

GN

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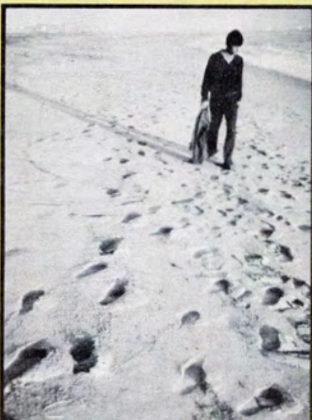
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ABOUT OUR COVER

Jesus Christ said: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 23:39). What if you hate "thyself" — is it possible to love others? The article beginning on page 24 answers this question and examines the concept of "I'm OK — You're OK."

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LEADERSHIP IN GOD'S CHURCH

by Herbert W. Armstrong

I have been thinking about a vital subject for some time now, and decided I should share those thoughts with all of our GN readers. That extremely important subject is leadership in God's Church — how it is something entirely different than executive leadership in an industrial corporation, a commercial business, or a university.

Of course, there must be leadership in God's Church, just as there must be in a commercial enterprise or any institution. It must not be guided like a ship at sea with several rudders and multiple captains, each turning his rudder in a different direction.

Yet the leadership in the Church of God must be, in another sense, entirely different than that of, say, an industrial corporation.

We need to understand what that difference is.

Just as in a commercial business or any institution, the leadership must be in the hands of one who knows what is the *purpose, function* and *commission* of the Church. He must be able to lead the Church undeviatingly on course toward that *goal*.

The first law of success in any operation, enterprise, or even in personal life, is to have the right

goal and to continually hew to the line, never to be led off on some tangent or lured astray from the goal.

Yet there is one outstanding difference. In fact, just about everything in God's Work is utterly *unique* — unlike any other operation.

In an industrial corporation, for example, the leader — the chief executive — is usually a nine-to-five desk executive. He is managing a factory. His office will be within the factory, or, in a large corporation, in the executive office building adjoining. All of the operations he must oversee and manage, except perhaps marketing, sales and purchasing of raw materials, are in this same plant. He may take an occasional trip to the source of raw material purchasing, or to inspect his sales and distribution system. But primarily he manages the enterprise as a nine-to-five desk executive at the factory.

Some might think God's Work should be managed in the same way, by a nine-to-five desk executive.

Now let's understand the *difference*.

First of all, where does the leadership in God's Church reside? The answer is simple and clear. "Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23).

And Jesus said: "All *power* is given unto me in heaven and in

earth” (Matt. 28:18). This was said after His resurrection, just before He ascended into heaven. He has full *authority* over the Church. He was sending His apostles forth *in His name*, which means *empowered* as His chosen representatives, clothed with that power and authority. And He followed those words with the Great Commission — the *purpose* of His Work: “Go ye therefore” — that is, as a result of the fact that all power and authority is vested in Him — “and teach *all nations* . . .” (Matt. 28:19).

The *leadership* is vested in Christ. But He, sending forth His apostles to proclaim His gospel *message* of the Kingdom of God, vested chief leadership of the Israelites in Peter, and chief leadership of the Gentiles in Paul (Gal. 2:7-8).

The very word “apostle” means “one *sent*.” Not one staying home as a nine-to-five desk executive.

How does Christ exercise His leadership? *What* is His leadership like? He is “the *same* yesterday, today and forever.” So, how did He lead yesterday? And how today?

In Moses’ day Christ led His Church — the congregation of Israel — through Moses. Moses had his critics who questioned his leadership. But God did not supply leadership through Moses’ critics, but through *Moses*, the man He Himself had chosen. It was actually Christ’s leadership (He was the God of the Old Testament). But He led *through* Moses.

Moses’ critics were of two classes — the congregation as a whole, and a few close to the top in high positions.

When God called Moses to Mt. Sinai to receive instruction, you will read that “the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” (Ex. 32:1).

I have experienced a similar situation in the early days of this Work in Eugene, Oregon. But in this instance, Moses had to face a credibility gap. He was the man *God* had chosen for *leadership* over them.

But God *Himself* ran up against a credibility gap with our very first parents. Adam and Eve didn’t believe or obey their Maker. They doubted. Satan has had people doubting God ever since. But does that make God wrong and the doubters right? No, “let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). God was exercising right *leadership* in teaching Adam and Eve, but they did not recognize nor accept even the *divine* leadership! The same was true with the Israelites at

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Mt. Sinai. It was God’s leadership through Moses, but the people did not recognize it, departed from it and turned to sin!

Though some few have done likewise today, let us be glad and rejoice that God’s Church today is solidly *together!*

But Moses’ leadership was also questioned by men in high position in God’s Church (the congregation of Israel).

“Now Korah . . . and Dathan and Abiram . . . took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against

Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation [the Church] are holy, every one of them, and the Eternal is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Eternal?” (Num. 16:1-3.)

A small group of dissident ministers, some in high positions, did the same thing in God’s Church in our day — just a little over a year ago. Oh yes, it *can* happen here! Are we so different today? Is not Satan just as eager to cause this same kind of rebellion against the living God in our day, as he was in Moses’ day? But thank God for the *leadership* of Jesus Christ. As in Moses’ day He has held His Church *together* — the dissenters are *gone!*

“Moses said unto Korah . . . Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Eternal, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: *and seek ye the priesthood also?* For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together *against the Eternal* . . .” (verses 8-11).

Notice, these men were already in a high position over the people, and brought close to God. But that was not enough! They were interested in high *status*, for themselves, rather than opportunities to serve God and God’s people. But continue on.

How does God look at this sort of thing? Has He changed today?

“And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram . . . which said, We will not come up.” Flat disobedience! Refusal to obey an official order by God’s human leader. Continue — notice their resentful attitude and refusal to recognize it was God, acting *through* Moses, who brought them out of Egypt — “Is it a small thing that *thou* [not God] hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou

make *thysself* altogether a prince over us? . . . We will *not* come up”! (Verses 12-14.)

How did God look at all this? He acted, as recorded in verses 31-32: “And it came to pass . . . that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah [including Dathan and Abiram], and all their goods.”

The one who was faithful in God’s sight was Moses, the man God had *chosen*, and not those who criticized and opposed.

God ruled His congregation (Church) in Moses’ day through Moses, who appointed leaders under him over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens. It was a chain of authority from God the Father, through Christ (it was the One who became Christ who was the God of the Old Testament; write for our free article “Is Jesus God?” for proof), through Moses, and then those under Moses.

But highest in the priesthood was Aaron, brother of Moses; and their sister Miriam was a prophetess. These two criticized Moses.

“And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Eternal indeed spoken *only* by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Eternal heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) And the Eternal spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the Eternal . . . called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words . . . wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the *anger* of the Eternal was

kindled against them; and he departed” (Num. 12:1-9).

But continue: As soon as the Eternal departed, “. . . the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous” (verse 10). At Moses’ urgent prayer, God healed her after seven days.

But do these experiences of ancient times have any significance for us today? Speaking of such incidents under Moses in the wilderness, you will read in I Corinthians 10:6: “Now these things were our examples”; and in verse 11: “Now all these things happened

We keep our eyes steadfast on the prime and central goal: Go ye into all the world . . . proclaiming the Kingdom of God, preparing the way for Christ’s coming. Today God is opening mighty doors, clear at the very top of many nations, for the proclaiming of the gospel message that has never reached those nations before.

unto them for ensamples: and they are written *for our admonition*, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Do they *mean* anything? Or do we shrug them off carelessly, with no fear of the living God?

Jesus’ personal ministry on earth, of course, occurred before He built His Church. Jesus set the example, and also gave the Great Commission — which is the *goal* for future Church leadership.

What was His example? Jesus was decidedly NOT a nine-to-five desk executive. He probably did not even have a desk. It is recorded: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the *kingdom* . . .” (Matt. 4:23).

Yet human nature has not changed since Moses’ day. *Who* was it that finally betrayed Christ to be put to death? It was one of His own top men — one of His elite inner circle — one of His twelve at the top, and closest to Him! But Judas no longer remained with the twelve. He no longer was part of God’s Work. Just like those in Moses’ day. Just like in the early years of the present Philadelphia era at Eugene, Oregon. And just like it still is *today!* Jesus Christ is still the *same*, yesterday, today and forever! (Heb. 13:8.) The dissidents, the critics, the traitors *do not remain in the Work*. They fall by the wayside. But probably *they* will never learn that lesson.

And, when Jesus had finished the work He personally was to do on earth — when the time came when He was going to lead the Work through humans He Himself chose, what did He command? How did He instruct those to whom He delegated the human leadership in His Church?

He did not delegate the job of becoming nine-to-five desk executives, but said, “*Go ye* into all the world, and preach the gospel” — the *message* of the coming *Kingdom of God* (Mark 16:15).

And THAT IS THE WORK!

As stated before, Jesus assigned Peter the responsibility for the leadership of the Work to Israel, and Paul to the Gentiles. They were apostles — *ones sent* — not desk executives. They went out proclaiming Christ’s message of the Kingdom of God. They also proclaimed the message in writing. Their writings were inspired, and they became part of the inspired Scriptures — the very Word of God. Just as Garner Ted and I do, they *preached*, and they *wrote*.

And they were in *authority*; the government of God was established in God’s Church. They wielded that authority *as they were guided by Christ* through the Holy Spirit — just as I and Garner Ted do today. And they made final decisions on

doctrine. As an example, you read in Acts 15 where *Peter set the final decision*, after which James, a pastor of the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem, made it official. That was the work and responsibility of God's apostle, and I follow that example today.

In our day the living Christ called and chose me and raised up His Church of this present "Philadelphia" era through me in 1933. He started His Work, proclaimed the gospel message of the *Kingdom of God*, through me in personal campaigns, over the air, and in print beginning in January 1934.

Through His Holy Spirit, the living Christ revealed plainly to me the goal of the Work — the main *purpose* of the Church — to *go* into all the world and preach and publish the message of the Kingdom of God!

There have been, during these nearly 42 years, times when there was criticism, opposition, persecution, false accusation, and efforts to deviate from the one main purpose and goal. The false accusers and dissidents of 35-42 years ago left the Work, accomplished *nothing* themselves, and are mostly long since dead. But the Work carries on bigger and in far greater *power* than ever before!

Of course, I knew when I was first called that opposition and persecution would come. This would not *be* the Work of God otherwise. I knew well that Jesus had said: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20). I had "counted the cost" before answering the call.

The living Christ started the present phase of the Work through me in the summer and early autumn of 1933 by raising up the parent church in Eugene, Oregon. He had not yet provided me even with a car. I had to hitchhike to hold meetings proclaiming the *Kingdom of God*.

The Church, raised up to back

Christ's human servant *in the Work*, stood back of me as I went on the air, first for one week in October 1933, then regularly in January 1934, never to stop to this day.

The *Plain Truth* was started February 1, 1934.

I knew well the *purpose* of the *Work*: to go into all the world, proclaiming the message of the Kingdom of God. The purpose of the Church was, and still is, to *back the Work* of proclaiming that gospel message in all the world, for a witness to all nations.

At first, Christ led all the Work through me and my wife, alone. After a while, I added a student stenographer half-time. Later a full-time secretary; then more were added. As God also added to His Church, the need for an educated ministry became imperative. God started Ambassador College in Pasadena through me in 1947. There were birth pains, hardships, traumatic suffering and the usual opposition.

Soon there were graduates from the College to assist me in doing the Work to which Christ called me, and which He is directing, leading and blessing.

