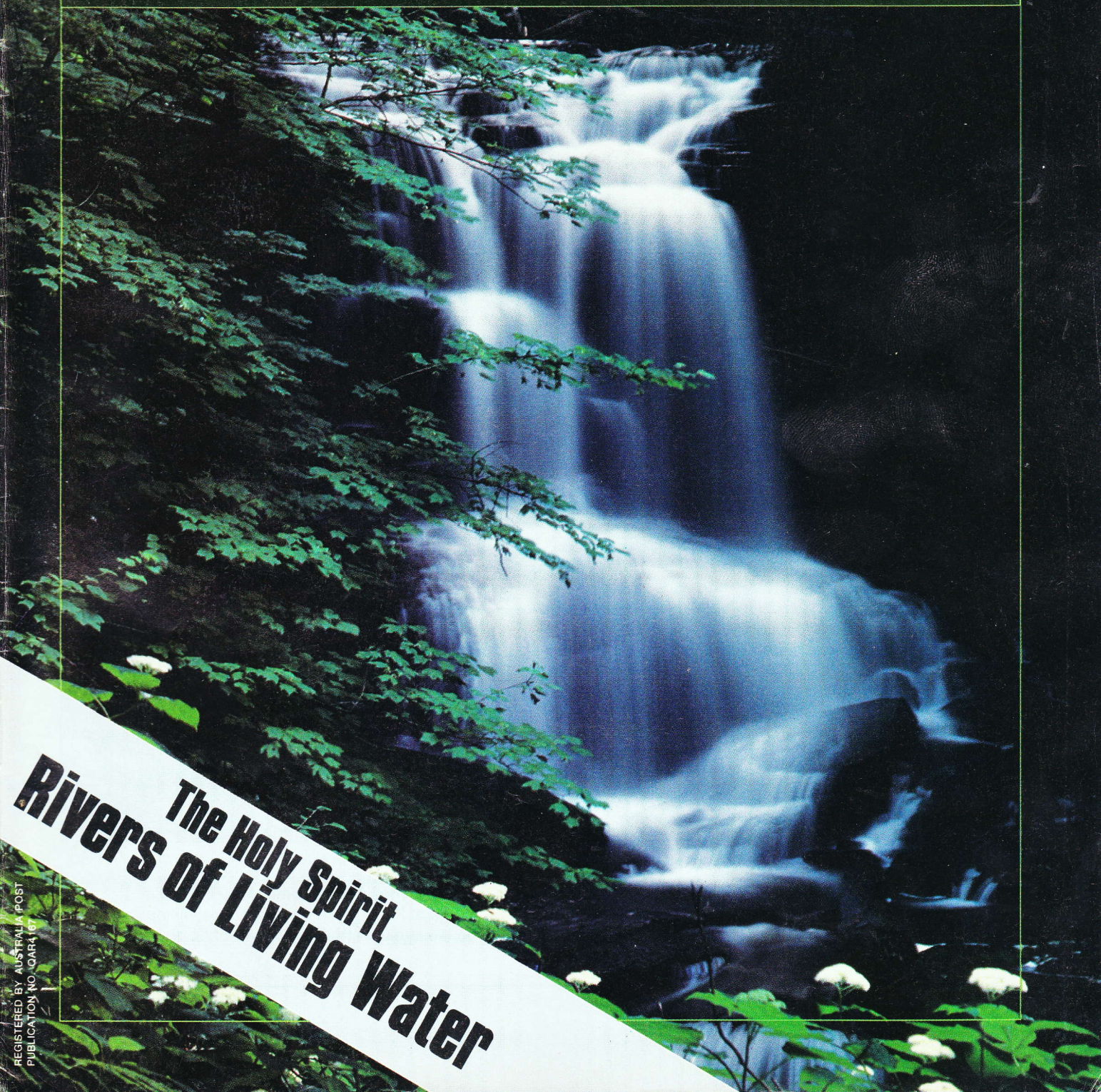


MAY-JUNE 1990

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**The Holy Spirit
Rivers of Living Water**

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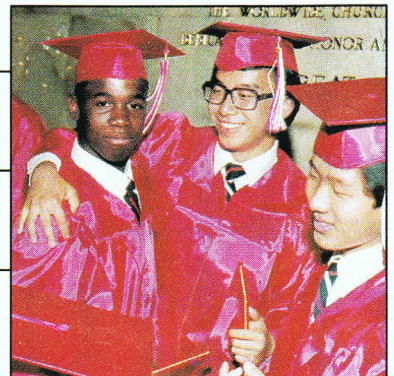
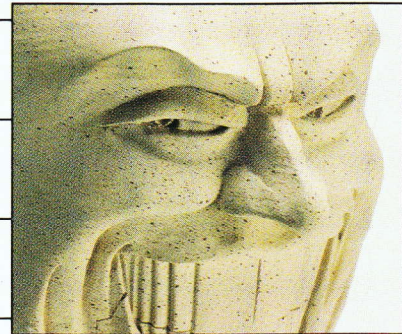
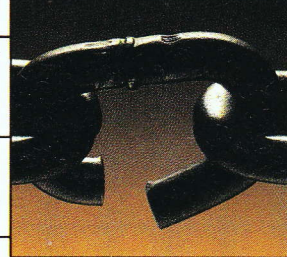
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COVER

Jesus spoke of water as a symbol of the life-changing power of God's Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). "Spiritual Power for Your Mind," beginning on page 7, shows how you can be imbued with the very power of God!
Photo: Comstock, Inc.

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GOOD NEWS PERSONAL



Avoid the Ditches

God's love, by its very nature, demands love in return. His gift to us is so precious, so valuable, so dear and priceless, that we would have to be most unperceiving and ungrateful indeed if we could accept it and then simply set it on the shelf to use at our own convenience.

Do you see God's love as merely some kind of "insurance policy" to pull out at the final judgment?

Yet that is exactly what many today have inherited as their understanding of the grace of God. They are willing to take what God has made available to undeserving human beings, and carry on with no sense of grateful appreciation that exceeds mere momentary emotion.

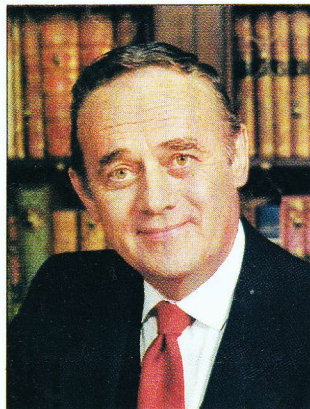
The need for a daily struggle with sin, for repentance, for making sacrifices and changes in one's life to serve the great giver of this invaluable gift is seldom taken seriously.

Many seem to feel it is quite enough to take a little time out once a week to go to church services, and then go happily back to the pursuit of one's own life-style with little thought of any compelling need to be a committed disciple of Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the legalists, in their efforts to justify themselves before God, also fail to comprehend his love. Legalists tend to see themselves as superior to others, like the Pharisees who opposed Jesus. They often become extremely critical and judgmental, and frequently try to force their views on others.

For true followers of Jesus Christ, however, the picture should be different. Through the Holy Spirit they have come to understand the magnitude of God's grace. But they do not put that understanding on the shelf. They are moved by God's love to *follow* Christ with mind and heart.

Theirs is no once-a-week religion. Though still imperfect, theirs is undivided commitment to a new



order, a new way of life that is contrary to the natural thoughts and ways of mankind. Through the love of God, their lives have *changed*. They have now devoted their energies, their time, their lives, their very hope for the future to the God who has given them not only a renewed purpose in their present lives now, but

a promise of a future life in supreme love—for eternity.

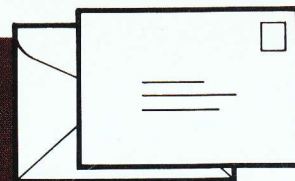
No longer are they devoted to amassing personal wealth, though some may be rich. No longer are they devoted to achieving personal fame, power or prestige, though some may be famous or powerful. No longer are they devoted to personal vindication or to dominating others.

As Jesus lives in them through the Holy Spirit, they are now devoted to the good and well-being of others. They are concerned about the consequences of their actions. They care about how they affect other people. They are dependable. They are trustworthy. They are honest. And they possess an indomitable hope and confidence in the face of trial, disaster or persecution. They know the supreme joy and assurance that come from the Holy Spirit opening their understanding to God's magnificent mercy and love, and from true surrender to his will.

We must be ever vigilant to avoid the wide ditches on either side of the strait and narrow way to which God has called us. We must not drift into the narrow-minded arrogance of legalism, nor can we allow ourselves to slide into the careless deception of failing to take sin seriously.

Pastor General
Worldwide Church of God

LETTERS



"A Woman's View of Prayer"

I have just read LeeAnn Luker's article in the November-December *Good News* on



Barry Stahl

prayer. It is one of the most balanced yet noncompromising approaches to prayer I have encountered.

I wished I had your article nine years ago. I battled with prayer and the guilt for years when my kids were small. I know your article will be a great source of encouragement for our young mothers here in Ireland! Especially as families tend to be larger here.

Gorey, Ireland

I cannot explain to you how much "A Woman's View of Prayer" has helped me. Being a husband and father of three, my time, too, is quite limited, and I always have been plagued with guilt about how much prayer is right. I never would let God take care of my problems or needs after giving them to him.

Since I read this article, I, too, have started a prayer jour-

nal, and it has been great. The time spent in prayer is so joyful and meaningful that I just had to say thank you.

Union, Nebraska

Thank you, Mom Luker, for "A Woman's View of Prayer." I almost cried after reading your precious letter. All these years of struggling to pray like the men, heavy-duty time on one's knees, despite the screaming baby, being tired, the house looking a wreck! But I had to put my "time" in, otherwise God might not like me anymore.

You really turned a light on in my head.

Manchester,
New Hampshire

Special children

I often wondered why God gave me a son who is mentally retarded. After I read your article "P.S.—For Parents of Special Children" I can now understand. The article hit the hammer straight on the nail. It has brought me closer to God and opened my eyes to what a wonderful blessing God has given me.

My child is a gift from heaven and I thank God every day for him.

Joan Masterson
Oakhurst, Oklahoma

I am one of those parents of a very special boy. His name is Gary. When he was 3, the doctors found a brain tumor deep in the brain stem. They were unable to remove it. He is now 17. I could hardly read the article through my tears. Not tears of self-pity, but of joy, because it helped me to relate to my heavenly Father, knowing my son will be healed in the new world, but also will be spiritually healed.

Evelyn Lyle
Chesapeake, Virginia

Five languages

This November-December 1989 issue is really great. I'm so glad it is now in five languages! Now many people can read it and enjoy and learn all the things I learn from the inspired articles.

Elma Chestnut
Parkdale, Oregon

Positive and priceless

Never do I cease to be amazed by the theme of your text and its brevity in *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*. Sirs, do all your writers possess a degree in college grammatical English or journalism? The fluidness of structure in articles is most positive and that I hold with esteem and enthusiasm.

Hoyt A. Moore
Roanoke, Virginia

Thank you for the continued inspiration you give me by the grace of God when I read *The Plain Truth* and *The Good News*.

It is a rich blessing our Lord has bestowed on the Church to create such intriguing, creatively laid out and in-depth, realistic books and magazines that are available free of cost to those who need it most. The publications are truly priceless.

Hastings, New Zealand

Milk and meat

Your Work pursues the highest goals which humanity can set for itself. You successfully reach beginners who are slowly and cautiously venturing into the subject, and at the same time you stimulate the spiritually mature to new thinking. I don't know of any other organization which is able to do this.

E.O.
Switzerland

"Gave up Saturday work"

The *Good News* magazine has taught me so much about God, his Holy Days and his laws.

I even gave up working on Saturdays.

Yvonne George
Flushing, New York

The Good News welcomes your comments. Letters for this column should be addressed to "Letters to the Editor." The editor reserves the right to use letters so addressed in whole or in part, and to include your name and edit the letter for clarity or space. Send all communications to our address nearest you:

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ARE YOU SINCERE?

Picking out a good-quality clay pot wasn't an easy task for a housewife in ancient times. Dishonest tradesmen would disguise their inferior pots by covering the cracks and blemishes with wax before selling them.

