

THE NEW CREATION

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Contents

	Page
Contents.....	1
Editorial: Our Greatest Enemy.....	2
He with Whom We Have to Do.....	3
My Help Comes from the Lord.....	9
A Quiet Spirit.....	12
Peter’s Revelation.....	13
Pursuing Contentment.....	15
The Work of God (part 1 of 2).....	19
A Biblical View of Healing.....	24
It Was Said ... But I Say Unto You.....	31
Perceptions.....	33
A Portrait of Jesus: <i>Spending Time with His Father</i>	34
Prayer List.....	35
Grads/Websites.....	36
Conferences and Conventions	37

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“Prove ALL things and hold fast to what is good.” – 1 Thess. 5:21.

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Our Greatest Enemy

The new creation has many enemies; we usually categorize them as the world, the flesh, and the adversary. A common theme runs through all of them. It is pride. Pride encourages us to attain a higher status of respect from others. This is attained by achievements that our friends admire, say wealth, position, education, health, friends, etc. This can lead to a false sense of importance. Thus, pride generated by the influences of the world's values drive our flesh to thinking of ourselves as better than we ought. (Romans 12:3) Praise from others can drive our minds to a false sense of importance. This becomes doubly troubling when it includes spiritual pride. Really, who are we? We are mere flesh and blood begotten with new hopes, aims, and ambitions along lines that God approves.



Can we maintain our relationship with God throughout our consecrated walk of faith, and by faith alone? Do we need evidences of God's blessing? We would say we need reassurance that all is still right with our God and ourselves. That encouragement comes through the scriptures and our brethren we meet with for study, prayer, and testimony. Jesus never said, "Isolate yourself, keep your knowledge to yourself, live for yourself." What he did say was to love your brethren, meet with your brethren, and encourage your brethren. (John 15:12; Matt.18:20, 24:28; Luke 22:32) Did he do this? Yes. Think of having 12 disciples following him for several years, teaching them, commissioning them, correcting them, and providing for them. He laid down his life for them and left a legacy of encouragement that they should likewise lay down their lives for the brethren. Pride could easily have infected these disciples, and one was to his own undoing, but the rest showed a living example of humility and love for others. Can we do the same, or will pride be our downfall? Lord, we pray not!

R. Whittaker

He with Whom We Have to Do

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” [Hebrews 4:13, KJV]

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.” [Hebrews 4:13, NLT]

Who is this Being “*with whom we have to do*”; the One who “*inhabits eternity*” and also dwells with those who have a “*humble and contrite spirit*”? [Isaiah 57:15] He is independent of everything, to the ultimate degree [Psalm 50:10-12]. Our physical universe of space and time is a creation of God and does not contain Him. He is “outside” our universe. It is impossible for us to picture any existence outside of space and time.

The Almighty, the Eternal is beyond our limited comprehension. His eternal past existence is simply incomprehensible to the human mind. What little we do know about Him is primarily revealed to us in the Scriptures, especially in the life and teachings of Jesus. In these “*last days*” [Hebrews 1:1-2] God speaks to us by His son. “*He who has seen me has seen the Father ...*” [John 14:9]

Even then, we need the holy spirit to understand spiritual things. The Scriptures tell us about God’s character, who He is and what He values, in other words, they are a revelation of Himself. We find that He is a living, active, dynamic Being, with a wide range of emotions [Isaiah 63:9; Micah 7:18; Zephaniah 3:17] and a definite plan for His creations.

God’s Power

We understand a little of His power by looking at His creation, both the animate and inanimate. Paul tells us “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eter-*

nal power and deity, so that they are without excuse" [Romans 1:20]

In recent years, humanity's estimate of the size of the physical universe has increased dramatically. In ancient times, the number of stars visible to unaided eyesight was about 2500. Now, after the Hubble and Webb telescopes have made their deep space photos, we are told that the number of galaxies is estimated to be as high as 2 trillion [2 followed by 12 zeros], with each containing around 10 million stars [1 followed by 7 zeros]. Such numbers of stars simply baffle our minds. Yet God says these are the "*work of my fingers*," and that He "*calls each by name*" [Psalm 8:3; 147:4]. Is God omnipotent? For all practical purposes, Yes; but, even God cannot do what is logically impossible, such as making a square circle or creating a being equal to Himself.

On the other extreme in size are the living cells. Each tiny cell is like a city, with food delivery, trash removal, guards watching for intruders, power generators, etc. How can God, who has made such an enormous universe, also be able to create the ultra-tiny single cells, and atoms, and even smaller things? Such wisdom and abilities are far beyond us.