My son Garner Ted, three years old when the Church was first raised up and the Work started, grew up, became converted, and soon it became apparent by the *fruits* borne that God had raised him up as His number-two man, beside me, in His Church and in His Work.

And still today, we are, primarily, *doing the Work*. But of course we need *help!* As one connected with the Work for fifteen years recently wrote: "All others have come into the Work, many as employees, for the sole purpose of helping the Armstrongs who are the living human heads [leadership] of God's Work, to help carry out the commission that has devolved on them. But, each of these individuals could be replaced."

So today, *many* are having their part in this great Work of the living God.

And, still today, we keep our eyes steadfast on the prime and central *goal*: *Go ye* into all the world . . . proclaiming the Kingdom of God, preparing the way for Christ's coming and the Kingdom.

Today God is opening mighty *doors*, clear at the very *top* of many nations, for the proclaiming of the gospel message that has never reached those nations before.

Today Garner Ted Armstrong broadcasts the message by radio and television, carries on personal appearance campaigns, gets out the gospel by writing as I do.

Today, Christ's message is going out in power, *in all the world* — and, still today, under the leadership of the living Jesus Christ, the Head of God's Church.

In closing, I want to express once again my deep, heartfelt *appreciation* to all of you whom God has called to share in accomplishing the Great Commission He has given to His end-time Church. We *know* you are *behind* Garner Ted and me, holding up our hands in proclaiming Christ's message to all the world as a witness.

Let's never lose sight of the *great goal*. Let's push on harder than ever before to get the Work done! □

RECOMMENDED READING

Jesus said, "I will build my church"! And He did build it! No one in the Christian world denies there is a true Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head somewhere on this earth right now! Many imagine that Church is to be found in the hearts and minds of multiple millions who may represent dozens of different "faiths." Others claim it is one great organized and political body. Others may feel it is a tiny sect. But can you prove which church is the true Church? There is proof available! In a new booklet, we present seven major proofs which represent incontrovertible evidence of where God's true Church, of which Jesus Christ is the literal living Head, is working on this earth today!

A copy of this free booklet, titled *Seven Proofs of God's True Church*, can be obtained by simply requesting it. See the inside front cover for the address of our office nearest you.

Q&A

QUESTION: "I would like the following question answered in your Q & A section as it has bothered me for quite some time. It concerns Galatians 6:6: 'Let him who receives instruction in the word of God share all good things with his teacher – contributing to his support.' Does this refer to monies over and above tithes sent directly to the Headquarters Church? In other words, are the people the minister serves also to provide for him?"

Anonymous

ANSWER: Most commentators appear to believe that this expression, used by Paul, is a euphemism for "let him make a financial contribution."

In those early days the Church was not centrally organized as it is in this age. While the Headquarters Church at Jerusalem was influential in the making of doctrinal decisions (Acts 15), there was no formal, corporate structure as such. We have no evidence, except for an offering of foodstuffs collected for the poor saints at Jerusalem, that there was any centralization of funds in those times. Each local church congregation was expected to support its ministry (I Tim. 5:17-18). The apostles too, though traveling throughout the Empire and beyond, were entitled to support from the Church.

Paul made this plain in I Corinthians 9: "Do we not have the right to our food and drink... as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas [Peter]? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?..."

"Do I say this on human author-

ity? Does not the law say the same? ... If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more?" (Verses 4-12, RSV.)

While Paul did not expressly quote the tithing law here, it follows that if the ministry had the right to claim material support from the Church, they also had the right to define *how much* was needed to do the Work.

Today, the cost of radio and television time, printing costs, advertising expenses, hall rentals, salaries and other expenses have made it plain that the Church must *define* for its membership just what is the Christian obligation. Following the biblical example of tithing (Gen. 14:19-20; 28:22; Lev. 27:30; Numbers 18:21-28; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 23:23, etc.), members of the Worldwide Church of God give God the *tenth* (tithe).

This tithe, and in many cases additional offerings, is sent to the Headquarters of the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, California (and to other offices around the world). From this central point it is equitably distributed to defray the expenses of preaching Christ's gospel and maintaining the Church.

Local church pastors are paid a biweekly salary from Headquarters. If a sudden, unexpected emergency creates a need for local church assistance, this is certainly in order. However, the Church does not generally encourage the giving of monetary gifts to local pastors. Their salaries are adequate for their physical needs.

So long as God allows us to maintain an organized, efficient headquarters structure, there is no reason

why the needs of the ministry cannot be taken care of from a central location. Prevailing circumstances dictate the best means of supporting the ministry. In today's computerized world of paper money and plastic money (credit cards), centralization provides the greatest efficiency – and the most mileage for God's money.

A brand new booklet on the subject of tithing will be forthcoming very soon. It will expound the overall biblical basis, pre-Mosaic incidents, the Levitical system and the New Testament principle. The present administration of tithing will also be explained in detail. Just what constitutes the tithable base is a question in the minds of salaried workers, wage earners, businessmen and farmers alike. These and other technical questions will be answered by way of broad guidelines and principles.

Just as soon as this new booklet is off the press, its availability will be announced to our family of readers.

Q: "Can you tell me where Cain got his wife?"

Carol F.,
Austin, Texas

A. The answer is found in Genesis 5:4-5: "And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: *and he begat sons and daughters*: and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died."

Notice that Adam begat daughters. By this time other children had been born to Adam and Eve. It is quite obvious that Cain married one of his sisters – Adam's daughter. There simply weren't any unrelated females for him to marry.

For further details, write for our free booklet titled *Answers From Genesis*. □

In the last issue we saw how the Bible is literally packed with analogies, examples and parables about the right attitude and approach toward money. Jesus Christ of Nazareth gave example after example about talents, pounds and pennies. In this article we'll show you where "your treasure" really ought to be.

by Garner Ted Armstrong

Well over half of the sixth chapter of Matthew (in the heart of the "Sermon on the Mount") is taken up with Jesus' message about money and concern over material possessions.

He said: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures *upon earth*, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal [there is no absolute security anywhere on this earth]: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:19-20).

The Perpetual Emergency

For those who are continually worried about "one more month's" survival, that scripture is an awfully big pill to swallow. But what good is that one month's supply when it is over, finished, done with, used up and that month is history? Those who want to put off an event find all too soon that it is right there — staring them in the face.

People think to themselves: I've got to have an emergency supply of money so I can perpetuate my existence for one, two or six months — or even, in some cases, a year, or maybe even six years. But would they really be satisfied at the end of a specified time — no matter how long it was? I think we know the answer. The truth is that we can never lay up quite enough for such an emergency: figuratively speak-

ing, such an emergency would last for all eternity.

The best way to store up for an emergency is to put it where it can *never* be corrupted, stolen, inflated, deflated or even diminished to the tiniest extent — where total, ultimate, maximum and absolute security exists!

Jesus continues: "For *where your treasure is*, there will your heart be also" (verse 21). Where is your treasure? Is it in a bank account? In gold stocks? Under the mattress? "Safely" stashed away in the ground? Wrapped up in a sack?

Or is it in God's coming Kingdom — *doing His work today* that precedes His Kingdom?

This is not to say God does not approve of savings or being frugal and careful with one's material goods with an eye toward the future! The Bible plainly endorses laying up for *grandchildren's* needs, and the example of a righteous woman "considering a field" in Proverbs 31 is well known. But there is an obvious difference between saving for a "rainy day" and the over-anxious, worried *concern* over the future to the point of "hoarding" either money or goods. *Balance* is the key — and the right balance is possible only when the right *attitude* is maintained.

Jesus talked about *attitude* when he spoke of the eye being "single."

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single [single-hearted, single in purpose], thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. . . . *No man can serve two masters*: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. . ." (verses 22-24).

God or Mammon?

And then Jesus Christ of Nazareth utters one of the most profound truisms in all of the Bible: "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (verse 24). The very essence of this age can be summed up in the one word



Part Two

"GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER"

“mammon.” Webster defines it as “material wealth or possessions esp. having an evil power or debasing influence” (*Third New International Dictionary*, unabridged).

Mammon is where it’s at. It embodies all the competition, strife, greed and lust attendant to this world’s way — all the debasing elements that are attached to the love of money. But Jesus says that you *cannot* serve God and mammon. You have to choose one or the other! God always gives us a choice. But He always advises us to “*Choose life* that both you and your children may live” (cf. Deut. 30:19).

Jesus’ advice is no different. He continues: “Therefore [in the light of the fact that you cannot serve God and mammon] I say unto you, Take no [anxious] thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat [food], and the body than raiment [clothing]? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, *O ye of little faith?*” (Verses 25-26, 28-30.)

Giving to Get?

Often the missing ingredient in giving is *faith* — the faith that God Almighty will back up His Word and take care of our physical needs. Some are afraid to put God to the test; afraid to “prove me now herewith”; afraid to see whether or not God will open the windows of heaven and pour them out a blessing (cf. Mal. 3:10).

But, giving to get? No, that

should *never* be our attitude! A person just gives to be able to give. And when he receives, he just treats it as a totally unexpected blessing and turns around to give more. The true giver, as it were, looks around in absolute bewilderment when he receives. He doesn’t give with an underlying surreptitious sort of a secret motive, thinking: “The more I give, the more I’m going to get.” That attitude is disastrous to giving! Giving to get is *not* really giving at all in the truest sense of the term.

Giving, of and by itself, brings unfathomable blessings even if you never get a dime back in a material sense. Jesus said: “It is *more blessed to give* than to receive” (Acts 20:35). As an example, just seeing the expression on the face of the receiver is by far the only reward many a giver would ever want.

Jesus’ advice on these material matters is consistent. He tells people not to be so overly concerned with things like money, food, clothing, possessions, shelter, survival, security, etc. He continues in Matthew 6: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles [nations] seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

“But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [food, clothing, shelter, little amenities, etc.] *shall be added unto you*” (verses 31-33). Jesus is talking about a right sense of priorities. He knows (and God the Father knows) what the material and monetary needs of men and women are — after all, He is our Creator. He made us knowing full well what our human bodies and minds would require in terms of the products of the material earth.

The problem is (and has been) that people are so *much more* concerned about their pecuniary postures (their financial and material needs) than seeking God’s Kingdom. God is more than willing to shower us with material blessings

(and even luxuries) if we would only put the true values *first*.

Approach to Tomorrow

Jesus continues in this account of the “Sermon on the Mount”: “Take therefore [in the light of the fact that God will add the material dimensions] no [anxious] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (verse 34).

The world is finally beginning to wake up to this one principle because of a kind of jaded recoil to the future shock of the absolutely inadmissible (to people’s minds) circumstances both extant in and coming on the world as a whole. People are learning to live life daily — one day at a time. “There’s no reason not to be happy today; there’ll be plenty of time to be unhappy tomorrow.”

Unfortunately there are plenty of perversions of this basically right concept. We shouldn’t say: “There is no need to worry; nothing is going to turn out all right.” That is a lack of faith. Neither should we say: “Why shouldn’t I do whatever appeals to me physically? There is no tomorrow.”

But there is a tomorrow! So God wants us to both live for today *and* to think about the consequences of what we do today in terms of tomorrow. We should live daily in the sense of tackling each problem as it comes to us — even with regard to procuring food, clothing and shelter.

But anxiety, fright, concern, apprehension, worry and fear over the future — a lingering desire for total security — none of these negative emotions reflect any faith in God Almighty and His ability to back up His Word and look out for the physical necessities of His children.