On the outside, a pot would look perfect, and the housewife often wouldn't find out just how flawed it was until she tried using it. As soon as she poured in hot water, the wax would melt and the pot would begin leaking.

Honest tradesmen began labeling their good-quality pottery with the words *sin cere*, literally meaning "without wax." Any housewife who bought a pot *sin cere* knew that the clay would be solid the whole way through.

Sin cere—without wax—is the root of our English words *sincere* and *sincerity*. We no longer connect this word to wax, but the reasons behind the root of the word can shed a lot of light onto its true meaning.

Sincerity vs. insincerity

According to our modern definition, "sincere" implies an absence of deceit, pretense or hypocrisy, and an adherence to the simple, unembellished truth.

Sincerity is usually thought of in the context of our words. For example, we might evaluate a compliment as being sincere or insincere, depending on the motive behind the mere words.

Insincerity often involves telling people what you think they want to hear in an attempt to make them think better of you, rather than giving genuine encouragement and praise.

Flattery given to boost someone's confidence is viewed as an



Are you covering up your true self with wax?

By Louise R. Hunnisett

acceptable form of dishonesty. However, although the motive seems good, such insincerity will do little to benefit anyone.

The highest compliment you can pay a person is sincerity, which simply means telling the truth. This doesn't mean being rude. We can still give our honest opinions tactfully. Although the truth may be harder for others to accept, it will be of far greater benefit in the long run.

Sincerity and character

Sincerity produces growth—both in ourselves and in others. It is the foundation of strong interpersonal relationships.

To build strong bonds with someone, we must express our true feelings and show our real selves. If we wax over our faults to appear to be what we think others would like to see, we will only promote further mistrust when the wax eventually melts

and our insincerity is shown. On the other hand, if we are sincere ourselves, we will encourage honesty and sincerity in others.

Sincerity involves being the same in actual character as in outward appearance. It means being solid the whole way through, just as genuine clay pots were solid through to the inside.

Insincerity to others is unfair. Insincerity to self is even more dangerous. If we wax over our faults to hide them from others, we could become blind to them ourselves.

We can compare our character to one of those ancient clay pots. How much of it is hidden from view by wax? And what kind of character is it?

There is little point in waxing ourselves for the benefit of others. If we are sincere, we will reveal ourselves for what we really are. That can be hard at times. It's certainly humbling when another person sees our weaknesses—but

we cannot work on these weaknesses unless they are visible.

It has been said, "Sincerity is impossible unless it pervades the whole being, and the pretense of it saps the very foundation of our character."

We must be sincere through and through. If a pot is perfect except for one little hole that has been filled with wax, then the whole pot is useless. As soon as hot water is poured in, the hole will immediately show.

God's Holy Spirit is like this hot water. We can ask God to pour his Spirit into us to melt the wax that we have built up. Then we will be able to see ourselves for what we really are. The cracks will be fully visible.

Once we see these cracks in our character, we can start working on repairing them. Only when all the wax has been completely removed can we say that we truly are *sin cere*. □

**THE
HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH
OF
GOD**

**THE CHURCH
BEGINS**

BY RONALD D. KELLY

Christianity is by far the largest single religion on earth, with more than 1.6 billion professing Christians. Islam, the world's second-largest religion, has only about half as many followers.

But Christianity is not one harmonious group of believers. The Christian world is divided into hundreds of denominations, splits, schisms and sects.

What happened? How did Christianity become so divided? Even more important, where is the Church Jesus founded?

Is the true Church composed of all these groups? Or is it just one of them? As we search through nearly 2,000 years of history, can we find where the true disciples of Jesus were? Can we know what they believed? Can we know who they are today?

Yes, we can, but our search is not an easy one. Large gaps often appear in the historical records. Information is sometimes very

sketchy, at other times spurious. The true followers of Jesus of Nazareth were often persecuted. During some periods of history, what we know about them comes only from their adversaries.

So sometimes the line of history is thin and questionable.

But there is a line.

Our search is based on this truth: Jesus himself clearly said, "I will build My church, and the

selves with games, tournaments, gambling, talking over valiant battles of the past.

In the confines of this great empire, the New Testament Church began.

Planned in advance

It was not an accident that God established the New Testament Church at exactly this time. He had set the stage.

Since the days of Moses, the Hebrew prophets had written of the coming Messiah. In 4 B.C. the time came.

Later, when the apostle Paul wrote of the momentous appearance of the Son of God on earth, he said, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

One of the most important preparations for the establishment of the Church was the Jewish dispersion throughout the Western world.

Beginning in the Persian period and continuing through the time of the Greek empire, the Jews established settlements in almost every important city in the Western world.

It would be in the Jewish synagogues where early New Testament ministers would first proclaim the message Jesus gave them. Gradually, then in increasing numbers, gentiles in the cities where the apostles preached were convicted of God's way.

They were baptized. Churches grew. Yet for many years the growth of the Christian Church went practically unnoticed by Roman officials. For all outward intents and purposes, Christians appeared little different from other Jewish sects.

By the time the Roman world really became aware that Christians were not just another Jewish party, tens of thousands of Christians were scattered from one end of the empire to the other.

The Roman background

Though they didn't realize it, the Romans had actually pre-

gates of Hades [the grave, or death] shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18).

He also said, "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

A small Church. An often persecuted Church. But a church that would always be there. That's what the Bible prophesied. And that's what history reveals.

Before there was a Church

Let's begin our story in the first century B.C.

By the time Jesus was born, the boundaries of the Roman Empire extended from Britain on the north to the Sahara on the south. Roman banners flew over cities from the Atlantic to the Euphrates. The clatter of horses' hooves, the rumble of war machines and the clamor of marching legions had long since been familiar sounds in the Middle East.

The entire empire was at peace and was prospering. Roman occupation armies now busied them-



“With the pacification of its shores the Mediterranean served not to separate but to join the lands around it. Improvement in navigational aids increased the safety of sea transport. . . . Freightage by water was inexpensive and customs barriers between the various sections of the empire were sufficiently low that they offered no real restraint of trade. A stable and uniform currency, the construction of good roads, a laissez-faire policy on the part of the government, and the revival of great trading cities such as Corinth and Carthage were added stimulants for a healthy expansion in commercial activity.”

Bourne, *A History of the Romans*, p. 359

"The policy of the Romans was opposed to the existence of separate political unions in countries dependent on them. On the other hand, they seldom interfered with the religions of their subjects or allies if these religions neither disturbed the peace nor encouraged barbarities. . . since it was part of their political tradition to win the good-will of other nations by respecting their gods."

Jackson-Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, p. 199

"Jews were found in large numbers in almost all parts of the empire. A multitude of exiles had planted themselves permanently in Babylonia, instead of returning to Jerusalem with the caravans that followed Ezra (457 B.C.) and Nehemiah (444 B.C.). . . and this version, called the Septuagint, was in general use among the Hellenists, or Jews of the Dispersion, beyond the limits of Palestine. In Antioch and in other places in Syria, in the numerous cities of Asia Minor, in Cyprus, Crete, and other islands of the Mediterranean, in the cities of Greece, in Illyricum, in Rome and in other towns of Italy, Jews had settled in large numbers. They followed the example of the Phoenicians: wherever there was a prospect of gain through trade and commerce, Jewish merchants swarmed."

George Park Fisher,
The History of the Christian Church,
p. 14

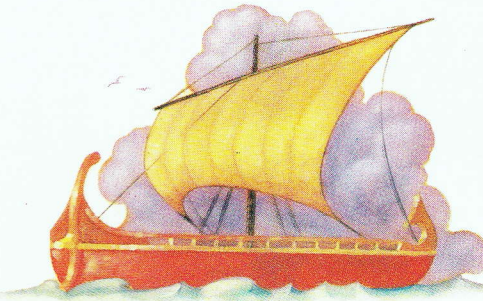
"The rights of persons and property were well protected. The conquered nations, though often and justly complaining of the rapacity of provincial governors, yet, on the whole, enjoyed greater security against domestic feuds and foreign invasion, a larger share of social comfort, and rose to a higher degree of secular civilization. The ends of the empire were brought into military, commercial, and literary communication by carefully constructed roads, the traces of which still exist in Syria, on the Alps, on the banks of the Rhine. The facilities and security of travel were greater in the reign of the Caesars than in any subsequent period before the nineteenth century."

Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, volume I, p. 81

pared the way for the gospel to be taken to the world in the first century of the new era.

Romans were great road builders. Roads that at first were constructed to move troops swiftly to battle could also take Christian ministers to far-flung corners of the empire.

After peace was established a few years before the birth of Christ, trade routes, sea lanes, business and commerce began to flourish. The apostles of Jesus could travel by sea or land to



cities throughout the empire.

An effective mail system also played a role. Most of our readers will recall the epistles, or letters, of Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude.

Another important step preparing the way for the New Testament Church was the Hellenization of the pre-Christian world, or the imparting of Greek culture and language.

God had given the Israelite tribe of Judah the responsibility to preserve the sacred Scriptures now known as the Old Testament. But when the New Testament was written, it was preserved, not in Hebrew, not even in the Latin of Rome, but mostly in the Greek language.

Greek had become the language of culture and education more than three centuries before Christ. When the Romans conquered the world, they respected and retained Greek language, literature and architecture.

The coming of the Messiah

Into this Roman world, then, when the fullness of times had come, God sent his Son.

Jesus was born in the autumn of 4 B.C. When he was about 30

years of age, in the fall of A.D. 27, he began his ministry.

Jesus actively taught a comparatively short time—only three-and-a-half years. During that time perhaps many thousands heard him, but only a few hundred really believed what he said. From among those few hundred, Jesus trained 12 to be apostles—the leading ministers of his Church.

On the day of the Passover in A.D. 31, Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

It appeared for the moment that the movement was over.

But three days after his death, the most momentous event in history took place. Jesus was raised from the dead—not back to mortal, human existence, but to spirit, self-contained life.

For 40 days, he appeared to his apostles and to many of his disciples. They were thoroughly convinced he who had been dead was now alive.

He left them with these final instructions: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Ahead lay the Work of the Church to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to all the world. That Work was to continue till Jesus Christ returns to this earth.

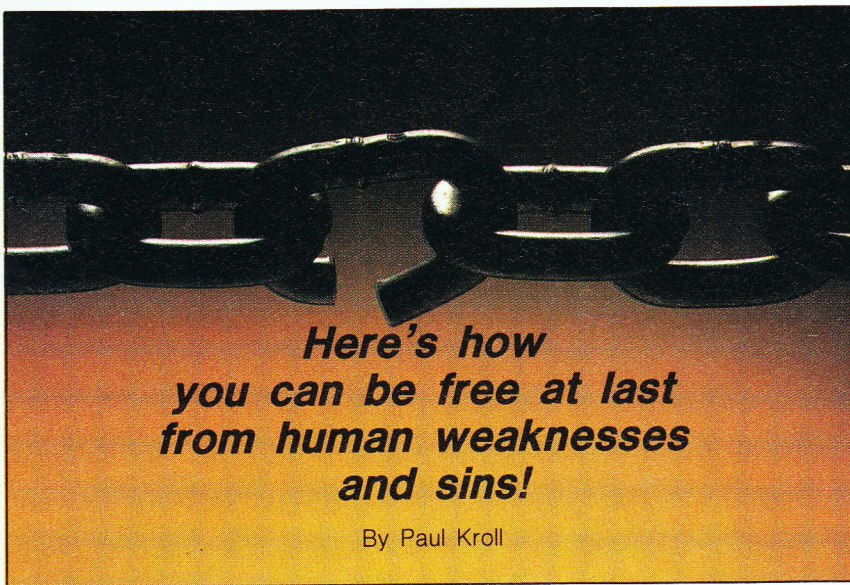
The Church begins

Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem. He promised he would send them help.

Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, the New Testament Church was born. The help Jesus promised was the Holy Spirit—a spiritual power sent from God to inspire those God called into his Church.

We'll see what happened in the early days of that Church, and how it survived the first tumultuous century of its existence, in the next installment. □

Spiritual POWER for Your Mind



Comstock, Inc.

One of the most exciting promises ever given to humans is contained in this statement by Jesus Christ: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

The freedom Jesus Christ promised was freedom from the weaknesses of human nature—from actions and thoughts that hurt and destroy!