But God's other unchanging attributes, such as wisdom, justice, love, holiness are not so obviously revealed. The permission of evil, and the restoration of humanity from that condition, will reveal some of the depth of God's various attributes.

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

God's Holiness

"The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'" Isaiah 33:14

God has the ability to read our thoughts, to see into our motives -- even those very deepest motives that we ourselves hardly know are there. But there will come a time -- “... *then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*” [1 Corinthians 13:12].

At some point or other, in this age or the next, a man must stop running from himself and his God. Possibly, he may in exhaustion say, “Enough. I can run no further.” Possibly, because there is just no other place to run to --- perhaps he has run into a wall, or finds himself in a corner, a dead-end with no way out.

At such a time a man must finally face himself, and admit he is what he is. Then he must turn and meet that God from whose eyes nothing ever can be concealed.

God offers salvation and redemption, but on His own terms.

Then there are two options for man:

1. Defiance and ultimate loss.
2. Acceptance --- Throwing oneself unreservedly on the mercy of God, with repentance, accepting Jesus, and obtaining ultimate victory and life.

God’s Benevolence, Love, Faithfulness

As an evidence of His love, God has blessed all His intelligent creatures with free choice -- a wonderful gift -- not unlimited free will, but free choice among the options He has allowed. We cannot flap our arms and fly because that is not a choice He has given us; we are restrained by the laws of gravity, aerodynamics, energy, etc. If we stay within the boundaries He has set for us, we have liberty and can choose among good, better, and best. We have no liberty to go to the “dark side” where sin and evil are. God does not dwell there.

The basic nature of God is love. The word in Hebrew is “hesed”, generally translated as “*lovingkindness*”. How awful it would be if He had great power, but a flawed character!

"Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."
[Psalm 121:4]

"... showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." [Exodus 20:6]

"... Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens." [Psalm 89:2]

"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." [1 John 4:8]

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."
[1 John 1:5]

And God does not change.

"For I am the Lord, I change not ..." [Malachi 3:6]

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." [James 1:17]

God's Wisdom

Does God know everything? The answer seems to be that God knows everything that can be known. God knows all the various possibilities that an intelligent creature might be faced with, of choices to be made, but free choice, by its very nature, seems to be unknowable until the choice is actually made and becomes a reality. Thus, the intelligent creature is allowed to be a "creator" within his own limited sphere. But God still maintains overall control of His universe and His plans for the future.

"But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight, says the Lord". [Jeremiah 9:24]

Paul writes in Colossians that he has a great conflict for them that their heart might attain to the full assurance of under-

standing, *“to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* [Colossians 2:2-3]

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory...”
[1 Corinthians 2:7]

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” [James 3:17]

One symbol of God’s all-seeing wisdom is found in Revelation 4:5, where we see *“Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God”*; and similarly in 5:6 *“... a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”* These “spirits” represent God’s awareness of everything in His vast domains; nothing escapes His attention. *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good”*. [Proverbs 15:3]

God’s Justice

God is not like his fallen creatures; we can scarcely judge ourselves, let alone others. God’s justice-balances are perfect; his measuring-weights are accurate. He alone knows the heart and all pertinent circumstances. We know so little.

“... God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed.” [Ecclesiastes 3:17, NIV]

“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.” [Ecclesiastes 12:14]

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Mercy and truth go before Your face.” [Psalm 89:14]

“Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on

you. For the Lord is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him.” [Isaiah 30:18]

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.” [Deuteronomy 32:4]

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” [Galatians 6:7]

Final Thoughts

So, then, we have barely touched the surface of our subject. If we could begin to grasp God as He really is, then He would be a small god indeed! We are satisfied that He is beyond our comprehension and that He has revealed Himself in His works, His word, and in Jesus the Messiah.

“Let him who boasts boast about this, that he understands and knows me.” [Jeremiah 9:24].