The Security Obsession

Total, absolute security is a myth anyway. This basic truism is nowhere better illustrated than in Jesus’ short parable in the twelfth chapter of the book of Luke.

He prefaced this parable with a great overall principle. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (verse 15). If people in this money-mad, materialistically oriented society of ours could only understand and heed this one principle! Yet possessions, accumulations of fine furniture, luxurious automobiles, furs, jewelry — these things are *so important* to many.

Then Jesus went right on into the parable: "... The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods *laid up for many years*; take thine ease [take it easy], eat, drink, and be merry" (verses 16-19).

This man thought he had it made: his emergency fund was almost perpetual — extending for many years on out into the future. But notice God's reaction to his totally selfish attitude. "God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee [he was to die]: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Verse 20.)

This particular rich man, just exactly like the one in the parable about the beggar named Lazarus, apparently had no concern whatsoever for his fellowmen — most of whom were far less financially fortunate than he was. He was so totally out of tune with the needs of others that the thought of giving away a small portion of his goods probably never even crossed his mind.

Then Jesus added this closing thought at the end of the parable: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (verse 21). This rich man's sad plight is the end result of total self-concern to the exclusion of God and

neighbor. And we don't have to be rich to have the man's attitude. Anyone who stubbornly continues in that same covetous attitude will wind up with the same "reward" — sooner or later.

The Giving Attitude

On the opposite side of the coin is the giving attitude illustrated by yet another vital maxim in the "Sermon on the Mount." Jesus said: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matt. 5:42). Luke's account expounds on this particular phase or aspect of the giving spirit a little more than Matthew's. "And if ye lend [or give] to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, *and do good*, and lend, *hoping for nothing again* [the true giving spirit]; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest [eternal life in God's Kingdom]: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:34-35).

And then Jesus goes on to show that the true giving spirit brings on an automatic boomerang-like effect. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (verse 38). This verse just repeats, in different words, the old time-tested principle restated by many different writers throughout the Bible: "What you sow you shall reap."

Solomon, several times in his writings, reiterates the very same axiom: "Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days. *Give* a portion to seven, or even to eight..." (Eccl. 11:1-2, RSV). And again: "One man *gives freely*, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered"

(Prov. 11:24-25, RSV). Also: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with *the firstfruits* of all thine increase: [and then as a direct consequence] so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Prov. 3:9-10). More about this true spirit of giving later in this article.

The Kingdom of God and Monetary Stewardship

The giving spirit, honest handling of material possessions, getting the most for your money in the right way — all these principles have everything to do with entrance into the Kingdom of God. In many of His parables, Jesus likened the proper use of and attitude toward various monetary units to both getting into and being rewarded in the coming government of God.

Forgiveness of monetary debts and forgiveness of spiritual sins are compared in a parabolic analogy in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven [Kingdom of God in Mark, Luke and John] likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents [the margin says a talent is 750 ounces of silver]. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made" (verses 23-25).

Then the story goes on to show how the servant begged his creditor to be patient with him — and how the master had compassion and forgave every bit of the debt (verses 26-27). And then at this juncture the account clearly displays the illogical, tortuous twists and turns human nature sometimes takes. "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants which owed him an hundred pence [a very, very paltry sum by comparison]: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell

down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt" (verses 28-30). Instead of shoveling out mercy with a giant scoop shovel as his master had (and as God does), that servant absolutely refused to forgive a minor, petty sin against him.

The spiritual analogy ought to be obvious. When God has totally forgiven us of incredible, uncountable sins, it's like one of us going out and shaking a brother like a rag doll — half strangling him, figuratively speaking — when we refuse to forgive his sins.

What do you think God's reaction is to this kind of conduct? "Then his lord . . . said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee *all that debt*, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors . . ." (verses 32-34).

And then Jesus caps off the parable, explaining its meaning in the very plainest of language. "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye *from your hearts* forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (verse 35). Here Jesus uses the analogy of the payment of debt and the handling of money as an example of a means of getting into God's Kingdom.

Almost every time Jesus Christ talks about the Kingdom of God and a righteous attitude — a spirit of mercy and forgiveness — He speaks about talents, pounds, pennies, trading, buying and selling, hiring and firing, the unrighteous mammon, a creditor that releases debts, etc., etc.

On one particular occasion, Jesus Christ was having dinner at the home of one of the Pharisees (Luke 7:36). "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner [a prostitute], when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of oint-

ment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake *within himself*, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

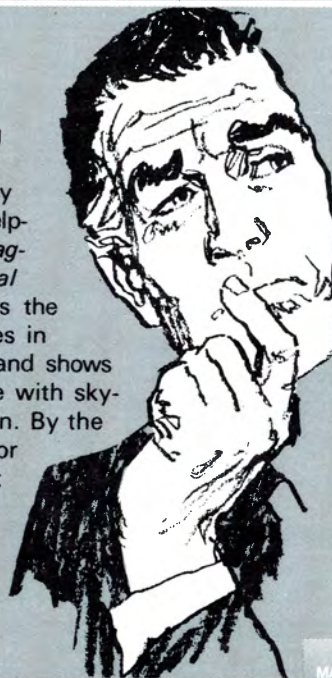
"And Jesus answering [He knew what the Pharisee was thinking; He knew what was *in man*, cf. John 2:24-25] said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee There was a certain *creditor* which had two *debtors*: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell

me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered . . . I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged" (verses 37-43).

Simon knew the answer: obviously it would be the one who owed the biggest debt. You are happier proportionate to the amount of the release. Jesus continued the discourse: ". . . Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with [her] tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; *for*

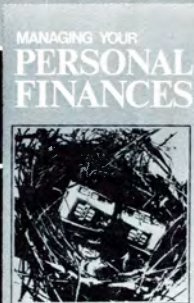
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she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little” (verses 44, 47).

Trading Your Talents

Christian stewardship, if you want to call it that, embodies a many-faceted set of responsibilities — going far beyond just the willingness to forgive a brother of a debt in a hardship case or the related spiritual analogy of releasing a spiritual sin. Other parables bring out different aspects of the same overall theme of proper handling of money and material possessions. One such parable is found in Matthew 25: “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several [natural] ability; and straightway [immediately] took his journey” (verses 14-15).

The word “talent” is a measurement of money (a monetary unit of payment) and is only spiritually analogous to an ability, proclivity, or something of that nature. These servants were to invest the man’s money wisely, and see to it that the investment improved to the best of their individual abilities. They were supposed to put the money to work — to make money with money — even to put it out to interest, if they themselves didn’t know how to use it otherwise.

Talents were given according to their innate and/or developed natural abilities, and those servants were expected to develop and increase those talents.

“Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two” (verses 16-17). So trading, buying, selling and working in business is a right principle of God.

This example shows once again Jesus Christ’s absolute belief in the free enterprise system, *minus*,

of course, its evils and abuses.

Both of these servants, though they started with different amounts, doubled their talents in trading — that’s a 100 percent increase! By spiritual analogy they overcame exactly to the same degree. Their reward would be *the same* in God’s Kingdom according to His righteous judgment.

God judges us individually based on how much we do with our own unique, natural abilities — *not on someone else’s* natural talents and abilities. And God judges the worth of how much we give based on *our own individual* financial capacities. He does *not* expect us to give what we “have not got”!

The Timorous Type

Now notice the negative example of the servant that had been given but one single talent. “But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money” (verse 18). How like this example is that of the backyard hoarder — salting away his emergency fund under the vegetable garden! This fellow was a timorous, penny-pincher type, afraid to take a little bit of a risk and launch into a venture with potential rewards and opportunities.

After the two servants, who had each doubled their talents in trading, received their rewards with a “well done, thou good and faithful servant” (verses 20-23), reckoning time came for this hoarder type. “Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and *I was afraid*, and went and hid [buried] thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine” (verses 24-25). All he would have had to have done was gain one more talent and he could have received the identical “well done.” But he chose to take the easy way out — following the path of least resistance. You can read of his “reward” in verses 27 through 30.

But notice especially verse 27: “Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury [interest].” Is it a right and godly principle for money to earn interest? According to Jesus Christ of Nazareth it is! The least this person could have done is to have put his master’s money into a savings account and let someone else use the money to make money — earning interest in the meantime. In the end, the one that possessed the ten talents (five given and five gained) was also given the one talent of the unprofitable servant (verses 28-29).

In this whole parable, Jesus is equating, by spiritual analogy, the earning of monetary profits and even interest with character improvement (as verses 31 through 46, which follow this parable, *in context* strongly indicate). But the central, crux, crucial theme of the parable is held together by a monetary unit — a means of fiduciary payment — a medium of exchange.

Jesus has invested, so to speak, a little bit of His Spirit in each of us, and He expects *an increase!* (The parable of the pounds described in Luke 19 is similar in nature.)

The Fruits of Repentance

John the Baptist (the forerunner of Jesus Christ) taught the Pharisees and the people to repent of covetousness, which is *material idolatry* — breaking the first as well as the tenth commandment. “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat [food], let him do likewise” (Luke 3:8, 10, 11). Pretty plain and clear advice for any Christian wanting to live a life that is going to end up in God’s Kingdom.

The account continues on with John’s advice to the tax collectors of that day: “. . . Exact no more [money] than that which is ap-

pointed you" (verse 13). He was telling them in modern vernacular: "Don't extort; don't pad the rate even a little bit; don't pull the wool over the eyes of these poor widows and peasants who really don't comprehend all this form shoptalk; don't take advantage of their ignorance of the ins and outs of the rate structure."

The soldiers also wanted to know about their responsibilities. How could they "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance"? "... And he [John] said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and *be content with your wages*" (verse 14). John hit right directly on the condition that has led toward more malcontent than perhaps any other thing in the military services from time immemorial — *low wages*.

Here we see three different brackets or types of people who came to John the Baptist asking: What are the fruits of a Christian life? And John answered: give of your clothing; give of your food; don't extort; be content with your income.

The apostle Paul expanded upon these concepts in Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conversation [conduct] *be without covetousness*; and be content [not only with your wages but] with such things as ye have: [Why?] for he [Jesus] hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

These scriptures bear down fairly hard on the idolatrous sin of covetousness; but they do *not* mean, taken in context with the many, many other plain scriptures on the subject, that a person cannot with honesty and hard work build up and increase his material possessions — and even be the recipient of a generous salary increase.

How To Give

This same apostle Paul also wrote: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he *may have to give* to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28). In order to give, in a material

sense, you have to have something to give. That's fairly basic!

Romans 12 is one of the most important Christian-living chapters in all of the Bible. Paul instructs: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us [by God], whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith . . . or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: *he that giveth*, let him do it with simplicity [margin, *liberally*] . . ." (verses 6, 8).

A person can give a great deal more than money. You can give of your energy; you can give of your work. Work parties in local churches have done just that many, many times. As an example, they have painted an elderly lady's whole house in just one day. Afterwards they will all gather around the backyard for a big barbecue and sit down and chat with her. They see how thankful she is by the gleam in her eye and the expression on her face. In only one day's time, she has a beaming white house with neat little blue shutters. Such is the true spirit of giving.

Giving is a proportionate proposition: the amount is in ratio to how much you have to give — both materially and spiritually. Again, God does *not* expect you to give what you have not got! The attitude is the important thing! *The true spirit of liberal giving far transcends the exact dollar figure!*

But generosity is commanded! Did you know that? A generous spirit and attitude — in proportion to the amount of your possessions — is basic to God's "give" way of life. God Himself is a very generous giver! He expects His children to reflect a like generosity within their limited means by comparison.