Who's to blame?

Look at most any difficulty in this world or in your personal life—in your marriage, for example. These difficulties often occur

because people cannot or do not want to control the mind to do the right thing for family, neighbor, nation, world.

In fact, we often feel powerless to do what is right even for ourselves.

We may know, for example, that drugs or alcohol are destroying our lives. But we rationalize our behavior, deny the facts, blame others or willingly succumb to the bottle or drug.

Today, a controversy rages over behaviors that once were considered unethical, immoral or criminal. Often as not, such actions are now blamed on society or mental illness.

People no longer do bad things, we are told—they are simply sick. Instead of calling people

wicked, we say they have "impulse control," "adjustment" or "personality" disorders. But why shouldn't anything be called wrong anymore? Whatever happened to sin?

In an American criminal case, the defendant claimed he had killed two people because he ate a junk-food diet high in refined sugar. This diet, the argument went, had "diminished his capacity" to restrain his violent impulse to kill.

We may blame circumstances, ignorance, biology, diet, our parents, society—whatever. We may attempt to explain away hurtful actions by applying new language or labels to them.

However, it is *we* who commit the acts and it is *we* and others who suffer the consequences of those bad actions. It is *we* who are responsible.

As humans, we desperately need better minds—stronger minds—more spiritually aware minds with the understanding, wisdom, desire and power to do the right thing under all circumstances.

Self-control, responsibility toward others, wise action, thinking of others' needs—these are some of the qualities human society desperately needs. Unfortunately, they are often lacking.

Promises to keep

Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus promised that humans could have better minds—so that we might be able to do the right thing. There is a way, said Jesus, that we can control our fears, our cravings, our rages, our lusts.

He told his hearers that out of the minds of those who believed in him would "flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Jesus used water as an analogy for a vital spiritual ingredient that God would give to humans.

He was talking about "the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (verse 39). It would provide the energy humans could use to change themselves for the better.

This Holy Spirit—*holy* because it comes from God—was

made available about seven weeks after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. It was imparted to human minds on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31, one of God's seven annual festivals. (Compare

WATER— *There's More to It Than You Think!*

Why did Jesus refer to God's Holy Spirit as water?

By Mike Bedford

On the Last Great Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus said: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit" (John 7:37-39).

Earlier, speaking to the woman at the well in Samaria, Jesus said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

In both instances, Jesus likened the Holy Spirit to water. Why? In what ways is water like the invisible Spirit of God? Let's examine the physical properties of this colorless, odorless liquid to better understand what the Holy Spirit is.

• *Comes in different forms.* In the natural world, water can take on three different forms—liquid, solid (ice) or vapor (steam). God has re-



vealed through his Word, the Bible, that the Holy Spirit can be manifested in more than one form.

After his baptism, Jesus saw the Spirit descending like a dove upon him (Matthew 3:16). The Spirit came in a different form upon those disciples gathered to observe the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31:

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:1-4).

• *Cleansing ability.* Each time we bathe or wash our clothes, we are using another property of water—its cleansing ability. Alone or combined with another cleansing agent, water can remove most any stain.

Spiritually speaking, we are stained and soiled by "the sin which so easily ensnares us" (Hebrews 12:1). At times we transgress God's spiritual, holy laws. Yet Jesus Christ desires a bride "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish," as Paul wrote to the Ephesian church (Ephesians 5:27). This de-

Water, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, can form into ice. God's Spirit can also be manifested in different forms. After his baptism, Jesus saw the Spirit descend like a dove upon him. Ice sculpture: Takehiko Yoshioka. Photo: G.A. Belluche Jr.

gree of spiritual cleanliness can only be attained by the purifying power of God through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). The apostle Paul spoke of being washed by the Spirit (I Corinthians 6:11).

• *Water carries nourishment.* If you have tended a garden, you understand the importance of water to the development and sustenance of a plant. Water carries nourishment from the soil through the plant's roots into the stem, then out through the branches and leaves, where it helps produce rich, ripe fruit.

The Holy Spirit acts as the spiritual lifeline for Christians. It is their water supply, the bearer of their much-needed spiritual nourishment. Jesus likened believers to branches, himself to the life-bearing vine and God the Father to the source of life and the overseeing husbandman (John 15:1, 5).

When we are actively absorbing the moisture of the Spirit of God, it

Leviticus 23:15-17 and Numbers 28:26 with Luke 24:49 and Acts 2:1-4.)

What was this "Holy Spirit"? "Spirit" comes from the Greek *pneuma*. *Pneuma* was the Greek

word for wind (John 3:8)—an unseen energy of tremendous power.

The mighty, invisible force of wind was used to describe the spiritual power of God. This di-

vine, godly energy can transform weak, sinning human minds. It can help these minds move toward the perfection of action and thought that are God's.

Jesus used another metaphor

shows in the quality and quantity of the fruits we bear—that is, our deeds and works of righteousness, the development of the mind of God in us (Philippians 2:5).

● *The Spirit refreshes.* During physical exertion, we lose large amounts of bodily fluids through our skin and our respiratory system. These lost quantities of precious water need replenishment. After we drink more fluid, we are able to recover our former vitality.

It is similar with the Holy Spirit. As the human needs to maintain its high level of water to keep performing in top shape, we cannot do without the Spirit when striving to perform acts of righteousness and obedience. Living the Christian life can be compared to physical exercise. It not only takes large amounts of the Spirit of God to develop a right heart, but to maintain such.

As we use the Spirit—as it flows out from God into us and out again toward others—it must be replenished. As plants need repeated watering to keep growing, so we need the Spirit continually.

Paul described it: "Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man [the mind of a Christian undergoing the conversion process] is being renewed day by day" (II Corinthians 4:16).

● *The Spirit empowers.* Before the days of electric generators and solar energy, man used a logical, readily available and natural source of free power—water. The energy of rivers, when tapped with water-wheels, for instance, gave power to small mills and factories. More recently, hydroelectric dams take advantage of the incredible energy potential of moving water.

What empowers a Christian? What enables us to keep God's law? Like the swiftly falling water that turns turbines and produces physical energy, the vibrant and active Holy Spirit of God is our main source of power. It was Christ's as well.

"The Father who dwells in Me does the works" Jesus admitted (John 14:10). Jesus himself did not accomplish his works with his own strength. Something additional was

needed. According to Paul, God has given us the Spirit of power (II Timothy 1:7).

This powerful Spirit can totally rework what a person is. Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus, was too weak to admit to his association with the Christ (Mark 14:66-72). But after receiving the Holy Spirit, he acted remarkably different.

On the Day of Pentecost, instead of cowering as he had done earlier, Peter took the lead in confronting the crowd with a strong testimony in support of the risen Christ: "Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in

Without the presence of water, life as we know it would be radically different. Water is such a basic building block of nature that all life draws its existence from it in one way or another.

Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words'" (Acts 2:14). Acts 4:31 goes on to recount that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

● *The Spirit gives peace.* There is something very relaxing about sitting on the seashore, and gazing quietly at the soothing waters. Imagine a sunset on the endless ocean, or a leaf floating downstream. Tensions melt away. Jangled nerves quiet down. Equilibrium is restored. God intended it to be this way.

Peace is one of the main fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). "The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

● *A basic building block.* Without the presence of water, life as we know it would be radically different. Water is such a basic building block of nature that all life draws its existence from it in one way or another.

The human body is composed mostly of water. Our brain cells are 70 percent water, our blood 92 percent. Adults carry in their bodies about 45 quarts of water!

This leads us to what is perhaps our most striking analogy. Every true Christian, begotten of God by the Holy Spirit, looks ahead with great longing to the time, soon to come, when Jesus Christ will return from heaven. At that time, our physical bodies will be changed—resurrected, transformed from the fleshly state to bodies composed entirely of spirit—just as we are now composed almost completely of water (Romans 8:11, Philippians 3:20-21).

No longer will we be dependent on physical water to sustain our lives. We will be entirely self-existent—immortal. The spiritual reality presently pictured to us by water will have been fulfilled.

Living water will flow

For those other billions of humans who have lived and died without having been offered salvation, the reigning Christ will, once the millennial kingdom of God has been established, continue to use water as a symbol of the greater realities as yet unrevealed to these multitudes.

Zechariah described this event: "In that day His [Christ's] feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley. . . . And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem" (Zechariah 14:4, 8).

Water. So basic, so common, and yet so far reaching in what it powerfully portrays.

The Holy Spirit. Invisible, yet powerful, and the ingredient that makes eternal life possible.

The next time you bathe or take a drink of cool, clear water, consider deeply what it is that God reveals through this facet of creation. □

for this energizing spiritual power or Holy Spirit. He called it the "Comforter" or "Helper."

"If you love Me, keep My commandments," Jesus admonished his followers. "I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper" (John 14:15-16). He called that helper "the Spirit of truth" (verse 17).

Powerful help is ours

Paul also spoke of that Helper or Spirit throughout his epistles, explaining what it could do for each of us. It is a Spirit that can help anyone develop a mind of enormous power. It allows us to grow in self-control and to express thoughts and actions that bring right results.

Those whom God calls and who have received his Spirit—and use it—are not to "be conformed to this world," Paul tells us (Romans 12:2). If you belong to God, says Paul, you are to "be

A war rages in the mind of someone who has God's Spirit. Human desire pits itself against the urging of this Spirit. Paul discussed that struggle in Romans 7:24-25: "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

transformed by the renewing of your mind." The objective is to "prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Those who are developing spiritual self-control are, said Paul, "strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16). That is, the conscious mind is undergoing a transformation, energized by the Spirit to do the right thing.

The resurrected Jesus, as the High Priest of the faithful (Hebrews 4:14-16), works with those called or "drawn" by God (John 6:44). He does so through this Spirit, dispensing its power to his followers.

Jesus "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us," said Paul (Ephesians 3:20).

Paul counsels those who have access to God's Holy Spirit in these words: "Let this mind"—the Spirit of God—"be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). If that mind is fully operating in us, the sky is the limit, so to speak, in terms of the spiritual works we can accomplish. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

A war that can be won

A war rages in the mind of someone who has God's Spirit. Human desire pits itself against the urging of this Spirit. Paul discussed that struggle in the latter part of Romans 7.

He said, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (verse 18).

Paul realized he could only be saved from himself through Jesus Christ and the power of God's Spirit working in his mind:

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (verses 24-25).

Paul then explains that the Holy Spirit frees us from sin: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

If we use that spiritual power, our human weaknesses and sins—as were Paul's—can be overcome. That's because, as

Paul put it, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

The end result is that we are able to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5).

God promises we can all have this new, spiritual mind. He says he will attach this mind to our consciousness. This mysterious process is likened to a begetting or birth.

But there are strings attached.

How to receive God's help

We must humbly ask God for his help with our problems—acknowledge that our human mind is incapable of doing the right thing—ask God for that Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). We must be willing to follow his direction, because only those who obey God can receive this new mind (Acts 5:32).

Peter gives us the simple formula by which each of us may receive this mind: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins," he said, "and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Yes, thanks be to God Almighty! We can be free at last—free from sin and human weakness, free to do what God commands and what will bring us all happiness.

Peter tells us we have been given "exceedingly great and precious promises" that we "may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4).

That is the wonderful and hopeful Pentecost message for us: "It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17).

God is already pouring out his Spirit on those who have been willing to repent of what they are—willing to use his spiritual energy—willing to obey him—willing to develop a new mind to do the right thing. □

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Q&A

In the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), the apostles concluded that circumcision wasn't necessary for salvation. So why did Paul circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3)?

Paul and Barnabas had preached the gospel in several gentile areas, and many gentiles had believed (Acts 13:48, 14:27). Some Jewish Christians claimed that the gentile converts should be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5).

The apostles gathered at Jerusalem to resolve the controversy (verses 2, 6). After much discussion, Peter concluded that the gentiles need not be circumcised (verses 7-11). James, leader of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, agreed (verses 13-21). Circumcision is not required for gentile converts.

But Timothy was half Jewish, "the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek" (Acts 16:1). The Jerusalem conference had not dealt with such a situation.

Many would have said Timothy ought to be circumcised. When Paul circumcised Timothy, he eliminated a situation that could have caused criticism.