"You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You".--Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) -- ["Confessions"]

L. Schneider

Scripture citations from NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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*Heav'nly Father, Sov'reign Lord,  
Be thy glorious name adored!  
Lord, thy mercies never fail;  
Hail, celestial goodness, hail!*

*Though unworthy of thine ear,  
Deign our humble songs to hear;  
Purer praise we hope to bring  
When around thy throne we sing.*

Hymns of Dawn

## My Help Comes from the Lord

*“My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth” Psalm 121:2*

The above statement is indeed very true but not recognized fully by all Christian people. It has often been said that *“God helps those who help themselves.”* It is true that God expects His creatures to use the faculties they are endowed with, to make all reasonable provision for their needs; *nevertheless, there is much beyond our scope, which leaves us dependent upon divine strength.* The closer we live to God, the more we realize this. In Heb. 11:6 we read, *“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.”*

There are three important points in this verse, **first**, that we cannot be pleasing to God without faith; **secondly**, this faith must establish a conviction in the reality of the personality of God; and **lastly**, that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

Christians who have come to love and serve the true God and His son Jesus do not serve solely for a reward, *but because of a feeling of gratitude for all that God has done for them;* but we are also glad to know that our loving Father has made this additional promise to those who diligently seek him. All who have been some time in His service will recognize how much they are in need of His daily support to maintain them in this narrow way, as well as His guidance to direct them in their spiritual hopes, which point us to that heavenly city whose builder and maker is God.

A sincere Christian never questions God's greatness and power, *but there are times when we may doubt the outworking of that power in ourselves with all our weakness and frailty.* At such times, we should turn to Paul's remarks in 2 Cor. 12:9-10 where we read these two statements: (a) *“My grace is sufficient for you”*, and (b) *“for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* This was the Apostle's source of power: a complete reliance upon God's power working in him through God's grace. No wonder, then, he states in Phil. 4:13, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

The Scriptures abound with evidences of God's power, exhibiting itself in the lives of those who placed their trust in

Him. This is very strikingly illustrated in Hebrews 11. In verse 34 the statement is made that certain ones spoken of previously were *out of weakness made strong*, which is completely in harmony with 1 Cor. 1:26-31 where we are told that God has chosen the weak things...to confound the things that are mighty, so that he that glories may do so *in the Lord*.

An excellent illustration of this power working in the lives of men is that of natural Israel and their leader, Moses. In Deut. 7:7 God said that he did not choose Israel because they were numerous but because they were fewest of all people; likewise their leader sought to avoid the responsibility of leadership because he was slow of speech. What wonders God wrought by this nation and their leader, Moses! Each of us can recall many names in both the Old and New Testaments of those who were lifted up from lowly positions in life to serve the living God with power and dignity.

How do we become associated with this power? The first thing to remember in this connection is *that it is not of ourselves but the gift of God* (Ephesians 2:4-10). Having received the call the next essential is to allow His spirit to abide in us richly as outlined in our Lord's own words, John 15:1-8, of the vine and the branches. We are also admonished in Col. 3:16 to "let the word of Christ dwell in us richly."

It is by the indwelling of God's spirit that we grow in grace and the knowledge of the truth. A word in common use recently is "*dynamic*," suggestive of the powerful yet unseen electrical energy which is in common use today. This illustrates how God's spirit can activate our weak human lives so that great things can be done in His name.

An even better illustration is the use of wireless communication, *where there is no visible connection between the sending and receiving stations*, yet it is possible to transmit messages clearly over great distances. In like manner, *prayer and God's holy Spirit* enables us to fulfill what Jesus promised His followers in John 14:12: "*Verily I say unto you, He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.*" Jesus did not specify what these 'greater works' were, but the point...is that He was about to leave them to go back to the Father in heaven, and in His absence He would arrange with His Father for an outpouring of God's spirit to direct them in

His absence. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-18 and 33).

Some people are inclined to chide the Christian church of today because they do not perform miraculous works of healing, speaking with tongues, etc. as was practiced in the early church. They attribute this to lack of faith on the part of present day Christians; but we must not forget that God's spirit moves in a variety of ways and in a manner suitable for the changing times. A careful reading of 1 Cor. 12, 13 and 14, will show that the special gifts of that time *were to convince non-believers of God's power in the lives of those who had become followers of Jesus Christ*. In the last five verses of chap. 12, Paul indicates that they all had different gifts, but the same spirit; but he would now "show a more excellent way." Chapter 13 is mostly given over to showing how these special gifts, having served their purpose, would come to an end, and all-embracing love take their place. This is a large subject and much more could be said...but I hope it may reveal to those who feel the church is not discharging its duties that it is the writer's conviction that 2 Tim. 4 :2 is our present duty and the most effective way of carrying out our Lord's original commission of Matt. 28:18-20.

R. Bayliss

*2Ti 4:2 ESV -- preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

Mat 28:18-20 ESV

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

The greatest hindrance to witnessing is cold feet.