Paul made this vital point crystal clear! "... He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for *God loveth a cheerful giver*" (II Cor. 9:6-7). □

If You'd Like to Know More

Many hundreds have written asking if we have representatives in their areas to counsel with them personally and to answer their questions.

The answer is yes, we do.

The Worldwide Church of God stations personal representatives (most are ordained ministers) in the United States and British Commonwealth and many other areas of the world. These men will visit you, if invited, directly in your own home.

So if you have spiritual matters to discuss or questions to ask about biblical topics such as repentance, baptism, etc., please feel free to write us and request a private appointment. Worldwide mailing addresses are as follows:

- United States: P.O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91123 (Or simply dial this toll-free number in the *continental* U.S.: 1-800-423-4444. Readers in California, Alaska and Hawaii may call 213-577-5225 collect.)
- United Kingdom, Europe, India, Africa and the West Indies: P.O. Box 111, St. Albans, Herts., England
- Australia: G.P.O. Box 202, Burleigh Heads, Queensland 4220 (Or dial this number: 075-35-4233 — reverse the charges.)
- Canada: P.O. Box 44, Station A, Vancouver, B.C.
- South Africa: P.O. Box 1060, Johannesburg 2000 (Or dial this number: 011-216406.)

Other areas of the world should check the inside front cover (staff box) for the address of our office nearest you.



Ambassador International Cultural Foundation

Dedicated to Serving Humanity Worldwide

by Arthur A. Ferdig, Publications Director, AICF

By now you have undoubtedly heard about AICF — an exciting new arm of the Work. It's helping to take Christ's message to this world with greater impact than ever before! Here's the story behind the Foundation, and here's how you can have a direct part in its worldwide activities.

* * *

The Ambassador International Cultural Foundation is moving full-steam ahead! It's proving to be a tremendous asset to the Work of God — and also to government leaders and their peoples in several areas of the world.

The Foundation was developed primarily to serve in carrying the message of the coming Kingdom of God as a witness to all nations. But it offers more. Through its many worthwhile activities we each have a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate true Christian character — our love, concern and generosity toward others. We can all share in this truly *humanitarian* effort.

How To Take the Gospel to the World

The commission of this Work is to take Christ's gospel to the world as a witness. That sounds simple enough, but in actual fact it is extremely difficult — impossible without direct

help and intervention from God. It's no easy task. All the wisdom and effort of men is not enough. There is a reason.

The world is a tangled mass of complexity. Masses of humanity are divided by national boundaries, by languages, by wealth or lack of wealth, by geography, by ideology, by religion and superstition, by education, by race, by hatred, by war — and by enormous government restrictions and piles of officially tan-

gled red tape. Today the world is divided by problems that are beyond man's ability to solve.

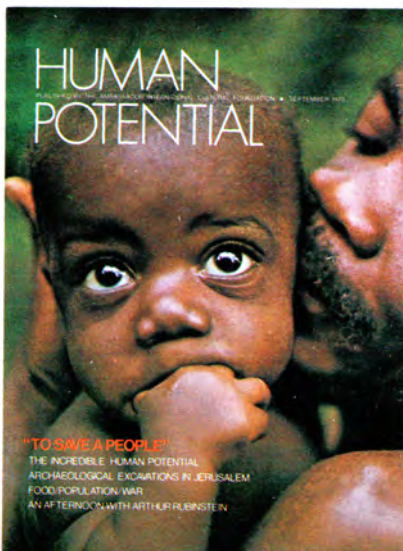
Through the years, the job of taking the gospel to the world has been confronted time and time again with international "roadblocks." Except in America, doors to public assembly, radio, television and the printing press have been tightly shut, with very few exceptions.

Most countries maintain strict control of all media. There is little freedom of press or speech and almost no commercial radio or television time. The government controls radio and television — the media do not enjoy the rights and freedoms guaranteed in the United States and Canada.

Yet, our commission is to take the good news of the Kingdom of God to all nations! Humanity *needs* this message! But how God intended to accomplish the task wasn't apparent until just the last few years.

A New Direction in the Work

Beginning in 1968, God began opening new doors for getting His gospel to the world. Circumstances "just happened to work out" for Mr. Armstrong to be invited to meet with prominent world leaders. It began on a small scale, but gradually the momentum built up! There were



FIRST ISSUE of Human Potential (cover shown), a magazine with a message to reach top people in government, education and industry.

that would serve and promote the activities of the Foundation, but also allow for a powerful spiritual message. So a working "dummy" of a new magazine — *Human Potential* — was designed and printed. It is top quality in every respect!

Sample copies have already been distributed to some of Mr. Armstrong's overseas friends, and their reactions were very *enthusiastic!* Here are a few of the first congratulatory messages from Japan and India — sent via telex:

To: Dr. Herbert W. Armstrong
Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Pasadena, CA

"Congratulations on founding of the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation at Pasadena and its sister organizations in Tokyo and Bombay. We are proud to promote the success of the foundation worldwide, as we find its objectives universal for all mankind. We are particularly pleased with the Founda-

tion's new publication *Human Potential* and are delighted to know that a Japanese edition is in the planning. We know that it will be extremely effective for the Japanese people. We will be contributing articles to both the English and Japanese editions and are deeply honored to have our names with you in this truly meaningful effort."

Bunsei Sato, Keiwa Okuda, Hajime Ishii
Japanese Diet Members

"Hearty congratulations on the inauguration of Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and your new publication — *Human Potential*. Japan welcomes establishing sister foundation in Tokyo and Bombay. We promise full cooperation with the foundation in Japan."

Toshio Yamaguchi
Member, House of Representatives,
Japan

"Congratulations on the establishment of Ambassador Inter-

national Cultural Foundation. Wishing great success in publishing *Human Potential*, and believe it will be the most required and significant magazine in the world. I feel a strong responsibility and am most happy to work with you and Professor Gotoh in Japan."

Jun Matsufuji
Ministry of Finance, Japan

"All my support for Ambassador International Cultural Foundation and its promotion of human cooperation and understanding through culture and education. Please accept my congratulations for efforts to promote world peace and international cordiality. Wish you all success. Fully expect your wonderful new magazine — *Human Potential* — to advance the cause of world fraternity and be as unique as you yourself have always been.

Yours with warm regards,"
Nagendra Singh
Justice, International Court of Justice

AMBASSADOR INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Participating Organizations and Institutions

The Society for Near Eastern Studies, Tokyo, Japan
(Directed by Dr. Kiyoshi Ohata, Japanese-Israeli archaeological excavations at Tel Zeror in cooperation with Prince Mikasa of Japan)

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Tokyo, Japan (In cooperation with Members of the Diet)

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Bombay, India (In cooperation with Dr. Nagendra Singh)

Thailand Mountain Tribe Educational Program (In cooperation with His Majesty the King of Thailand)

Nepal Mountain Teacher Education Program (In cooperation with the Minister of Education, Nepal)

University of Jordan Cultural Center

Ambassador College International Student Scholarships

Ambassador College Archaeological Scholarships

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, Thailand (In cooperation with His Majesty the King of Thailand)

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation (Jordan)

Archaeological Excavations in Jerusalem (In cooperation with the Hebrew University, Prof. Binyamin Mazar, Director)

International Cultural Center for Youth (Jerusalem)
King Leopold III Foundation (anthropology and exploration)

University of Brussels (oceanography)

University of the Ryukyus (Okinawa)

The World Wildlife Association (In cooperation with Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands)

Institute for International Political Research, Tokyo, Japan (In cooperation with Diet Members)

Clinic for the Underprivileged, Cairo, Egypt (In cooperation with Dr. Abdel Kader Hatem)

City of Westminster Society for Mentally Handicapped Children (London, England)

New Chasers Charitable Trust (England)

Ambassador International Cultural Foundation, The Philippines (In cooperation with Secretary of Labor, Mr. Ople, and the Minister of Social Welfare, Mrs. Aldaba-Lim)

As of this writing, we have received enthusiastic responses from our friends in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, the Philippines, India, Japan, Thailand and elsewhere. It has been very encouraging.

And, also, we have several manuscripts submitted by international figures that will appear in the first few issues: a Japanese leader's view of Israel; an Egyptian official's perspective on the Middle East; the case for international law written by a World Court Justice; a report from Thailand, etc. Many top people, worldwide, are wanting to contribute.

Besides international articles, and those of a moral and spiritual nature, we will also be publishing articles on archaeology, nature, the wonders of the human mind and body, creation vs. evolution, historical expeditions, the arts and cultures of the world, etc. All in beautiful color.

Human Potential magazine will be unique in international journalism and publishing. It will be a magazine for the very top people in government, education and industry. It will contain articles from prominent world leaders who share our common concerns. And, it will carry the gospel to the kings and government heads of this earth!

Foundation Memberships

The far-reaching activities of AICF — including the publishing of *Human Potential* magazine — will be supported through *paid* memberships in the Foundation. A charitable contribution of \$25 will entitle the donor to one year's subscription to *Human Potential* (six issues), plus other benefits that will be explained in future mailings. A portion of this contribution (\$5) will defray the cost of publishing and distributing the magazine. The remainder, which is tax deductible, will go directly to support the charitable activities of the

SOME of the participating organizations benefited by concert series sponsored by the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation.

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United Way

Foundation. Foundation monies will be kept totally separate from either the Ambassador College or Worldwide Church of God accounts.

This type of financing, similar to that of *National Geographic*, will allow for maximum growth *without* impacting our day-to-day budget for radio, TV and our *free* publications.

We certainly invite and encourage you, our *Good News* subscribers, to support the Foundation and its activities. If you haven't already responded to our earlier letter, we hope you'll take the time *now* to do so. It is a wonderful opportunity to help give the gospel to the world, and a wonderful opportunity to serve our fellow human beings.

Very shortly we will begin to *actively promote* memberships in the Foundation throughout the United States, as well as worldwide — regardless of one's affiliation with us in other respects. Memberships are open to *all* who want to help in this truly worldwide humanitarian effort.

Those of you who can't contribute monetarily can certainly contribute earnest prayers for the success of this whole new phase of the Work. There is no way to put a price on heartfelt prayers to God.

We are just beginning to break through the doors that have previously been closed. God is leading and directing, and we must do our part. The gospel of the living Christ is going to the nations of this world *with power* through this Work! God is using human instruments — you are a part of the team and your efforts are appreciated more than can be adequately expressed.

Even though *Human Potential* will, of necessity, be written and edited to reach top government and professional people throughout the world — we're sure most, if not all of you, will want it. Besides the strong "spiritual meat," articles in *Human Potential* will give an overview of all aspects of human endeavor as no other magazine does.

Please address communications to AICF, 300 W. Green St., Pasadena, Ca. 91129 □

HOW TO REALLY UNDERSTAND

by Richard H. Sedliacik

HAVE you ever tried to read the Bible, only to throw up your hands and exclaim, "I can't understand it"?

You're not alone if you have.

Here is an eye-opening example of the appalling lack of biblical understanding and outright ignorance of the "Book of all books" among professing Christians today, as related by a startled newspaper reporter:

"Some months ago, a Protestant pastor administered a Bible quiz to members of his congregation. The questions were very simple. Anyone with a general knowledge of the Bible should have been able to answer all of them easily.

"The results staggered the pastor.

"Only five percent of his flock made a commendable grade on the test. Fifteen percent failed to give a single correct answer. Sixty percent were unable to name the four Gospels. Seventy-five percent could not identify Calvary (Golgotha) as the place where Jesus was crucified.