Another reason it was wise to circumcise Timothy was that Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. "Paul wanted to have him go on with him" (verse 3). Paul usually went to Jewish synagogues (Acts 17:1-2) and he wanted Timothy to be able to come with him.

Many Jews of the area knew that Timothy's father was Greek (Acts 16:3), and apparently they knew that Timothy had not been circumcised. They would consider him and his companions, even Paul, unclean (Acts 10:28).

So Paul circumcised Timothy "because of the Jews who were in

that region" and let this be known so Paul and Timothy would be given full access to the synagogues.

Timothy did not need to be circumcised for salvation, but because of the circumstances, circumcision helped him become a more effective assistant.

I Kings 17:22 tells us that "the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived." If the child himself is a soul, how can his "soul" return to him?

The original Hebrew word for "soul" is *nephesh*, which can have several meanings. It occasionally refers to a dead body, as it does in Numbers 6:6 and 9:6-7. But it usually refers to a living creature.

In Genesis 1:21, 24, 2:19, 9:10 and Leviticus 11:46, *nephesh* refers to animals. In Leviticus 17:11, 14 and Deuteronomy 12:23, it means "life." Genesis 2:7 tells us that man, through the breath of life, became a living soul. In this sense, man does not *have* a soul—he *is* a soul.

Since *nephesh* can have several meanings, we must look to the context to see its meaning in any specific passage.

I Kings 17:17 tells us that "there was no breath left in" the child. He was dead.

Elijah asked God to restore the child's *nephesh*. The context shows that in this passage *nephesh* means "life." The New International Version, verse 22, says "the boy's *life* returned to him, and he lived."

When Christ rules earth in the world tomorrow, will he take away man's right to choose how to live?

Certainly not! God's purpose

for man requires that he have the right of choice, also called free moral agency.

God sets before us two ways of life, and he tells us to choose one (Deuteronomy 30:19). Disobedience brings curses and death, but living God's way produces blessings and life.

God tells us that we should choose life, but he doesn't force us to. The choice is still ours. As we learn to choose God's way throughout our lives, we grow in God's own character.

God doesn't want robot-like creatures who live his way simply because they have no choice. He wants children who live his way because they have chosen to, because they *want* to do his will.

God will allow free moral agency during the reign of Christ so all who live during that 1,000-year period will be able to grow in godly, righteous character.

Zechariah 14:17-19 shows us that humans will still be able to choose which way to live, even to choose to disobey. At first, some nations will refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. They will be punished to help them repent. Otherwise their sins would cause even greater problems.

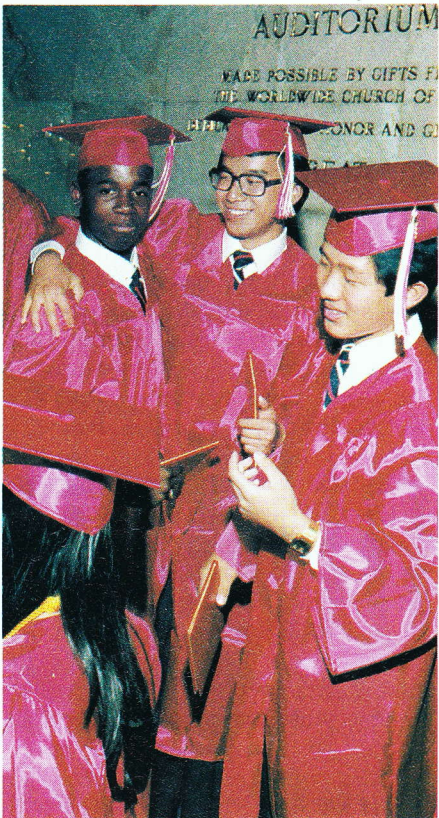
A major difference between the world today and Christ's kingdom will be that all people will know God and his way (Jeremiah 31:34).

Satan, who deceives the world today, will be restrained from doing so for the 1,000 years (Revelation 12:9, 20:1-3).

At the end of the 1,000-year rule of Christ, Satan will be released, and he will deceive all who still reject God's way (verses 7-10), showing again that men will still have free moral agency, even to choose the way of death. □

How to Cope With Change

Left photo: Hal Finch, right photos: Good News



*Whether it's moving,
graduation,
going to college,
a new job or retirement,
the changes in your life
can be exciting—
and unsettling.
How can you cope?*

By Mike Bennett

How do you feel when a major change takes place in your life? Excited and eager? Or scared, lonely and lost?

Perhaps it's a mix of these feelings.

Change can be unsettling—there are new locations to adapt to, new people to meet, new skills to master, new schedules to get accustomed to. Change can have a dramatic effect on your life.

How can you cope with these challenges, and make the most of them?

Daniel goes to college

To find some of the answers, let's look at someone who suc-

cessfully handled major changes in his life.

Daniel was probably a teenager when a conquering army assaulted the nation of Judah and carried him captive to a land hundreds of miles from his home.

The conqueror, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, decided he wanted to train some of the brightest, best-educated captives to serve in his empire. Daniel was among those who received forced admission with a full scholarship to this exclusive university:

"And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king" (Daniel 1:5).

Besides everything else that had dramatically changed in his life, Daniel found that the food he was offered at the king's university would be bad for his health and spiritual condition. What could he do?

Daniel proposed an alternative that would help him hold on to what he knew was right. He thought out possible objections, and his proposal answered them all. Daniel didn't let feelings of helplessness overwhelm him—he got involved in shaping his life:

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank. . . .

"So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel . . . 'Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be examined

before you, and the countenances of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants' " (verses 8, 11-13).

With all the changes happening to him, Daniel knew he needed help. So he stayed close to God.

"He knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Daniel 6:10).

God respected Daniel's commitment and responded to his prayers. God saved his life several times—even from certain death in the lion's den.

Daniel also built strong friendships with others who shared his values. They supported and encouraged each other to do the right

control of our lives. Daniel's example shows that we need to put our trust in God to work things out, as well as do what we can to improve negative circumstances.

The Bible contains many other examples of how people respond to change. These examples can help us see how to deal with the challenges we face.

Consider Joseph. Though he was condemned to slavery and prison in Egypt, his trust in God and his hard work finally brought him to a position of rulership over the whole nation.

Ruth, in a touching example of devotion to her mother-in-law and to God, left her people and her homeland behind. The book of Ruth shows how God blessed her for this.

When Joshua was to take over a difficult new job—leading all Israel into the Promised Land—God gave him the encouragement and advice he needed. We, too, can take encouragement from God's words to Joshua:

"I will not leave you nor forsake you. . . . This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:5, 8-9).

If we obey God's law, God tells us we will enjoy ultimate success. When times are tough, we can remember that God never forsakes us.

Transition tips

Let's look at some tips that can help us stay close to God through the transitions in our lives.

• *Make time for prayer.* It may take some effort and creativity to work out a regular time and place for privacy, but contact with God becomes even more important as we face the stresses of change. Sticking to a schedule gives stability to your life. Pray-

ing, sleeping, eating and exercising at regular times can help you feel in control of your life.

• *Strengthen your foundation.* Study God's Word for a true perspective of what is important. Study the life of Jesus Christ, our foundation (I Corinthians 3:11). How he handled the challenges in his life sets us the perfect example.

Christ told us it would take work: "Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock" (Luke 6:47-48).

Studying the principles in God's Word gives us a firm foundation for facing floods of discouragement and difficulties.

• *Stay in touch with your family.* Many young people moving away from home or going to college let their family ties slip. But it's a difficult transition for both child and parents, and keeping in touch can really help. Even if things weren't going well in the family, now is a good time to patch up the relationship, if possible, and draw strength from it.

• *Build strong friendships with friends of like mind.* Friends with the same values can help in times of trouble. We can encourage and stir up one another to love and good works if we keep in constant contact with God's Church and his people (Hebrews 10:24-25).

• *Give to others.* By turning outward, we can overcome loneliness and get to know others. We can practice the outgoing concern for others that God teaches us. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

Staying close to God is the key to surviving—and thriving—in times of change or turmoil in our lives. Accept the challenges, and accept the help God offers. Then, like Daniel, Joseph, Ruth and Joshua, you'll pass life's tests with flying colors! □

We become
unnerved by change
when we feel we've lost
control of our lives.
We need to put our trust
in God to work things
out, as well as do what
we can to improve negative
circumstances.

thing. Daniel and his friends poured themselves into their studies. When the three years of training were over, "The king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king" (Daniel 1:19).

They passed their studies, their job interviews and their spiritual tests with flying colors.

Springboard to success

If we look at the challenges in our lives positively, they will help us grow. We'll develop the character we need to succeed both physically and spiritually.

We become unnerved by change when we feel we've lost

Patience, you tell yourself.

You were just cut off on the road by another driver, and you missed your turn. Your first urge was to blast your horn at him or call him some name.

But then you catch yourself and begin looking for the next exit.

You're in the market. You just stopped in to pick up a couple of items. You're due somewhere and you're already late. And wouldn't you know it? Only one checkstand is open, and you're the seventh person in line.

You have several options. You can leave in disgust and come back later to get your groceries. You can find the store manager and, fuming, give him a piece of your mind. Or you can calmly wait your turn and be cheerful about the whole thing.

Patience.

We all need to develop more patience to deal with problems in our everyday lives—disagreements with our mates, annoyances from our children, unfair treatment from employers and fellow workers, inconsiderate acts of both friends and strangers.

But, as Christians, we have an even greater need to develop real godly patience, living, as we do, in the pulsating pressure cooker that is this age. We are challenged to endure to the end, and to wait patiently for the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment on earth of the kingdom of God.

Cheerful endurance

Paul tells us, "But if we hope for that we see not [our birth into God's Family], then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25, Authorized Version).

What exactly is true, effective,

godly patience? And how can we develop more of it?

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (AV).

Patience is one of the virtues Peter tells us to "add" to keep from falling away from the faith (II Peter 1:5-10).

James writes that Christians should "count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you

offer sacrifices there before a battle with the Philistines. When the appointed time passed and Samuel didn't appear. Saul and the people with him grew impatient and fearful.

Finally Saul decided to go ahead and offer the sacrifices himself, in direct contravention of God's command.

Immediately after Saul's sin, Samuel appeared (if Saul had only waited a while longer!). The prophet condemned the king's act and informed Saul that God had rejected him from being king of Israel (I Samuel 13:7-14).

Abraham, on the other hand, patiently waited a quarter of a century for the son God promised him from his wife Sarah. Hebrews 6:15 says of Abraham, "After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise."

Remember the patriarch Job? Satan utterly destroyed everything Job had and then racked his body with severe pain. Yet Job set a tremendous example of patience (James 5:11).

King David, unlike Saul who preceded him, had great patience, which was linked with abiding faith in God. David's psalms are filled with expressions of this attitude of patience:

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry" (Psalm 40:1).

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope" (Psalm 130:5).

Paul, in the service of God's Work, underwent hardships that we today can scarcely imagine (II Corinthians 11:23-33). Yet he endured patiently, and exhorted others to do likewise:

"But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed

PATIENCE!

*What should you do
when circumstances force you
to wait?*

By Norman L. Shoaf

may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

The word *patience* means "cheerful or hopeful endurance, continuance or waiting."

People with real patience bear trials calmly. They are steadfast in the face of adversity or strain. Patient people are not hasty or impetuous, but act with wisdom and discretion. The Bible gives many examples of people who acted with patience—and some who did not.

Wait for the Lord

The prophet Samuel arranged to meet King Saul at Gilgal and

abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:3-5, AV).

The greatest example of patience was set by Jesus Christ, who, as an innocent Lamb, died a hideous death to make possible mankind's reconciliation to God: "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls" (Hebrews 12:3).

Developing patience

Here, then, are several ways to develop godly patience.

G.A. Belluche Jr.



● *Keep your eye on the overall goal.* All of us are forced to deal with trials and problems. It's sometimes hard to keep our minds on our ultimate destiny—birth into God's Family.

But that's exactly what we must do—keep our minds on that great, overall goal.

James wrote: "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. . . . You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand" (James 5:7-8).

Habakkuk adds: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and

it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Habakkuk 2:3).

● *Think before you act.* There is an old saying that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." A person who jumps to conclusions is likely to end up at the bottom of a cliff.