"Some congregations might do better than that," continued our reporter, "but not many. The vast majority of Americans today are Bible illiterates. They simply have never read the book which they profess to regard as the 'Word of God.'"

Biblical Ignorance — Hallmark of Our Times

This same newspaper reporter offered an explanation as to why most professing Christians do not read or study the Bible.

"A great many people have turned away from the Bible because, when they do try to read it, they find they cannot understand it To the modern reader, it has a remote and antiquarian flavor. It is likely to leave him with the impression the Bible is an ancient history book that has no real relevance

to his life here and now" (by Louis Cassels, UPI Special Correspondent on religious affairs).

Paradoxically, this biblical ignorance is considered "respectable" today. "It is one of the curious phenomena of modern times," reports J. B. Phillips in *The Young Church in Action*, "that it is considered perfectly respectable to be abysmally ignorant of the Christian faith. Men and women who would be deeply ashamed of having their ignorance exposed in matters of poetry, music, or painting, for example, are not in the least perturbed to be found ignorant of the New Testament" (page 6).

And so the Bible has become little more than an obsolete "sacred book" to which most of its devotees pay lip service, but which they practically never *read, study, or understand!*

What are the underlying reasons for such widespread biblical ignorance and lack of understanding today? Why aren't people ashamed of not knowing what's contained in their Bibles?

How Theologians View the Bible

You might expect atheists and agnostics to deny the divine origin of the Bible. But would you expect that many of today's leading ministers and theologians are foremost among the *critics* of the Bible? Incredible, but true.

One such minister of a very large church denomination said: "No mainstream Christian church accepts the Bible as the literal interpretation of the Word of God. Some of it is folklore, some legend, some tribal history."

How does he know? Answer: He doesn't. He has merely accepted as true the theories and hypotheses taught today in the seminaries and graduate schools of theology!

This man was looked up to as a minister of God. Yet he attempted to discredit the very Book he was supposed to uphold and teach. Branding the Bible as the contradictory product of the vain efforts of *men*, he called it a book of fables and myths, instead of the inspired truth of *God Almighty!*

In the introduction to a well-known modern version of the Bible, the translator summarizes his ideas in the claim that many books of the Bible are "notes by disciples, worked up into literary papers which have been repeatedly edited, sometimes by pious collectors."

This translator and Bible scholar thought that the earlier portions of the Bible stemmed from "the natural desire to gather up the primitive traditions of the people." He took for granted, and without proof, the *assumption* that God had nothing to do with its inspiration.

Still another theologian summed up the modern trend this way: "We must take the Bible seriously; but not literally."

With statements such as these ringing in their ears, is there any wonder why hundreds of ministers publicly confess — and thousands privately admit — that they themselves can't understand or believe the Bible?

Certainly statements such as these by well-known ministers, theologians and Bible scholars have *directly discouraged* many from trying to read the Bible. What else could you expect the average person to think about the Bible when men looked up to as biblical "specialists" and "experts" declare it to be a pious fraud?

The trouble with most people is that they have taken for granted what other people say about the Bible.

Most people — including church laymen and the clergy — have not

THE BIBLE

taken the time to really look into the Bible with an open mind and *study it for themselves!* They simply have never proved what they have come to believe about the “Book of all books” and the world’s best seller.

And so most people continue to carelessly assume the Bible teaches hundreds of conflicting ideas — that it is irrational and irrelevant in our Space Age — and that the Bible is responsible for the hundreds of differing sects and denominations we find in the world today.

What Is the Bible?

There is a statement in the Bible which says: “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching . . .” (II Tim. 3:16, RSV).

The Bible is God’s *revelation* to man of basic knowledge — laws and principles which man is unable to discover for himself — knowledge which is otherwise utterly inaccessible to the mind of man.

For example: God did not directly reveal the law of gravity in the Bible. He equipped man with the powers and abilities to discover gravity for himself.

But man has never been able to discover *what* he is, and *why* he was put here on earth — whether there is a real *purpose* for human life, or *what* that purpose is. Apart from the Bible, man has not been able to discover the true way to peace, happiness, abundant well-being and real success. The colleges and universities of this world do teach students how to earn a living — but they fail to teach them how to live.

Simply stated, the Bible is God’s “instruction manual” to show His supreme creation *how to live!* Only in the Bible can one find this basic necessary knowledge because God inspired the Bible to be the very *basis* of true education.

The Bible, then, is the *foundation of knowledge!* It gives the true ap-

proach to the acquisition of knowledge in the fields of history, education, psychology, sociology and the health sciences. It reveals basic principles concerning business, commerce, science, the arts, law, government, philosophy and religion.

The Bible also explains the *meaning* of the chaotic times in which we live. And it shows us how peace, prosperity, success and happiness are coming to all the world in our lifetime.

Yes, people *could* understand the Bible — if they were willing to study it and accept it for what it says. They would find the Bible makes real sense.

You Can Understand It!

For over two decades, scores of thousands have become “biblical literates” through the help of the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. This unique international course has led approximately 500,000 students in nearly every country on earth to a greater knowledge and understanding of the least-read and most-misunderstood book in the world. (Lessons are also available in the French, German, Dutch, Danish, Italian, Spanish and Afrikaans languages.)

This course employs a totally *different method* of Bible study. It makes it easy to understand the Bible, and shows how it is relevant in the Space Age. It is dynamic, down-to-earth — a course of understanding. It pulls no punches. It shows you what the Bible *really* says.

The Ambassador College Correspondence Course has been designed to guide you through a systematic study of your own Bible — the Bible is the *only* textbook. It is definitely not a study of men’s ideas about the Bible, but a study of the Bible itself.

Twelve different major subjects of vital interest to every man, woman and child are thoroughly gone into and made clear with each lesson. You are directed step by step to the plain answers *in your own Bible!*

This course helps you find the answers to the really big questions of life most people have always wondered about. It is designed to show the *meaning* behind today’s world chaos, and it helps you to see the *very purpose* for your existence.

Students from all walks of life are enrolled — including even ministers of religion — and all are enthusiastically discovering new truth in their Bibles with the guidance of each lesson. They are all learning that there is hope for the future — that there are solutions to the absolutely terrifying and seemingly insoluble problems of today. They are learning the keys to understanding Bible prophecy, and the principles which lead to success, financial security and a happy, abundant life.

This course is designed for people of *all ages* — for *you!* And it makes studying the Bible enjoyable, rewarding — the experience of a lifetime.

Remember, there is no tuition cost or obligation whatsoever. Your lessons have already been paid for by others who are voluntarily helping to send this course free of charge to all who request it. And there are no tests to send in. You evaluate your own progress conveniently and privately at home.

Will you let the Ambassador College Correspondence Course make the Bible 100 percent relevant to *your life* today? You can begin by simply requesting it (see inside front cover for the addresses). We’ll send you the first of twelve 16-page, attractively illustrated, monthly lessons by return mail.

Do it *right now* — lest you forget! You’ll be glad you did. □

THERAPY FOR AILING MARRIAGES

"Marriage," said the Greek poet Menander, "if one will face the truth, is an evil, but a necessary one." Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, said simply, "Marriage is a noose." To many in today's troubled society these statements would merit a hearty "Amen!" But marriage was not meant to be a "noose" or an "evil"! It was intended by the Creator God Himself to be the epitome of human relationships. In fact, marriage is a reflection of a much higher relationship. If your marriage is not quite up to par, this article will provide some helpful therapy.

by Brian Knowles and Carole Ritter

OVER the years, the institution of marriage has acquired a rather bad image in some circles — and not without good reason. The marriage relationship has been blamed for a great deal of human misery and suffering.

To many in a society where the "new morality" is rapidly endangering the conventional family unit, marriage has indeed become a noose, an unnecessary evil.

More and more the institution is falling into disfavor. Futurists are looking around for alternatives to the traditional "nuclear" family.

Divorces take place with alarming frequency in the Western world. Marital breakdown is one of the most serious social problems confronting the United States, Great Britain, Canada and the democracies of Northwestern Europe.

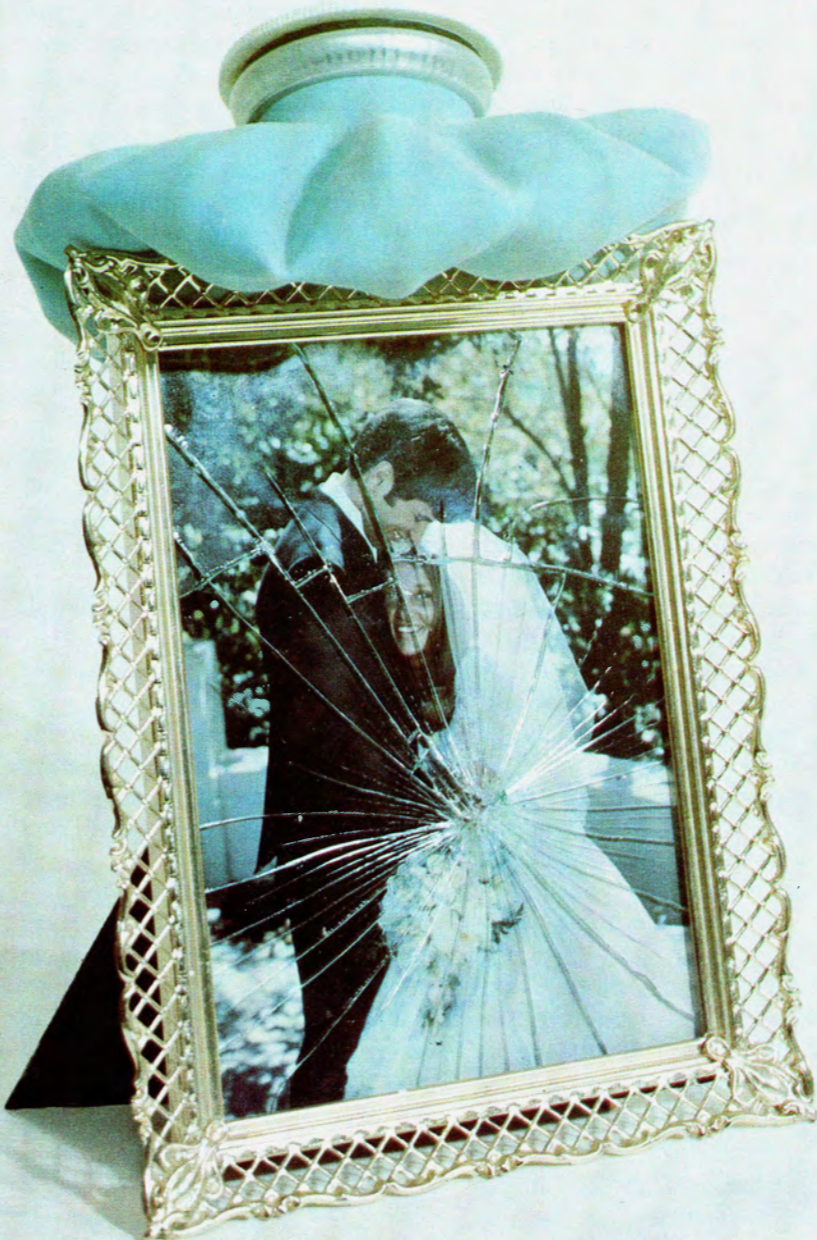
There are reasons why this is so. The problem is not with the institution of marriage itself — it is with *the people* involved in it. It is because certain laws — written and unwritten — are being violated.