Your husband or wife made an unkind remark to you? Don't snap back with something you'll be sorry you said. You're tired of standing in line at a church function or at the Feast of Tabernacles? Occupy your mind with something else! Don't dwell on the long line, or you'll end up saying or doing something that will set a wrong example of God's way of life.

● *Concentrate on giving to others.* Impatience is many times rooted in selfishness.

Paul said, "Be patient with all" (I Thessalonians 5:14)—the slow bank teller, the small child who can't understand an instruction, the rude gas station attendant, the person who drones on and on with the most boring story you ever heard.

Overlook the shortcomings of others (you have a few of your own). Forget yourself and be concerned with their welfare. "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit" (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

● *Talk out tensions.* Does a mate, a fellow employee or a friend have an annoying habit that is about to drive you up the wall? Well, if you simply cannot overlook it any longer, tell the person about it and talk out your feelings.

In many cases, the other person will not have even realized his habit bothered you, and will make an effort to stop, if you approach him with tact, meekness and sincere concern.

● *Rely on God for strength.* Our Father in heaven is the God

of patience. Patience (called long-suffering) is a fruit of God's Spirit (Galatians 5:22). God can help you have a mind like his (Romans 15:5).

When you think you're at the end of your rope—when you just can't grin and bear it any longer—ask God for more of his Holy Spirit—his strength.

David wrote, "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!" (Psalm 27:14).

God can give you the patience you need to overcome.

An incredible future

If we do wait on God—if we practice godly patience and endure to the end of this age—an incredible future awaits us.

"For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God . . . and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:19, 23, Revised Standard Version).

Even God's very creation sets an example of patience for us as it awaits the fulfillment of God's plan!

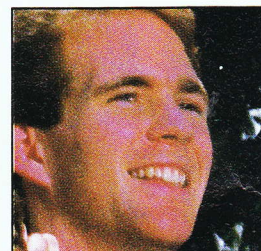
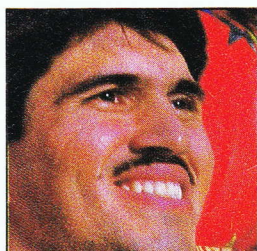
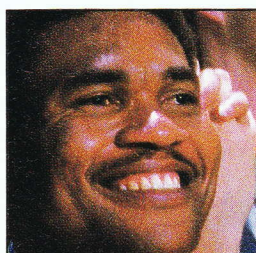
"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him" (Isaiah 64:4).

Patience is a vitally important commodity in the makeup of the future children of God. We must have godly patience if we are to rule with Jesus Christ!

"For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth" (Psalm 37:9).

Make every effort to build this trait of godly patience into your character—it is necessary if you intend to overcome the trials of this life and endure to the end.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Hebrews 10:36, AV). □



Build the Personality of a King

Do you have the capacity to inspire—to influence—to lead others for good? Here are vital keys to building a powerful and effective personality.

By Roderick C. Meredith

Some 38 years ago, my boss ordered me and a partner to make a long trip back to the head office—immediately!

We were already tired and sleepy from the long and difficult road trip we had been making. But now, just when we hoped to slow down and rest a while, we were ordered to drive over a thousand miles.

An important meeting was to be held, and we were to be there.

All the way back, I became

more conscious than ever of how tired we really were. As we groggily rolled over plain and desert, I began to feel more and more sorry for myself.

“Doesn’t he know how tired we are?” I muttered to myself. “Can’t he realize that an extra day wouldn’t make all that much difference? Besides, we’re so tired we might get in a wreck and be killed!”

We stalked into the building to check in and find out when and where the meeting was to be held that afternoon. I walked a little stiffly, with a set jaw and a chip

on my shoulder. They said the boss was coming, so we waited for a few minutes in the hallway. Soon we heard him coming around the corner.

The boss appears

“Hi, fellows!” the familiar voice boomed out with resounding warmth and enthusiasm. “Boy! It’s good to see you guys here!” He gripped my hand warmly and put another friendly hand on my shoulder.

“I know you’re tired, but you look great. This meeting would just not have been the same without you fellows being here.

“Say, I really appreciate your driving straight through to get here in time! I think I’ll line up a long weekend recuperation period over at a very special resort I know about as soon as this meeting is over. It’ll all be on me. How about it?”

“Oh, that’s all right, sir,” I

found myself saying. "It wasn't so bad a trip, and we're sure glad to be back here on the job again."

The warmth in his voice and his smile, the sincere love and concern in his eyes and manner—it melted me like butter under a tropical sun!

What changed my attitude so dramatically—so suddenly?

It was simply the force of a sincere, dynamic and powerful personality. It was the boss's personality. And, as I realized more with each passing year, that personality was at least one of the important reasons why he became the boss over a large and growing organization!

Now, what about you? Do you know the keys or the building blocks so that you can build this kind of personality?

What kind of leader are you?

A new age is coming. And the right kind of leaders are going to be needed in that new age. Christians are now in training to be those leaders.

Notice Revelation 2:26-27: "And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—'He shall rule them with a rod of iron.'"

Again: "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne". (Revelation 3:21).

You can either *lead* people, or you can *drive* them. You can cause them to *want* to follow you, or you can *make* them.

Which is it going to be?

When Jesus spoke, the people were warmed and inspired. The religious leaders of his day became fearful that the whole nation would begin to follow him (John 11:48).

Jesus' teaching *and his personality* had such a profound effect on people that his disciples remarked, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32).

Here are those "keys" Jesus had—five of them—to help build

a powerful personality—the personality of a king.

1) Develop outgoing interest and warmth for others

What strikes you most about someone who easily wins your love and respect?

Chances are, it is the sincere warmth and affection that person shows. It may be the light in the eyes or smile. It will often include the pleasant, friendly voice.

People who possess a great deal of personal charm really like their fellow human beings and are genuinely interested in them.

Learning to love and enjoy others—to give of yourself to them in personal relations—is certainly the foremost key to building a radiant personality. Jesus Christ—the greatest personality of all time—stated this universally applicable spiritual principle: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

If you can sincerely learn to share your warmth, your love, your plans, hopes and dreams with others—to give kindness, encouragement and a sense of being loved and appreciated—you will build bonds of friendship that will endure many a trial.

And you yourself will be the one most blessed in the end.

All of us should learn to smile



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more. We should put more warmth and enthusiasm in our voices and in our handshakes. We should build a sincere feeling of empathy with our fellowmen—having their welfare and happiness at heart as much as our own.

Proverbs 17:22 states: "A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones." This shows the powerful effect of a happy, positive frame of mind not only on one's self, but on others as well.

"A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). To inspire love and loyalty in your friends and associates, *give* of these qualities yourself in a spontaneous, wholehearted and sincere manner.

Learn to think of love and warmth as something you *give*, not *get*.

2) Build zest and humor into your life

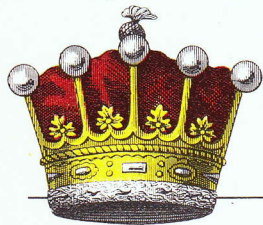
One of the most endearing qualities in a person—especially a leader—is the ability to see the humorous side of things, even about himself.

Most people of ability are, alas, too busy building up and protecting their image or greatness and grandeur to maintain their childhood zest for small occasions, and their ability to laugh at and enjoy many things in this life—even themselves.

A number of this world's outstanding leaders and statesmen

have maintained the hearty zest and humor of younger days—and it has even increased their stature as leaders.

Although many disagreed with his political theories, overwhelm-



Genuine, outgoing concern for others will be expressed in hundreds of little ways. It is often through these acts of kindness that we demonstrate the depth of our concern, our friendship and our love.

ing millions of Americans were charmed and inspired by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's personality. When, during the Great Depression, his rich, resonant voice came over the radio, "My fellow Americans . . ." millions of his insecure countrymen were warmed and reassured. His full, vibrant laughter and engaging smile made him popular.

One of his close associates and a counselor of many presidents, Bernard M. Baruch, described his feelings after news came that President Roosevelt had died: "Now that the President was dead, I remembered with particular force his zest for living. He used to enjoy the pleasures of the children's hour . . . and the convivial conversation of his friends.

"His sense of humor was always evident. I recalled many of the amusing messages he had sent me, such as the one I received when I turned 73. 'Keep

right at it,' he wired. 'Someday you will grow up.'"

This flair for humor also characterized Sir Winston Churchill. During World War II, he wore a varied and obviously funny assortment of uniforms, hats and paraphernalia.

Alan Moorehead wrote: "There was an immense love for Churchill in England through these years. The crowds knew every one of his uniforms and hats, his siren suits, the bow tie, the shoes with zip fasteners, the walking stick, the watch chain. Nothing apparently could ever weary them of the V-sign or the cigar, and the first sound of the grumpy, reassuring voice on the radio silenced all conversation in any pub or public place."

So learn to laugh even at yourself—and at the many funny things that happen in life. Of course, always laugh *with* people, not *at* them. Learn to preserve, or recapture, your youthful zest for the right kind of upbuilding fun and games—and for the new and different experiences that make life interesting!

3) Learn to be patient, compassionate and modest

Perhaps the thing that irks others most about many so-called important people is that they are so impressed with *self* that they seem blind to the needs and wishes of others. They are pompous and vain. They are impatient and demanding—cutting other people off in conversation and expecting superhuman efforts of their subordinates that even they themselves would not be able to accomplish.

They lack real compassion—the ability to share in the plans, hopes, dreams and sufferings of others.

One of the characteristics that made Abraham Lincoln great was his sincere compassion for the downtrodden, plus his modesty and humility.

Perhaps you have heard the story of the little old lady who was impatiently waiting outside her apartment for a buggy to take her to the train station. Although

the station was only a few blocks away, she had a large trunk too heavy even for an average man to want to carry for that distance.

Finding her in distress—in fact almost at the point of tears over the prospect of missing her train—and with no buggy or help in sight, President Lincoln picked up the large trunk, placed it across his strong shoulders and said, "Follow me!"

The little old lady and her trunk were personally placed on board the passenger train by the President of the United States!

For a far greater example yet, it is enlightening to read the life story of the greatest personality of all times—looking as you read for the word *compassion*.

"And Jesus, moved with *compassion*, put out His hand" (Mark 1:41).

"When the Lord saw her, He had *compassion* on her" (Luke 7:13).

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with *compassion* for them" (Matthew 9:36).

Genuine, outgoing concern for others—as Jesus had—will be expressed in hundreds of little ways. Tact, courtesy, consideration—we have so many different names for such small attentions. Yet it is often through these acts of kindness that we demonstrate the depth of our concern, our friendship and our love.

Again, learn to give yourself to others with sincere love and outgoing consideration for them. Have empathy—express compassion when they are suffering, or when they are down and out.

Become more patient and tolerant of the mistakes of others—realizing your own human frailty. And be loyal to your friends and loved ones—not throwing them aside when you think you have become "important."

Do all this—and you will inspire the love, confidence and personal devotion of others.

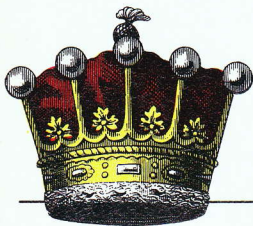
4) Be strong, confident and courageous

All of us admire strength of will and personality, infectious

optimism and raw courage. The greatest leaders and personalities of all time have had, at least in measure, these qualities. To be this way, you must, of course, have a purpose in which you fervently believe—and for which you are willing to die if necessary.

Again, Churchill is a moving example. In the critical period just after Dunkirk, when invasion seemed imminent, Churchill's ringing voice proclaimed to Britain and the world: "We shall not flag nor fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight in the seas and oceans. . . . We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches and landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. . . . We shall never surrender."

The infectious optimism and



The person who has courage and confidence, who is bold and sure of his or her convictions, will inspire the admiration and respect of friends and associates. Any real leader must have this bold power of decision.

confident manner, the unbounded determination and will to win—all these lifted and inspired the British people.

The greatest examples of faith and courage are found in the Bible. In Acts 5:17-42 we read the account of the apostles of God being put in prison and threatened. "When they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of

Jesus, and let them go" (verse 40).

After being threatened for their very lives, their backs raw and bleeding from a beating, you would think the apostles would at least slack off in their preaching, or perhaps go "underground."

Quite the contrary!

"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (verses 41-42).

They had absolute confidence in the living God, and plenty of raw courage to go through the terrible trials and sufferings often necessary in his service.

The person who has this type of courage and confidence, who is bold and sure of his or her convictions, will inspire the admiration and respect of friends and associates.

Any real leader must have this bold power of decision in storming the beaches of life, scaling the mountains and conquering all

obstacles. Surrender your life to your Creator and to his purpose. Then you can in faith ask him for his strength, confidence and courage!

5) Enthusiasm, drive and purpose

No matter what his other faults, a person or a public speaker will always capture at least our momentary attention and interest if he has an abun-

dance of just one quality—enthusiasm. For if the poorest speaker in the world is on fire—completely given to his message—he is going to speak, gesture and perhaps shout with such ringing conviction and force as to wake up even the sleepest audience.

The interesting person is lively and enthusiastic—and he usually makes life more interesting for others.

The word *enthusiasm* comes from the Greek *en theos*, or "God in us." We often speak of one as being "inspired" in his cause if he has great enthusiasm.

"Eloquence," said the great orator William Jennings Bryan, "may be defined as the speech of one who knows what he is talking about, and means what he says—it is thought on fire. . . . Knowledge is of little use to the speaker without earnestness. Persuasive speech is from heart to heart, not from mind to mind."

In your voice, your face and your actions, show that you are excited and thrilled about the opportunities and challenges of life.

God says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

And in the New Testament, the apostle Paul states, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Colossians 3:23).

So be zealous for those things that are right and good in this life, and put your whole being into seeking your Creator and his purpose in giving you life. Then you will really have something to be enthusiastic about!

As his servant and his begotten child, become more outgoing and warm. Build zest and humor into your life. Be patient, compassionate and modest. With God's help, become strong, confident and courageous. And build drive and enthusiasm into all you do.

Do these things, and you will have a richer and happier life. You will extend additional happiness and courage to others, and you will make great progress toward fulfilling the great purpose of your loving Creator. □

Why Does God Say NO?

God promises to answer the prayer of faith. But why does God sometimes answer no?

By Rick L. Shallenberger

“You keep telling me to pray about my problems and I do. But it just doesn't seem to help. My problems are still here. It makes me wonder if God really hears my prayers. And if he does, why doesn't he answer?”

Have you ever felt the way this *Good News* reader feels? Do you think God doesn't hear your prayers? Or, if he hears, that he doesn't answer?

Another reader writes: “I've been sick for a long time and I pray about it daily. At one point I told God I couldn't take any more. I reminded him of the promise he made in I Corinthians 10:13. He said he would never give us a trial we couldn't bear. We wouldn't be tested beyond our limits.

“I told God I had reached my limits and asked him to heal me. Evidently God said no, because the next day I got worse.”

Sometimes the answer is no

God does hear and answer prayers, but sometimes the answer to our requests is no. Why? How could God say no to someone who is genuinely striving to overcome, someone who is trying to faithfully deal with problems and trials?

In 1986, Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of *The Good News* and the pastor general of

the Worldwide Church of God, was critically ill. Church members fasted and prayed, asking God to heal Mr. Armstrong. But God allowed Mr. Armstrong to die.

Many of us have seen loved ones die, even after we've earnestly prayed for them. We've also seen illnesses drag on in spite of daily prayers and supplications to God. We've seen loss of employment, difficulty in making ends meet, lack of proper living conditions and, for some, insufficient food and clothing to meet needs.

We pray daily for relief from trials such as these, yet sometimes they continue.

God sometimes says no. We've experienced it in our own lives. But why? Why does God say no?

If God always said yes

Let's look at the other side of this question. What if God always said yes?

Suppose you find your dream home. The house is out of your price range but you still want it. You tell God you'll work harder and use the house to serve him by sharing it with others. You promise to praise him more—if he'll only give you this house.

So God says yes, and you buy your home.

Before long you realize you really can't afford your dream home, so you tell God you need an increase in salary. “After all,” you reason, “God put me in this house. He should help me find a way to pay for it.”

Again, God says yes, and you get a raise.

With this increase in income, you decide you need a bigger

house and ask God to provide it for you. He does and then you find you need more money. So you go to God.

Where will it end? What would this do for your character and your desire for material things?

Suppose you eat whatever you want, whenever you want. You aren't worried about getting sick

G.A. Belluche Jr.



because if you do, you'll just pray to be healed and God will heal you. You don't need to worry about exercise, eating the right foods, getting the proper amount of sleep or any other aspect of health care because you know God will take care of you.

In short, if God always said yes to our requests, we wouldn't need to develop character! We wouldn't need to study the Bible to know God's will in our lives. We wouldn't need to overcome and change. We wouldn't need faith or hope. And we wouldn't need God's kingdom.

For us to grow in grace and knowledge (II Peter 3:18), for us to learn to look to and trust him, God occasionally says no. Let's

look at four reasons why God might say no, or might seem to say no:

1) We don't ask enough

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Sometimes we think if we ask once, that should cover it. But God wants us to be persistent.

In Luke 18:1-8 we can read the parable of the persistent widow. She pleaded her cause so often before the judge, he finally gave in just to keep her from coming back and wearing him out! Christ

no. Another way to ask amiss is to ask while expecting the answer to be no.

Do you sometimes pray out of a sense of duty, not really expecting God to answer? Maybe you feel your request is too silly or too unimportant for God to answer.

You still pray, though, so when others ask if you've prayed about it you can say yes.

For your prayer to be effective, it must be a work of faith. When we pray, we must believe that God will answer positively.

"Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt . . . if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:21-22).

So if you pray believing God will say no, why do you get upset when he does?

3) "No" tests our faith and commitment

Hebrews 11:1 tells us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We are to pray in faith. If the answer was always yes, we wouldn't need faith. There would be no need to hope for things.

God wants to see if we will remain faithful despite our trials and our problems.

The apostle Paul was beaten and left for dead, imprisoned, shipwrecked, stoned, hungry and tired (II Corinthians 11:23-27), yet he never lost his faith or his commitment to God and the work he was doing.

One would think that a man of Paul's stature would have any request granted by God. Yet we read in II Corinthians 12:7-10 that Paul had a "thorn in the flesh." "Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'"

It is through our weaknesses, those trials God decides not to

change, that we come to rely on God. We realize through faith that we need God to make it through our trials. We can't make it on our own strength.

4) "No" sets an example for others

After David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah killed, Nathan the prophet told him that his son would die. David prayed and fasted for seven days, an act of a converted and repentant man. Yet God allowed the child to die (II Samuel 11 and 12).

What a tremendous lesson for us to learn. Sin produces consequences. Sometimes we suffer those consequences immediately, as in the case of getting a sexually transmitted disease from an adulterous act. Sometimes the consequences come down the road, such as marital problems from that same adulterous act.

When we suffer through a trial, maintain a right attitude and don't waver in faith, we teach others. We have watched some loved ones die. We also have watched them grow in faith. They set a tremendous example of faith and dedication for us.

God shows us through our trials, and through the trials of those around us, that we can make it. Even if and when God says no, we can grow.

The ultimate yes

God wants us in his Family. He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

We must keep in mind that God knows what is best for us. He knows when to say no and when to say yes. He promises that "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Romans 8:28), to those who remain faithful in trials.

When we make it through our trials, when we don't falter over the occasional no, when we learn *why* God sometimes tells us no, then we are ready for that ultimate yes. Then we are ready for the kingdom of God! □

A *Another reason to be persistent is because sometimes the answer to our prayers is not now, or not yet. God may not be saying no, but he is telling us to be patient and to have faith.*

used this example to show that we, too, must be persistent. In verse 7, he said, "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"

Another reason to be persistent is because sometimes the answer to our prayers is *not now*, or *not yet*. God may not be saying no, but he is telling us to be patient and to have faith.

Also, if we want God to answer our prayers, we must ask in the right attitude, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).

2) We ask amiss

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3). If we ask God for something that isn't good for us, or for unnecessary, selfish, personal gain, God is likely to say

Here's a war in which you definitely can't afford to take part.

Any war is awful. A civil war, where a nation fights itself, is especially horrible.

In a civil war, your enemies are the people of your nation, of your neighborhood, even of your family.

You fight the battles on *your* territory, blowing up *your* bridges, destroying *your* homes and burning *your* farms.

When the bloodshed and destruction are over, you may have beaten the other side, or perhaps they have beaten you. But both of you have lost.

When a people wage civil war, they are made weak and vulnerable. Look at the Lebanese, the Cambodians and those who live in El Salvador, Northern Ireland or any of the dozens of nations who have gone to war with themselves in the last few decades. Then you will realize why civil war is something that no nation can afford.

And that includes the kingdom of God.

Why fight?

Why do people make the ruinous decision to fight each other in their own home territory?

If people are repressed and abused by their leaders, they may be driven to fight back. Often they will rally around a champion who will lead them in a war of liberation.

But many of history's "liberators" proved to be more despotic than those they overthrew.

There is an underlying reason why a war—any war—is fought. It is simply that humans do not know any other way to get what they want—or rather what they *think* they want, or perhaps what they have been *told* they should want.

The apostle James explained it like this: "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do

CIVIL WAR IN THE CHURCH?

By John Halford



seem reasonable. But James warns us to be cautious of these emotions: "But if you have bitter envy and self seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic" (verses 14-15).

Yes, *demonic!* The Bible leaves us in no doubt where the passion that flares up into a civil war comes from. It is the attitude and spirit of Satan.

The first civil war

The Bible says the first civil



they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:1-2).

That's basic—some might even say simplistic—but it is nevertheless true. We resort to fighting among ourselves because we know of no other way to get what we want. "The spirit within us lusts to envy," wrote James (James 4:5, Authorized Version). He also explained that "where envy and self seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there" (James 3:16).

In such a climate, rebellion, ill feeling and the potential for war flourish. Frustrated people huddle in groups, fretting, griping and plotting. Passions are inflamed, the truth becomes distorted. Rebellion and violence

war was fought in heaven: Satan became dissatisfied with his position and decided to try to seize power. Two thirds of the angels remained loyal to God, and Satan's rebellion was soundly repulsed. From that time on, the angelic kingdom has been divided, with a resentful Satan trying to thwart all that God stands for.

Satan still has authority on earth. This is his domain, where he prowls, looking for trouble, fanning the flames of pride, greed, resentment and discontent. He is the god of this world and the "spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2).

It is, then, not surprising that we see so much of mankind embroiled in nation-breaking, family-shattering civil wars.

When the kingdom of God is established on earth, civil war

will become a thing of the past. Nations will not learn war anymore, which means that they must learn another way to resolve conflicts.

They will discover that there is a way to redress wrong, reduce tension and resolve disputes without resorting to war.

Those who expect to serve with Jesus Christ in administering the government of God in the world tomorrow must know that way.

But how?

Peace at home

We do not control the destiny of nations. We cannot influence to any great extent how the world behaves.

But we do have some say in how things go in the embryonic



Ken Tunell

nation that is the Church of God. God's kingdom is represented on earth today by his Church—a "holy nation . . . who once were not a people but are now the people of God" (I Peter 2:9-10). It is a nation with a job to do—to

announce the establishment of the kingdom of God and to prepare spiritually for it.

God knows that his "nation" will be most effective and productive when it is at peace within itself. He knows that if his Church is in turmoil with internal strife it will be weakened and less effective.

God's Church is not immune to the kind of problems that, if not resolved, could lead to civil war. Wherever humans come together, misunderstandings and disputes will inevitably occur. We become disgruntled with the way things are done or the way we are treated.

We are not yet perfect in the way we treat each other and injustices do happen. So we need to

know, by studying what God has revealed in his Word, the techniques that resolve conflicts in a peaceable and godly manner.

Preserving peace

But just knowing the tech-

niques is not enough. It is important to put what you know into action.

When disputes arise, when you are tempted to get caught up in rebellion or to undermine or attack constituted authority, God watches carefully. He knows what humans *usually* do in these circumstances. He must be sure his people are different!

Are they trying to preserve peace, humbly and sincerely looking for a better way to work things out? Are they obeying the commands to "go to your brother" (Matthew 18:15) and to "not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26)? And if all else fails, do they wait patiently for God to give his solution to the problem?