Symptoms of an Ailing Marriage

When they counsel troubled couples, experienced marriage counselors encounter certain common denominators over and over again. These symptoms include money troubles, sex problems (including impotence and frigidity), lack of communication, arguments over children, simple incompatibility, and misunderstanding of how the family structure should operate, including how decisions are made and who has the final say-so.

Some of these problems may seem well-nigh insoluble, but *each of them can be resolved*. The reason they exist is that the partners involved are often failing to practice *basic Christianity* within their marriage. Most of them can be worked out by applying some simple New Testament principles governing human relationships.

But before going into those prin-



ciples, let's take a look at one of the big marital difficulties — a lack of understanding of how the family structure should operate.

Who's in Charge Here?

There's no way of escaping the fact that God designated the husband as head of the wife (Eph. 5:22-23; I Cor. 11:3). But the key to understanding the husband's position lies in verse 23 of Ephesians 5 — “as Christ is the head of the church.”

Let's ask some blunt questions about how Christ exercises His authority over the Church. When Jesus walked the dusty roads of Palestine over 1900 years ago, was He perpetually reminding His disciples who was in charge? Was He preoccupied with His own authority?

No! He led primarily by calm, rational teaching and a perfect example. He did not browbeat, nag and threaten His disciples. He considered them His friends. He admitted that He was their Lord and Master when they stated it — but He didn't go around shouting, “I'm the head of the Church and what I say goes!”

The reason for authority in anything is not to “lord it over” someone else — it's merely to maintain order and to aid in the decision-making process. Christ taught His disciples not to tyrannize people this way (Mark 10:42-45). The apostle Paul stated that all things during a church service were to be done decently and in order (I Cor. 14:40). Authority is for the purpose of getting things done in an orderly manner — nothing more.

Mutual Respect

Taking all of the above into account, it's good to remember that *both* partners are commanded to “Submit . . . [them]selves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21). Even though God placed a husband at the head of the family (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:23; I Pet. 3:1, 6), there is a mutuality of respect involved in a good marriage

relationship. According to Jean and Martin Adams in *The Emerging Couple*: “. . . Mutual respect between husband and wife [is] the single most important element in maintaining their compatible relationship” (p. 170).

If a husband encourages dialogue and input from his wife, they can arrive at decisions together and there will usually be no need for any “authority” to be wielded.

A husband should be careful to never rob his wife of her self-respect by treating her like a second-class inferior being. He should treat her as an equal — a co-heir with Christ on the same plane as himself.

One erroneous idea unfortunately attributed to Scripture is that a husband's authority automatically gives him license to order his wife about like a domestic robot.

In some homes a man will interrupt his wife in whatever she's doing to ask her to bring him something only a few feet out of his reach. That's the way he's been trained, and he thinks it's his “male prerogative.” But if a man is a loving, mature human being, and has real respect for his wife and her activities, he won't use his authority to demand demeaning servitude.

Peter said husbands should have a considerate relationship with their wives and honor them for their *equal* calling. I Peter 3:7 shows we are all heirs *together* of the grace of life.

Women are not second-class citizens. They are not in any way inferior to men. They are “heirs together” on the same plane with their husbands. Women in general may be somewhat weaker physically — but they are not inferior!

God is every bit as interested in having women in the Kingdom as He is men — He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). II Corinthians

6:16-18 shows that God is also interested in having *daughters!*

So a husband should be careful to never rob his wife of her self-respect by treating her like a second-class, inferior being. He should treat her as an equal — a co-heir with Christ on the same plane as himself — remembering that she is one of God's daughters. He should never wield his authority unless it is absolutely necessary — and then only as much

as is needed to solve the problem.

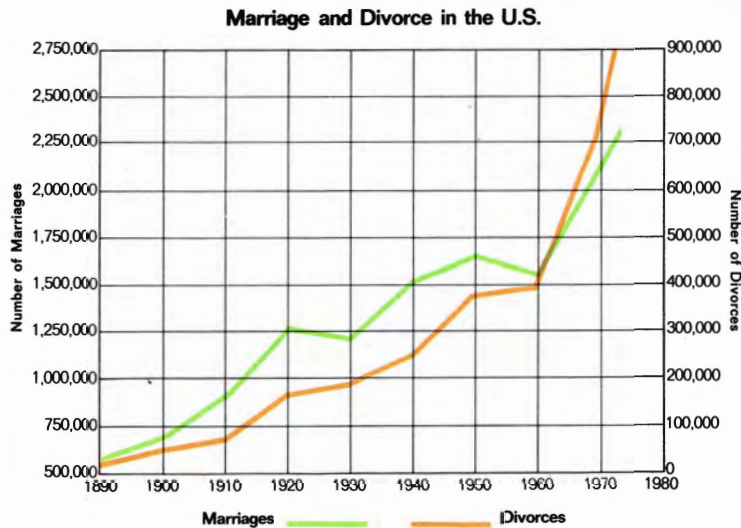
Now let's look at another aspect of marriage and apply some Christianity in another direction.

A Little Bit of Empathy Goes a Long Way

If you have got something on your mind and you need to talk it out, what kind of person do you go to? Don't you seek out someone you know will understand, someone you know you can “bleed all over” and never have to worry about getting a put down? You go to someone who is willing to hear you out — someone who will understand your point of view, and not think less of you because you are upset or angry, or in a rotten frame of mind, or just plain wrong. You *aren't* going to go to someone who is distant, aloof, unsympathetic, too preoccupied or too busy!

The same applies in a marriage. A husband who is having job problems, or is beset by worries about bills or layoffs, needs a wife who is a real friend. He needs someone who can vicariously experience what he is going through (Rom. 12:15) and offer a little moral support.

In I Corinthians 12:26 we read:



Misery in Multiples

The tragedy of divorce struck more American homes than ever before this past year, and the divorce rate itself is skyrocketing. Last year 913,000 couples (one for every four marriages) split up, and sometime during the next 24 months the number is expected to pass one million. The divorce rate has nearly doubled since 1960, and in the past four years it has already increased as much as it did during the entire decade of the Sixties. The number of divorced persons per 1000 people living together has climbed from 35 in 1960 to 47 in 1970, and last year to 63 per 1000.

Why the spiraling increase in family breakdown? Experts cite liberalized state laws as one big reason. Only six

states cling to the traditional fault system of divorce that was once the norm. California's pioneer "no-fault" divorce law recognizes only two grounds for dissolution of marriage: 1) irreconcilable differences leading to irrevocable breakdown of the union; and 2) incurable insanity. In 1973, 117,677 divorces were granted to Californians, far more than any other state.

Other experts note the fact that young people, especially, are unwilling to stick with unrewarding relationships, and older folks are no longer deterred by the social stigma once attached to getting a divorce. With these restraints of morality gone, the rate is projected to climb even higher during the second half of this decade.

Graph by Randall Cole — GN

"If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (RSV). This applies not only to the Church but also to a marriage. If one member of a family is going through a trial, then the whole family should rally around that individual — whether it is the husband, the wife, or one of the children.

If mates could learn to do this — to be understanding, to be empathetic, to put themselves in the other person's shoes — it would solve a lot of marital communication problems, and make a lot of supposedly incompatible people compatible.

Forgiveness and Tolerance

Although mates may try the best they can to overcome their difficulties, sometimes change may not come easily. Because of deeply ingrained habits or childhood background, it may take *years* of gradual progress before anyone notices a difference in their behavior. In cases like this, *patience, forgiveness* and *tolerance* play a big role in making a marriage livable.

Colossians 3:12 says it this way: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (RSV). And Romans 14:10 adds: "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother [or your mate]? For we shall *all* stand before the judgment seat of God . . ." (RSV).

Many husbands and wives have a nasty habit of bringing up the past and throwing it in each other's faces periodically. But when you forgive, you are also supposed to "*forget . . . what lies behind, and strain . . . forward to what lies ahead, [and] press on toward the goal . . .*" (Phil. 3:13-14, RSV).

And remember this — your mate will probably turn into the person you *expect* them to be. If you want

your wife to take more of an interest in her appearance, compliment her honestly on whatever you can and *treat* her as if she is beautiful. (This does not include insincere flattery, of course — just positive encouragement.) If you continually treat your mate as the person you would like them to become, believing the best (I Cor. 13:7, Moffatt), eventually they will tend to live up to these expectations.

Don't Practice a Double Standard

A lot of us play the game of Jekyll and Hyde with our families. We act one way on the job, but the minute we walk in the door we become a totally different person.

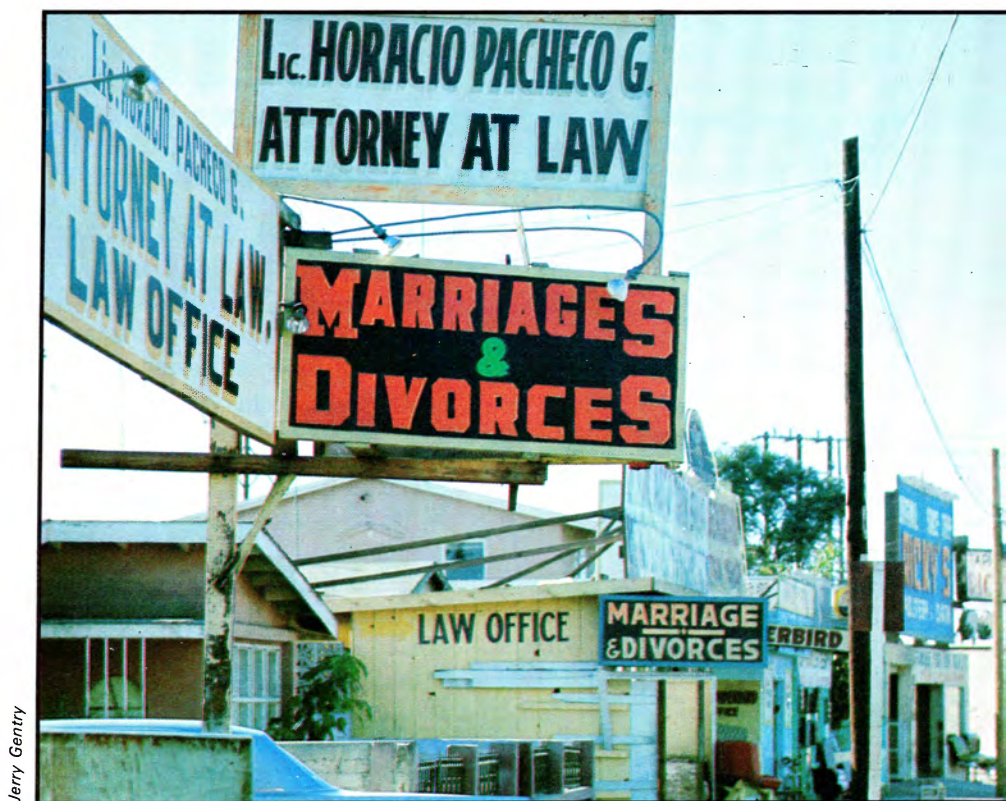
Many husbands wouldn't dream of treating their secretaries or their friends the way they treat their wives! Many wives would never talk to their girl friends in the same tone of voice they use on their husbands. And both husbands and wives may speak to (or scream at) their children in a way they would never *think* of addressing another adult!

God says: "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). We should have one standard of behavior toward *everybody* (James 2:9) — including our mates and children.