Yes, sometimes it comes to that. The grievance may be genuine, the problem real, but no solution seems to present itself. That's when you wait for God to intervene.

It might take more time than a quick and dirty little civil war, and you might have to build some character and patience. But in the long run, the Church remains intact and people can still look each other in the eye.

But if we do choose the route of civil war, time, money and other resources must be used to bring the situation under control. Then there is the aftermath—the hurt feelings, broken relationships and offended brothers and sisters retreating to their "strong towers," glaring at each other through the bars, as Solomon so vividly described in Proverbs 18:19.

All this infighting takes away from the Work the Church of God should be doing—making every effort to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and to prepare for Christ's coming.

This world has enough anger, malice, plotting, backbiting and strife. Why should the people who know God's way add to it? God has revealed to us a better way to resolve our disputes and quarrels. If we are to teach it tomorrow, we must practice it today. □

THE BIBLE AND CIVIL WAR

We need to understand how God views insurrection, rebellion, taking matters into our own hands and working against authority and government in the Church. It is an important subject. That is why the Old Testament describes in detail several examples of civil war.

Study these incidents. Think about what happened. Were the wars avoidable? Who did the right thing? Who was wrong? What were the immediate, and also the long term, results of the actions? Could these situations have been better handled? What would you have done?

Satan's rebellion:

Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-17

Abraham avoids family strife:

Genesis 13:5-12

Korah's rebellion:

Numbers 16

The war against Benjamin:

Judges 20-21

Saul against David:

I Samuel 18-31

David becomes king:

II Samuel 2-4

Absalom's rebellion:

II Samuel 15-20

Solomon becomes king:

I Kings 1-2

The 10 tribes of Israel revolt:

I Kings 12:1-19 □

HOPE FOR HOMOSEXUALS

God is calling men and women out of this life-style to the knowledge of his truth. He is calling them to be part of the Body of Christ—his Church!

By Dennis G. Luker

Some think that God could not call and convert someone who is homosexual. This is not true, of course.

God knows the causes of homosexuality and he is able to lead anyone he chooses to repentance. He is able to bring about change and healing in their lives.

I have counseled many hours with men and women whom God is calling out of homosexuality. I have baptized some of them because they were repentant and wanted to overcome and change.

My experience in counseling homosexuals

My first counseling experience with homosexuals began in 1963, when my wife and I were sent to San Francisco, California, to serve in the ministry.

At that time San Francisco was called the homosexual capital of the United States. Some claimed that about one third of the men in the city were "gay," a term used by homosexuals to describe themselves. Homosexual women, also called lesbians, were a smaller percentage.

Today, medical authorities estimate that as many as 10 percent of U.S. men and 5 percent of

U.S. women have homosexual tendencies. About half of these are active, practicing homosexuals. So we are talking about millions of people!

I came to realize that God was working in the lives of some of these people and was calling them out of homosexuality. But I didn't know how to help them with their struggle except to encourage them and pray for them.

Years later, in another church congregation, I mentioned in a sermon my experience of counseling and trying to help homosexuals in San Francisco. After services a member asked me if I would like to attend a seminar with him conducted by ex-gays on overcoming homosexuality. The member himself had been called out of this life-style and was willing to tell me his story.

I attended the seminar with him. It was the beginning of an education on how to help people who sincerely want help. Later I attended another seminar conducted by an ex-gay who had been a minister. The approach was biblical and he recommended some good books on the subject.

I had a lot to learn. I didn't know what I didn't know about the causes of homosexuality. And I didn't know how to help those

whom God was calling who had this problem. I still have more to learn.

But I do know God's Word, and God wants homosexuals to understand why Christ died for them, also. He wants them to know that help is available. He wants them to have hope. I feel it is important to share some of what I have learned so that others may benefit.

God does call homosexuals

God's Word says: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *homosexuals*, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Notice that Paul mentioned homosexuals, along with other sinners, and said, "Such were some of you." Some of the baptized members of the Corinthian church had been homosexuals. They had been called by God into his Church.

And they had repented of their

sins and received the Holy Spirit. Verse 11 proves this. It says they were "washed" (or cleansed spiritually), "sanctified" (set apart for a holy purpose) and "justified" (forgiven past sins and made righteous) "in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Only those who have repented, accepted Christ's sacrifice and been baptized have received the Spirit of God (Acts 2:38).

God in past ages has called homosexuals into his Church, and he is doing so today!

The big question is, Will you as a member of God's Church have the love, compassion and understanding to accept these brethren and help them grow spiritually?

Some may feel that homosexuality is the worst of sins. But notice what Christ said in Matthew 11:23-24: "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Christ meant it will be easier for homosexuals to repent of their sins when they are resurrected to physical life at the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-12) than for many of the non-homosexual (heterosexual) people of Capernaum who witnessed Christ's miracles and did not repent.

We are not to sit in judgment of others regardless of their weaknesses. God says we should learn to hate sin. But he also emphasizes that we should love the sinner with unconditional love regardless of his sins (Matthew 5:44-46, John 13:34-35).

This is important because Jesus also said: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

We all need forgiveness of our

sins regardless of what they may be. Sin is sin, and the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God to all sinners who repent and come under the blood of Christ is eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Heartbreaking stories

One way that most helped me to understand homosexuals was counseling with them and listening to some of their heartbreaking stories.

Not all homosexuals have consciously chosen homosexuality as their preferred life-style. Not all homosexuals fit the description given in Romans 1 of men lusting for men and women lusting for women.

There are some who willingly and willfully chose this sinful life-style, of course. But most of

ceived that critical emotional bonding with their mother and father, but didn't.

Some children are born with a more sensitive and vulnerable temperament than others. If they have lacked love, affection and acceptance, they can more easily fall victim to homosexuality.

Other researchers say that genetic and glandular (hormonal) disorders play a role in the homosexual orientation. This may be true, but it has not been proven to be the main cause.

The root causes of homosexuality seem to lie in unhappy and broken marriages and dysfunctional family life. God created children to need love, security and acceptance from the very beginning of their lives. They need proper sexual role models. They

The root causes of homosexuality seem to lie in dysfunctional family life. God created children to need love from the very beginning of their lives.

those with whom I counseled were victims.

Some were victims of sexual abuse, both men and women. Some were just neglected and never received the love, affection and acceptance they needed growing up. They were sexually ignorant and starving for someone to love them.

Research has shown that emotional bonding with parents and sexual identity begin early in life, probably in the womb, so that by age 2 or 3 a child's sexual orientation is strongly established. One ex-gay counselor and author said some homosexuals feel they were born that way because they don't remember those early, formative years. Those early years are when they should have re-

need praise, encouragement and teaching more than correction. They need unconditional love at all times.

This is something that most of those struggling with homosexuality have never received—unconditional love and acceptance.

Will you help fill that need in their lives?

What about AIDS?

Some of these repentant homosexuals may unknowingly carry the AIDS virus. Some may actually have symptoms of the disease. What should we do? Notice what Pastor General Joseph W. Tkach has written to the whole Church concerning the AIDS virus:

"It should come as no surprise

to us, then, that a small number of God's people are, and a few others no doubt will be, afflicted with acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS. Some brethren became infected because of sins committed before God called them to repentance. Others, some hemophiliacs, some children, have become infected from tainted blood.

"So the question we must now face is how are God's people to fellowship with brethren who are either carriers or actually suffering from a disease that is thus far

**“Let’s not
be so terrified...
that we lose our
Christian
perspective about
extending...
fellowship to our
own brethren.”**

100 percent fatal and to most people extremely frightening? How would God have us handle such a matter?

"The Bible does give us principles about how to deal with sicknesses that are easily spread by general or casual contact with the afflicted person. In such cases we practice quarantine. Godly love dictates that the infected person take whatever steps necessary to protect others from getting his or her sickness.

"But with AIDS, the matter is not that simple. From all indications available so far, the disease is not spread through the air, by sneezes or coughs or through direct contact with the skin. Research indicates that it is only spread through exchange of body fluids—primarily by direct sexual contact and sharing of infected needles, and a very few by

blood transfusions with blood from infected donors. In addition, some people may have the AIDS virus and not even know it. Some people with the virus can carry on with a normal life for years without actually suffering from the disease.

"Does it make sense to have contact with people in the general public who have the AIDS virus, rub shoulders with them on the job, be served by them in restaurants, etc., but then to deny fellowship on the Sabbath to our own brethren who have the same virus?

"If there were real evidence that the AIDS virus is spread through casual contact, the situation would naturally need to be handled differently. But surely we must all realize that we are likely to unknowingly come into casual contact with people carrying the AIDS virus rather commonly in our day-to-day affairs on the job, in school, in the market, restaurant, theater or any other public location.

"Therefore, based upon the United States Surgeon General's Report on AIDS, unless or until additional information warrants the restriction of casual contact with victims of AIDS, the Church of God will not restrict its members or its members' children who suffer from AIDS from attendance at Church services or activities.

"Let's not be so unduly terrified about this disease that we lose our Christian perspective about extending the right hand of fellowship to our own brethren."

How God's people can give hope and healing

Homosexuals who are being called by God into his Church need friends—straight (heterosexual) friends. They need Christian friends, male and female, who have the love of God and are not afraid of them.

Of course, you will never know that someone is struggling with homosexuality if your attitude is wrong. The person would never open up to you or trust you.

In my experience I have found

these brethren to be fearful because of the attitudes many, even in the Church, have toward homosexuals. It is time for all of us to change and grow in this area—to have the mind of Jesus Christ!

Are you ready and willing to extend the right hand of fellowship to those whom God is calling out of homosexuality? God has a great purpose for them, just as he does for all of us.

Imagine how they will be able to help others who have similar problems, as they, themselves, overcome and grow. Imagine the many millions of homosexuals who will be resurrected in the Great White Throne Judgment. They will need help from others who understand homosexuality and who have overcome the problem themselves. God knows what he is doing. He has a plan for everyone.

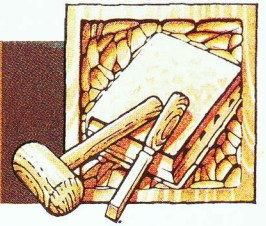
I have experienced the joy of helping people who were once trapped by Satan in the homosexual life-style. A tremendous burden of guilt was removed from one woman who thought she had committed the unpardonable sin. Then there was the man who gave me a big hug after I baptized him. He said, "Thank you for baptizing me so that all my sins can be forgiven." I will never forget the look of joy and happiness on his face.

The purpose of this article is to encourage anyone struggling with homosexuality who wants to overcome. One who is homosexual is not alone. God is calling and working with others as well.

Parents who have children with this problem should not worry that the children are spiritually lost. They have not committed the unpardonable sin. God understands them and knows how to help them and, eventually, to save them.

And for those of you who are not directly affected by or involved with this problem, I pray that you will have open hearts and minds, so that God can use you as an instrument of his love to bring about hope and healing in the lives of homosexuals. □

BIBLICAL WORKSHOP



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVING

GUILTY!

Imagine a courtroom in heaven. A person is being judged for his or her actions.



Ken Tunell

God is the judge. Satan is the prosecuting attorney—he makes the accusation (Revelation 12:9-10 says Satan accuses us night and day). Jesus Christ is the defending attorney (the word *advocate* in I John 2:1 refers to a defense lawyer).

Satan makes his accusation. The person admits his guilt. But Jesus Christ has already paid the penalty, so he claims the mercy of the judge. The person should be let go with no further penalty. The crime will be removed from the record and never mentioned again.

The case seems to be

clear-cut. But wait! The person does not believe that the defense lawyer has already paid the penalty in full. He does not believe that the judge could be so merciful. The person begins to help Satan by repeating the accusations. He even proposes new penalties for his own crimes!

Such a scene is more common than you might

think. Many people think that the penalty for their sins should be numerous good works, or fastings, or sacrifices, or money. So they continue to accuse themselves of the crimes, and continue trying to pay their self-assigned penalties.

But these humanly assigned penalties cannot remove guilt. So the people continue carrying the burden of guilt in addition to their self-assigned penalties. Each time they come before God, they remind God of all their sins. They are caught in a cycle of increasing guilt.