Give Each Other Freedom To Be an Individual

If two people chose each other as partners for life, it's probably because they had a lot in common. But no man and woman are identical. Although some couples *do* resemble Siamese twins — go everywhere together, do everything in tandem — this may not be the healthiest thing for their marriage. If a couple is overly possessive, they can stifle each other's development in the areas where their interests don't overlap.

You need to allow your mate the freedom to indulge his or her own individual interests, and even help make it possible in some instances. For example, child rearing is an im-



Jerry Gentry

portant and time-consuming part of a younger wife's job (Titus 2:4-5). But a woman isolated at home with small children may find herself falling into the "Darling, please-come-home-and-make-my-life-begin" syndrome. If her husband is her only contact with the outside world, she may turn into a clinging vine who irritates her man with constant demands for conversation or entertainment which she could rightly find elsewhere.

It will take effort, ingenuity and cooperation from her husband to get out and take a class or do some volunteer work. But the effect it will have on her marriage will probably be well worth it.

Even a once-a-week escape from dirty diapers can turn a mental basket case into a decent conversationalist. There is nothing like an occasional escape into the "real world" to sharpen up a woman's mind and morale.

So let your wife go out with the girls — and let your husband go out with the boys. Don't try to make each other into duplicates of yourself. *You can't really change each*

MODERN "marriage-go-round" is succinctly pictured in this street scene in Tijuana, Mexico. Here "quickie" divorces are big business.

other! Do things together and do them separately. But don't smother each other!

God says, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"! (John 8:32.) God's way of life was never intended to be a grinding, constrictive, smothering existence in which every desire, every thrill, every pleasure is to be squelched.

Marriage was meant to be the very greatest of human relationships.

The family — the home — is really the best building block for a successful society. So let's keep them together and keep them growing by practicing the principles of basic Christianity within our marriage relationships. □



DO YOU HATE YOURSELF?

Jesus Christ said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:39). What if you hate "thyself" — is it possible to love others?

by Gary Alexander

Mankind is indeed his own worst enemy. More people murder themselves each year (25,000 suicides annually in the United States) than murder others (18,000 homicides per year). A milder, more common, form of self-hatred is the inferiority complex we all secretly harbor.

As a result, most of us are tougher on ourselves than we are on others. A best-selling book put this self-deprecating attitude in colloquial

terms by labeling most people's lives as "You're OK, but I'm not."

I'm Not "OK"

This "not OK" posture, according to the book's author, psychiatrist Thomas Harris, is instilled early in life, no matter how loving and well meaning parents try to be. "It is the situation of childhood and not the intention of parents that produces the problem." The baby, Harris writes, may reason like this: "I'm two feet tall, I'm helpless, I'm defenseless, I'm dirty, nothing I do is right, I'm clumsy, and I have no words with which to try to make you understand how it feels." But to his parents, he thinks, "You are six feet tall, you are powerful, you are always right, you have the answers, you are smart, you have life or death control over me, and you can hit me and hurt me and you're still OK."

By age one, the crawling baby begins to "cruise," and his bottom begins to bruise because of the no-no's he can now reach. Since virtually all his curiosity is punished, his infantile inferiority complex is constantly reinforced: "It's my fault. Again. Always is. Ever will be. World without end. Amen."

In school years, various everyday events amplify this self-disrespect. When a boy is chosen last on a baseball team, or a girl is teased for having a shabbier dress or smaller bicycle than the others, the outcast child will pout about this put down, thus reinforcing the self-worthlessness they first learned at home.

"I'm OK, If . . ."

By constant diligence, a modern Pharisee can obey his own self-imposed standards of behavior, saying, "I'm OK, if . . .," followed by a list of do's and don'ts which may be more or less than the standard of conduct God requires. Like the Pharisees of old, such men "pray with themselves" like this: "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast



twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:11-12). Until he breaks this self-imposed code of behavior, the Pharisee is proud of himself "for his works' sake."

The "publican," however, realizes the enormity of God's grace — that unique quality of God that says to a repentant man, "you're OK" — no if's, and's or but's. "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. I tell you, this man went down to his house *justified* rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted . . ." (verses 13-14).

Seven incomprehensible words — "God be merciful to me a sinner" — make one incomprehensible doctrine: GRACE! An unrepentant person laboring under "you're OK — if . . ." cannot fathom forgiveness. A religious hobbyist anxiously keeping score between good and bad works cannot justify, to himself, justification by faith. God's mercy is foreign to an unmerciful man.

The doctrines of modern "chur-chianity" demonstrate this human aversion to the concept of *grace*. Heaven and hell are doctrines which say, "I'm OK — I'm bound for heaven; but you're not OK — you're bound for hell." The doctrine of predestination assumes that people are born "not OK" or "OK," and they are helpless to change that fate. The "rapture" (a word not found in the Bible) is a belief that all "OK" people are silently whisked away before the "bad" people get what's coming to them.

Is Grace Sufficient?

To some professing Christians, "grace" is a loaded word. It is a code word for "license to do evil." To an unrepentant, unchanged, carnal bigot, of course, this may be true. A truly repentant Christian, however, is deeply broken up for every sin he commits. He does not want to make

the same blunder again. *Grace* is God's tool for wiping that man's slate clean.

The primary problem for most Christians is not necessarily the sinful *state of being*. This condition, not just the individual acts, is the stumbling block which causes their chronic self-hatred. As long as they have this "beam" (a lifetime of sins) in their eye, they will continue to see the "mote" (individual sins) in everyone else's eye (Matt. 7:3-5).

When a Christian understands God's law, repents of his dead works, and receives God's Spirit, this "beam in the eye" is totally removed. Then he can finally see his neighbors without the "mote" in their eye.

Since the new Christian is now pure through Christ's blood, God looks upon His newly begotten son as *perfect* — without beam or mote. For the rest of that man's life, God's grace will wipe each mote from his eye — as long as he does not willfully, deliberately, and with malice aforethought, continuously disobey God's law (see Hebrews 6:4-6).

One major reason people hate themselves is because they have not taken this step in their life to remove the beam from their own eye. They have not repented of breaking God's laws — laws representing a way of life which brings all the happiness and fulfillment they want. Only true repentance, followed by baptism and begetting by the Holy Spirit, will remove the "unhappy-makers" that cause each of us to say "I'm not OK."

The Two Commandments

A lawyer asked Christ, "Which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God* with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:36-38).

This unconditional all-powerful love by man toward God is a prerequisite for what follows: "And the

second is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (verses 39-40).

One more scripture will make clear that *love* is in fact a four-step process. John wrote, "We love him [God], because *he first loved us*" (I John 4:19). (Paul expounded the same principle in Romans 5:6-10.) Before man can express love toward God, God must first express His own limitless love toward that individual.

Accordingly, the path of perfect love must grow by stages: *God first loves us*, individually, by calling us to His truth. Then *we love God* in return, exemplified by the submissive acts of repentance and baptism. After receiving God's Holy Spirit, *we love ourselves*, because our source of self-hate (our sins) has been removed. Finally, we are free to work toward *loving others* as ourselves.

The command to "love thyself," therefore, is not an act you can perform in a vacuum. God must be in the picture. He must first work individually with you (which He is doing, or you would not be interested in reading this magazine), then you must love Him in return. Any attempt to love yourself without these prior steps is doomed to become self-love by works, a form of *vanity*.

"I'm OK — You're OK"

You can start on the road toward perfect love if you follow the outline Jesus gave in Matthew 22:36-40. Only when you love God (because He first loved you) can you respect yourself. And when you "love thyself," you can continue that love toward all mankind.

When you understand this master plan of love, combined with the beauty of God's law and the enormity of His grace, you can be among the few Christians on earth who can look at any other human being and say, "I'm OK — You're OK." □

Part Two

DOES GOD HAVE AN UNLISTED NUMBER?

Why does prayer fail so often for so many? Last month we saw that communication with God is often cluttered with rituals, repetitions and archaic or arcane language. But avoiding these common pitfalls is only part of the answer to unanswered prayer.

by D. Paul Graunke

When it comes to prayer, most people have a give-and-take relationship with God. He gives — and they take.

In this age of grace, there is a tendency to maximize what God will do for us (which is very considerable) and minimize what we “need” to do for God. People approach their relationship to God with a minimum-daily-requirement mentality. They think in terms of *how little* they have to do to “please” God and get saved rather than *how much*.

Christianity is thus transformed from a religion into a racket. God becomes a “patsy” whom men con, cajole and coax blessings from while paying only lip service in return. He is expected to play the role of a supernatural answering service that answers all requests for help and forgiveness with no questions asked and no strings attached.

And then they wonder why He doesn't answer their prayers. They wonder if He understands their plight, if He really cares, or even if He really exists.

God exists all right. He remains loving, compassionate and merciful.

But He is also smart. He knows that one-way give-and-take relationships never solve anything. He wants to help us, to give us abundantly of all good things — but He insists there be an appropriate response on man's part. And that is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment” (Matt. 22:37-38, RSV throughout article unless otherwise noted).

You Got To Have Heart

God doesn't want us to worship Him with full churches and empty hearts. And He won't settle for half-hearted, part-time, lackadaisical Christian living either. He seeks a total, wholehearted commitment to Him. “I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be thou *wholehearted*,” He commanded Abraham (Gen. 17:1, Jewish Publication Society translation).

The person who is sincerely dedicated to God will find a God who is interested in helping him through the problems and trials of this life. “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is whole toward Him” (II Chron. 16:9, Jewish Publication Society translation).

Prayer is a dynamic part of a meaningful give-and-take relationship with God. It is not a device to get this or that from God, but a means by which God and man work together toward a common goal — salvation.

Let's examine the salvation God has in mind for us. When we under-

stand why we exist in the first place, why God bothers to listen and deal with us, we will know how to make prayer work for us. We will better understand the problem of unanswered prayer — and what to do about it.

Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done

In Christ's model prayer we are instructed to ask: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). A lot of people aren't that enthusiastic about the Kingdom of God. They aren't sure what God's will is, except in the most general terms, such as “to save all sinners.” And anyway, they are much more interested in the next topics for discussion: “Give us this day our daily bread” and “lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” So they tend to discuss God's will perfunctorily and briefly and get down to what matters to them most — their problems.

Too bad. For if they took more time and thought to consider God's will they might ask more wisely and with a greater assurance of an answer about their own needs. They might solve the problem of getting the opposite of what they asked for — not enough bread, and too many temptations.

What, then, is so important about the Kingdom of God? And just what is God's will? What do they have to do with you and your problems?

We generally think of the Kingdom of God in terms of Christ's second coming. But the Kingdom of God is more than a divine govern-

ment that now rules in heaven and will one day rule from earth. It is also a family — God's family. And God's will on earth is that every human being shall eventually be born into the Kingdom of God. We are to become members of God's family. We are to become sons of God.

(If that's news to you, then you need to find out what the gospel — literally, the "good news" — of Christ is all about. Write for our free booklets *What Is the True Gospel?* and *Why Were You Born?*)

Seek First the Kingdom

Bringing sons into His family is God's number-one priority. It affects every decision He makes about you, every response to your prayers. His spiritual purpose supersedes mundane considerations.

Now don't get God wrong. He's not oblivious or inconsiderate to our physical needs. He knows we need jobs, need food, need healing of our physical infirmities, etc. He knows our problems better than we do! He is acutely aware of how frail our existence is. "For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:14). We should pray about our physical needs.

But we should also get our priorities straight!

"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But *seek first his kingdom* and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matt. 6:31-33).