We can be freed from this cycle of sin and guilt. We need to understand that the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). We cannot pay the penalty with any amount of good works or personal sacrifices. But Jesus has paid the penalty for us (Romans 5:8).

Our High Priest understands our weaknesses, so we can come boldly to God and ask for mercy (Hebrews 4:14-16). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Does this mean we can continue to sin simply because God is merciful? "Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15). We must repent and firmly resolve to sin no more.

But if we slip and sin again, "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1). We need not be burdened with guilt—

we can repent and be forgiven. We do not want to abuse Jesus' sacrifice or misuse God's mercy by continuing in sin. Nor do we want to reject his mercy by trying to punish ourselves, refusing to accept forgiveness.

All have sinned. All are guilty. But all can be forgiven, and the sins will be removed from the record, never mentioned again.

—Michael Morrison □

THE PARENT PROJECT

The command to "honor your father and your mother" (Deuteronomy 5:16) just means to respect what they tell you and buy them presents on Mother's

Tony Freeman, Photo Edit



Day and Father's Day—that's all there is to it, right?

Of course not. There are many ways to honor your parents and grandparents. Here's one that works for children of all ages and can build a closer family

"Among the major industrialized nations, America is the most religious. . . . Americans are more likely to believe that their church answers spiritual needs, more likely to believe in heaven, hell, the devil and life after death. Some 65 percent of Americans believe there is a personal God, compared to 31 percent of Englishmen and 19 percent of Swedes."

—U.S. News and World Report

bond in the process. It works with in-laws, too!

The only requirement is that you must be genuinely interested in your parents or grandparents as people.

Talk to them about what life has been like for them, and write down what they say. Let them know you intend to remember what they tell you long after they are gone, and that you plan to pass it on to your children.

Write up a family history, and make it as complete as possible.

Ask your parents to show you, if it is possible, the house where they grew up, their schools, where they met, where other family members are buried. Take pictures of these places.

Ask them about happy and sad moments they can remember from their childhood. Did they play musical instruments? Were they athletic or studious? What kind of religious training, if any, did they have while growing up?

What did they worry about when they were teenagers? What is the most exciting thing your Mom ever did? What was your Dad's closest brush with death? What were their most embarrassing moments?

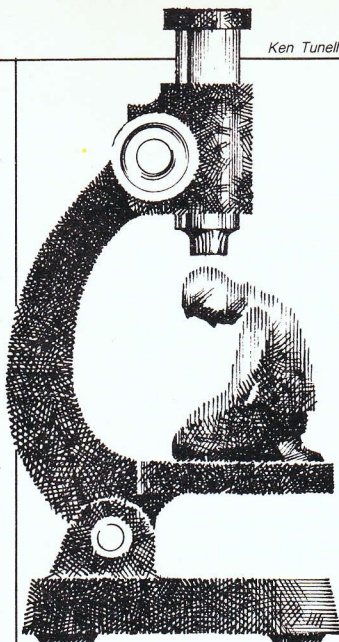
What do they remember about their parents and grandparents?

Ask them to describe themselves and tell you some of their goals, dreams and accomplishments. Ask them for their best advice on various subjects—child rearing, dating, managing finances.

When my husband and I spent a week with his parents last year, we recorded the answers to our many questions and typed them.

His parents were delighted with the idea. They asked us frequently throughout our stay, "Ask us some more questions!"

As your parents' life



ASK FOR TRIALS?

Bible prophecy reveals that in the end time many Christians—even though they are the chosen of God—will suffer from spiritual blindness (Revelation 3:17). What is

God's solution? "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire" (verse 18). In other words, put yourself under God's microscope. Ask him for the trials you need to change.

Ask for *trials*? You might think that is akin to walking out in the middle of a busy intersection and asking to be hit by a car. No, thank you!

But you need not be fearful that God will suddenly overload you. The prophet Jeremiah, concerned about this, asked: "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps. O Lord, correct me, but with justice; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing" (Jeremiah 10:23-24).

God will be kind and loving as he works to produce righteous character in your life. He won't make your Christian life so demanding that you will want to give up. I

Corinthians 10:13 tells us: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

Like a loving parent, God will do everything in mercy and love to *encourage* you to grow. And he will be with you to help you every step of the way.

The object of the intense examination that trials give you is to see yourself as God sees you.

Pray the words of Psalm 26:2: "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my mind and my heart." Or the message of Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Put yourself under God's microscope and let fantastic growth begin!

—Graemme Marshall □

story unfolds, you may find, as we did, ideas and traditions you will want to implement in your family.

It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery. Undoubtedly, it is one of the best forms of honor.

Learning family history can also help children understand their parents' reasons for certain decisions and beliefs that may have caused division. In this way, this project can help develop family unity.

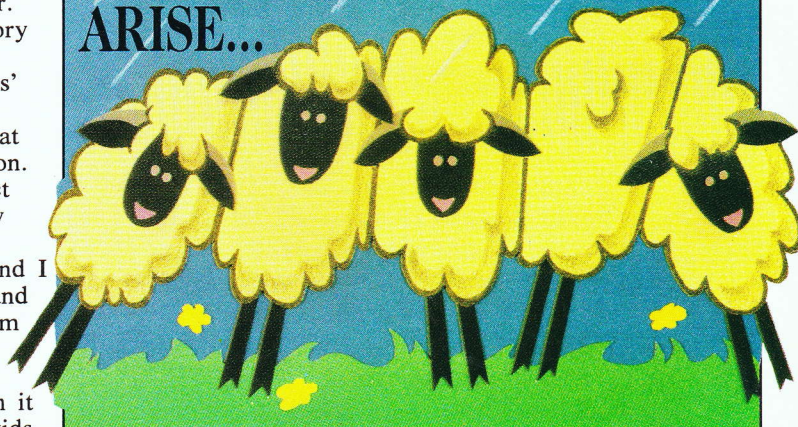
When my husband and I visited my great aunt and uncle, we talked to them about their lives.

My aunt said: "You have no idea how much it means to us that you kids want to know about our lives. We would always love you no matter what, but it is wonderful to know you really care about us."

She was honored.

—Kerri Dowd □

WHEN STORMS ARISE...



Christine Hooper

Most are familiar with Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd..."). God tells us that he is the shepherd and we are his sheep:

"Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm

100:3). God calls us sheep in the hope we can learn from these docile animals.

One tremendous lesson we can learn from sheep is how they react when storms approach. During severe storms, sheep look to and lean on each other for strength and protection. At the height of a storm they will huddle together in the middle of the field.

Those in the middle of the flock are the safest, and those on the outside try to squeeze into the middle. The sheep know, by instinct, that when they are alone during a storm they are vulnerable to the elements, and that there is safety in numbers.

This is how we should handle the storms in our lives. When problems and trials arise—and they do continually—do we try to “go it alone” and or do we follow the example of the sheep? Instead of trying to make it on our own, and leaving ourselves more vulnerable to depression, loneliness and hopelessness, we should go to the flock for strength.

Who is the flock? “You are My flock, the flock of My pasture; you are men, and I am your God,” says the Lord God,” (Ezekiel 34:31). Those who follow Christ (John 10:4) are the flock of God.

We can't get as much done, physically or spiritually, if we always try to do everything ourselves. As we work, as we struggle through life, we occasionally will stumble and even fall. If we are alone, there is no one to help us. But if others are near, there is always someone to help us up and give us strength (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

There is strength in the begotten Family of God. A strong family, tied together with love and God's Spirit, offers Satan no foothold. He can't break us as long as we, God's own flock, are together.

—Rick L. Shallenberger □

KEYS TO OVERCOMING SIN

“He who overcomes,” Jesus Christ promised, “and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations” (Revelation 2:26). If we want to rule with Christ in his kingdom, we must overcome sin.

God's Word gives us specific keys that can help us triumph over sins:

1) *Diligence*. “The hand of the diligent will rule” (Proverbs 12:24). We must be diligent in identifying sin and in rooting it out. We must strive for perfection (Matthew 5:48). Overcoming must be a high-priority task.

2) *Realize sin is serious*. Satan deceives the world into believing that many sins are harmless. We shouldn't be fooled by the “passing pleasures of sin” (Hebrews 11:25). A candy coating on a poison pill may taste good, but the pill's end result is death. Even a “small” sin hurts.

3) *Replace evil with good*. We will have success in overcoming sin if we take the positive approach of starting to do good, rather than the negative approach of trying to stop sinning. God didn't call us to a life of restrictions, but to a productive life of helping and giving to those around us. We should fill our minds with good thoughts (Philippians 4:8). “Overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). If our minds are filled with God's Word, there will be no room for Satan's temptations.

4) *Seek God's help*. Like Christ himself, we can of our own selves do nothing of any spiritual significance (John 5:30). But with God's help, we can do all things (Philippians 4:13). It is God who works in us (Philippians 2:13). We can be “strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).

5) *Never give up*. There will be times when we slip into old sins. When that happens, Satan will try to discourage us, paralyze us with hopelessness. But we must not quit trying. God will never forsake us nor leave us (Hebrews 13:5). He promises to complete his work in us (Philippians 1:6).

Every sin can be overcome. Don't let sin hold you back from the kingdom of God.

—Donald T. Mears □

KEEPING HABITS BROKEN

It's demoralizing to stumble when you're trying to break a bad habit. But the knowledge you can gain from slips will help you in the process of overcoming.

Did you know that 90 percent of smokers quit by themselves? Yet most relapse several times before kicking the habit.

“The belief that a slip means you have no willpower or are addicted is a self-fulfilling prophecy,” said G. Allan Marlatt

of the University of Washington. He told the *New York Times*: “About 20 percent of people can kick a habit on their first try, but most need several attempts, no matter what the habit.”

Here's how you can learn from relapses and get right back on track again:

• *Examine the circumstances that led up to the slip*. Were you angry, depressed or frustrated? Were you with a particular group of people or in a particular environment?

Next time you find yourself in a similar situation you will recognize the danger and will be prepared. You may need to avoid the situation altogether.

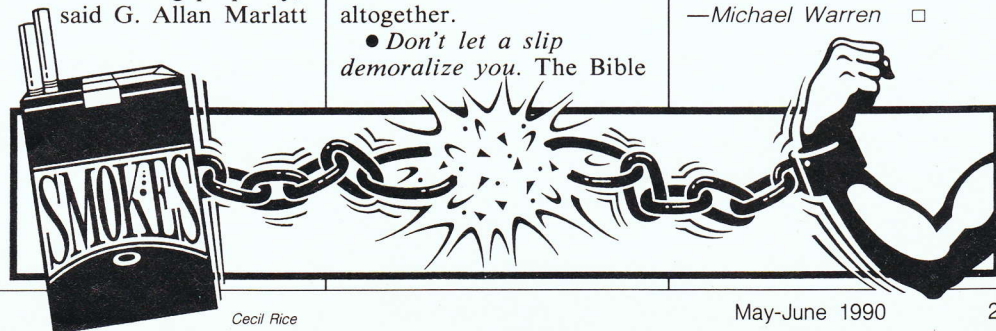
• *Don't let a slip demoralize you*. The Bible

says, “A righteous man may fall seven times and rise again” (Proverbs 24:16). Remember that upon your repentance, God will forgive you every time you sin.

• *Don't be afraid to get help*. God's ministers and professional counselors are there to do just that—help. Their function is to encourage you and help you develop a practical program for overcoming sins and bad habits.

Overcoming our carnal nature is a lifelong process that requires good strategies, not just good intentions. One of those strategies is to use the knowledge gained in 'lost battles to go on and win the war.

—Michael Warren □



COMING

IN THE GOOD NEWS

◇ “If You’re Doing It God’s Way It Will Work Out”

Dozens of brethren with nonmember mates answered our invitation to tell us how their conduct influenced their families. Here’s what they said.

◇ King Hezekiah: The “Caged Bird” That Got Away

Sennacherib intended to destroy Jerusalem. But God had something else in mind!

◇ What Does God Want From You?

Think about the person you love most. Do you love God even *more*?

◇ Break Down the Barriers!

Suppose you could ask 10 guests to a dinner party. Who would you invite? Who *wouldn’t* you invite? And why?

◇ Filling the Empty Nest

After the last child leaves home, what’s left for Mom and Dad to do?