Man does not live by bread alone (cf. Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4). He shouldn't live *for* bread alone — God didn't put us here to see how much of this world's goods we could grab for ourselves. "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

In the consumer-oriented societies of this age, that is a very difficult spiritual principle and fact of life to learn. When God does provide our basic, daily needs, we still want more, while neglecting our spiritual impoverishment.

In prayer we often seek our own gain — and let God take the hindmost. Consequently, we come up empty-handed. "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions" (James 4:3).

Seek His Righteousness

You may have noticed that Christ told us to seek God's righteousness as well as His Kingdom. God's righteousness is expressed in His laws. They are summarized in the Ten Commandments. God gave them so that we would know how to act like Him; so that we would know how to prepare to be sons of God.

Unfortunately this is another area of God's will where many are in conflict with God instead of harmony. It is a major reason why prayers go begging for answers.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from

you so that he does not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).

The barrier of sin that prevents God from responding to our prayers is broken down by the sacrifice of Christ. It is kept down and communication is kept open by living life God's way as defined by His laws. "And we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him" (I John 3:22).

Law Is a Means — Not an End

Of course, keeping God's law can't save us. It can't earn us salvation. That's not the point, the objective. The law serves as a guide for us to understand how God thinks, how He would act if He were human — how Christ, God Incarnate, *did act* when He was human. God's law reflects His way of doing things. It exemplifies His mind, His character. And Christ tells us: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

To emulate God the Father is quite an assignment. As human beings, it is an impossible task. But as Christians, with the help of God's Spirit, and the sacrifice of Christ for when we fall short, we can use God's laws to grow toward spiritual maturity and perfection in this lifetime.

It is through God's law that we come to understand Him — and love Him. "He who says 'I know him' but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected" (I John 2:4-5).

The greater our love and knowl-

edge of God, the more effective our prayers become because we are giving God the commitment to His way that He seeks and we better understand what to ask. We can say, as did the apostle John: "And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything *according to his will* he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him" (I John 5:14-15).

More Blessed To Give

As was stated at the beginning, most people have a selfish give-and-take relationship with God. God is always giving, and they are always taking.

But if our relationship to God is based upon a wholehearted commitment to His way of living, to emulating God so that we may become His sons, it behooves us to give and share with God and our fellowman as generously as God gives to us.

Christ said it is more blessed to give than receive. He challenges us to "give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Luke 6:38).

Notice particularly the meaning of that last phrase: God gives to us as we give to others. Paul amplified this important point in his appeal to the church in Corinth: "After all, God can give you everything that you need, so that you may always have sufficient both for yourselves and for giving away to other people. . . . The more you are enriched by God the more scope will there be for generous giving. . ." (II Cor. 9:8, 11, Phillips translation).

Giving is one of the "acid tests" of Christianity. It separates the goats from the sheep, the fakes from the faithful. It shows where a person's priorities are, where his heart really is. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . but lay

up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Poor in Money — But Not in Spirit

It seems to be a rule of thumb that the more treasure people have, the more "earth bound" they are in their use of it. The more they have, the less generous they are — at least towards God. "And he [Christ] sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in

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more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living" (Mark 12:41-44).

This pattern holds true today. Often widows, pensioners, and poor people are far more liberal toward God in their tithes and offerings than those substantially better off. They contribute a disproportionate share of the funds for the work of the Church. They may be poor in terms of money — but not in spirit, in zeal for God's Work!

"The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under com-

pulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:6-7).

Establish a give-and-give relationship with God and your fellowman.

Waiting for God To Act

No discussion of prayer would be complete without mentioning faith. When people think of faith, they think of moving mountains. They envision spectacular deeds and mighty miracles. They talk in terms of "proving one's faith" and "stepping out in faith."

But there is another kind of faith Christians need also. It's not as dramatic or heroic — but it's just as important for salvation. It's not the kind of faith that steps out — but a faith that stands still, that waits for God to act. Sometimes we must prove our faith by simply our patience and perseverance.

This is especially true in praying to God. Many times we commit to God problems that clearly only He can solve. Sometimes God may act on our behalf quickly. But other times He may wait.

When God waits we must wait with Him. We must believe that God has a good reason for waiting. We must trust in His love and wisdom to take care of the situation in the best way at the best time.

Jesus Christ Himself preached perseverance in prayer. "And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, "Vindicate me against my adversary." For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, "Though I neither fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming."'

"And the Lord said, 'Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God vindicate His elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay

long over them? I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, *will he find faith on earth?*” (Luke 18:1-8.)

Will Christ find faith in you? When only God can solve the problem, or correct the injustice, can you pray with perseverance and wait with patience until He acts — until the end of the age if need be?

Endure to the End

It is never easy to wait for God. “But he who endures to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:13). And, “By your endurance you will gain your lives,” says Christ (Luke 21:19).

These are watchwords for Christians in every age. But it just so happens that Christ made these statements while talking about the *end* of the age, the time just before His return.

We like to think that in the end time Christians will shake the earth with mighty miracles and great acts of faith. Perhaps some — such as the two witnesses — will. But could Christ be telling us that most Christians — you and I — will prove their faith by their patience in spite of every adversity and affliction? Instead of stepping out in great and glorious steps of faith, may we be asked to prevail with God in prayer and good works, believing in His great purpose and promises of eventual deliverance?

Time will tell. In any event, the faith that waits, that won't give up, is one of the most indispensable traits you need in dealing with God.

Humility

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says the Lord. But this is the man to whom I will look, he that is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word’” (Isa. 66:1-2).

God puts a premium on humility.

On the other hand, Christ reserved some of His strongest condemnations for the spiritual vanity and self-righteousness of the religious leaders of His day.

Unfortunately, it seems that into every Christian's life seeps a little overweening pride. Like childhood diseases, it's one of the things the children of God seem to catch as they grow up to the stature of Christ. Some are afflicted with it more than others. In a few cases, the malady is never shaken off and it proves fatal.

What makes the problem even worse is the fact that spiritual pride is usually very obvious to everyone but the person who has it! Blessed is the man (though he won't think so at the time) who has a genuine friend tactful and courageous enough to tell him he's caught the fever.

The “Pharisaical Fever”

In the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, Christ gave an example of spiritual pride in prayer.

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that *they were righteous and despised others*: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus *with himself* [certainly God was not listening to this public relations spiel], ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted’” (Luke 18:9-14).

If your conversation, private thoughts, or prayers are even *vaguely* similar to this, you may be contracting the “pharisaical fever.”

You may need a good dose of humility, an awareness of your own

humanity and fallibility, coupled with compassion and longsuffering for the shortcomings of others. “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). Don't compare yourself with others or judge the spiritual status of others based on outward appearance.

Ask the Right Question

There is much more that could be said about prayer. But like swimming or painting, you learn by doing. You come to understand the basics by experience.

Just remember one thing. If you can't seem to get through to God, the problem lies on earth, not in heaven. The answer to unanswered prayer begins by asking the right question — not about God, but about yourself. So don't ask: “Why doesn't God answer?” Ask instead: “Why should He?” □

For Those Who Want to Help

Jesus said: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations,” just before the end of the age. His true disciples were to announce His second coming around the globe.

He told them: “Freely you have received, freely give.” But a price must be paid for giving this magazine *The Good News*, the Correspondence Course, booklets and other literature to as many as possible. Therefore, God expects every child of His to give generously as His means of paying the cost of carrying this gospel to others.

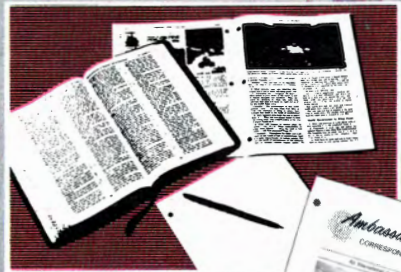
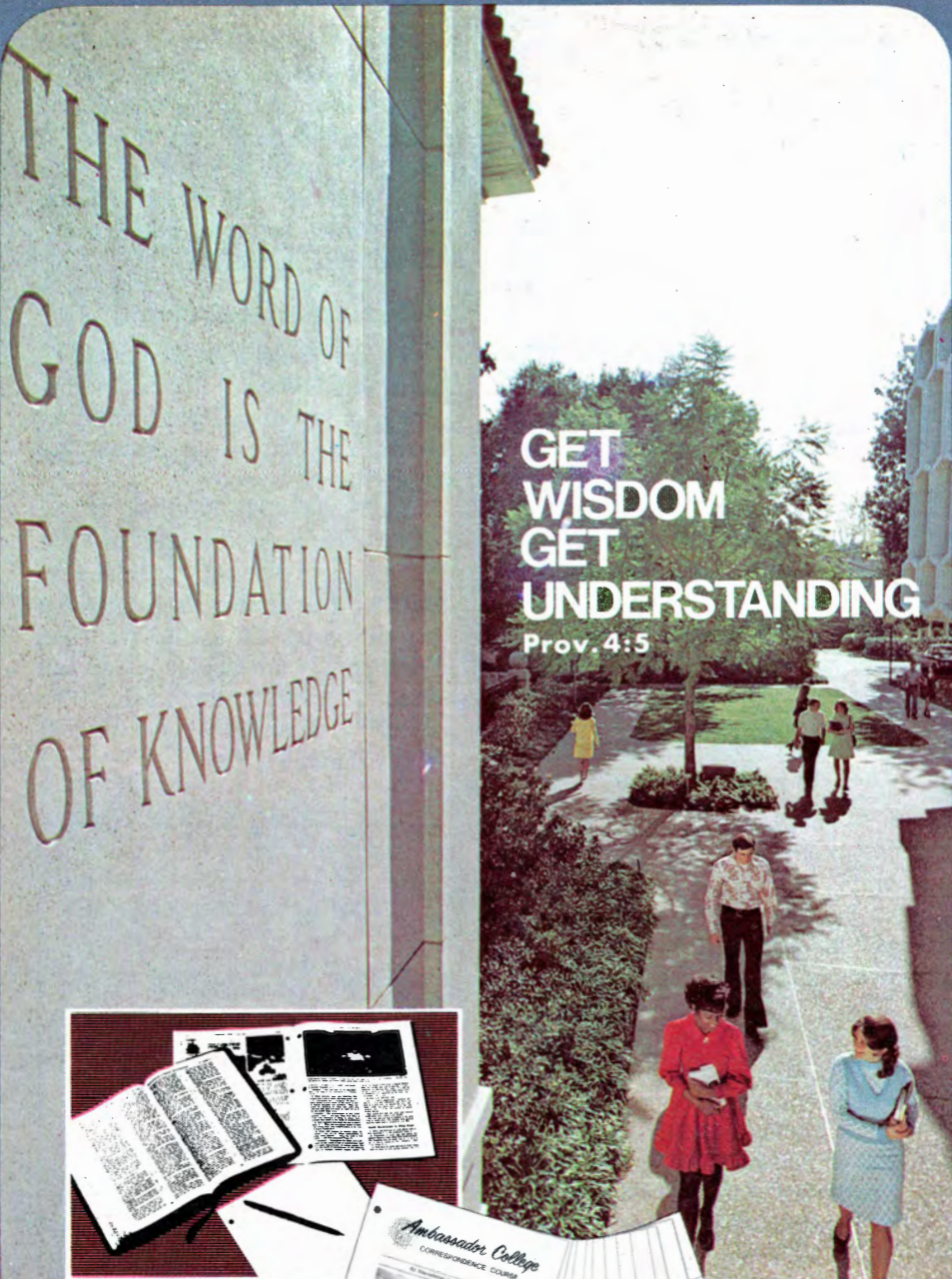
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