## A Quiet Spirit

*“The hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, a meek and **quiet spirit**, which is in the sight of God of great price.” (1 Peter 3:4)*

The admonition of Proverbs 4:23 is well taken: *“Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.”* One might be very careful as to what they allow their eyes to see and their ears to hear. They might watch and guard against anything wanting to prey upon their minds, but if they are ensnared with the inner spirit forces, so that they begin to act and react in alignment with the spirit of the world, *sorrow lies at the door.*

We need to *take heed to our spirit*, guarding against that which would defile us from within, unsettle us and disturb our peace, causing us to become riled up with the agitating spirit of the world. So unawares, and in an hour when we think not, we find our *inner spirit* becoming pressured and tested, but God can help us maintain a quiet spirit.

The need to come into the maturity of a meek and quiet spirit becomes more evident with the increasing pressure of our times. *“Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him”* (Ps. 37:7). More literally from the Hebrew text, this reads, *“Be silent to the Lord.”* You say, “what does that mean?” Consider how often we trouble our own spirit with our constant babble of sound to the Lord. “Why, Lord?” “When, Lord?” “How, Lord?” “Speak, Lord!” “Do something, Lord!” “Hear me now, O Lord!” when all the time what we really need is *to quiet ourselves before Him and remember that “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength”* (Isaiah 30:15).

Often our mind screams out, *“But God ought to act in this emergency **now!**”* But His Spirit whispers back to us deep within, *“Keep calm, just rest in Me.”* Don’t allow your flesh to rise up in rebellion at what seems like inactivity on God’s part, but rather maintain a quietness of spirit, in full confidence that He will not fail. At the proper time He will work *“all things together for good”* (Romans 8:28). *“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord”* (Lamentations 3:26).  
From Daily Overcoming

## Peter's Revelation

Peter was in Jaffa or Joppa, when he received a heavenly vision as recorded in Acts 10. You all know the story. The implication of this vision, as Peter came to realize, is extremely significant and is something we should take to heart every day, and apply to our understanding.

Peter at that time came to the conclusion that God was not, and I will add, was NEVER a respecter of persons. He said in Acts 10:34 *".....Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."* God does not change, (Mal. 3:6) and we are warned by James not to be a respecter of persons if we are to walk with, and be accepted by God, and our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. As we read in Jas. 2:8-9, *"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced (convicted) of the law as transgressors."*

Doing the will of God, and following in the footsteps of our Lord and Master is tantamount to being known of him. We are admonished to **watch**, to avoid daily snares that can entrap us, and separate us from Him. We must always be prepared, having put on the whole armor of God, to daily be led by His Word, not like the five foolish virgins who were not ready at His coming, with Jesus confessing that he never knew them. (Mat. 25:11-13) This is contrasted by the five wise virgins who were ready, having built their house on a solid foundation of God's Word -- that armor that can withstand and deliver us from trials and temptations.

As we read in 1Co. 10:6, Israel was given to us as an example that we may learn and not fall prey to pride, thinking that we are something special as Israel did, and as perhaps some still do. The scriptures teach that our heart condition should be such as to esteem others better than ourselves (Php.2:3). Concerning Israel's heart condition, we read in Eze 16:14-15 *"And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through MY comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD. But thou did trust in thine*

*own beauty, and played the harlot because of thy renown, and poured out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was.”*

We should receive encouragement when we read in Acts how the prayers and alms of Cornelius, the first gentile convert in this account, went up to God as a memorial. (Acts 10:4) It was Peter who changed in his thinking, for God was never a respecter of persons. We read in Exo 12:48 *“And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee (Israel), and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and **he shall be as one that is born in the land:...**”*

We are also given the example of the Canaanite women, Rahab the harlot, who lived with her family in Jericho before it was destroyed by the Lord. She became an Israelite, saved by faith in the Lord. That was counted to her for righteousness. (Ro.4:5) And there is Ruth the Moabite woman, who along with Rahab was an ancestress of David and Christ. (Mat.1:5-6) We have a **most gracious and forgiving** Heavenly Father who never looks on the outward appearance, but on the condition of the heart, testified to us in Eze 18:21-22, *“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, **they shall not be mentioned unto him:** in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.”*

From the very beginning in the Garden, it was **obedience** to the commands of our Creator that established **our standing with Him**, and that is simply as true today, and tomorrow, as it was then. A good attitude and desire of heart to please those we are called to serve is more important than education, skills, and fancy titles, and is the prerequisite of long and lasting success. It is only the humble and obedient that are exalted. (Mat. 23:12) As noted in Ezekiel above, it is who we are, not what we were that matters. Praise the Lord!

J. DiCesare

## Pursuing Contentment

*“Keep your lives free from the love of money and **be content** with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).*

Contentment is a *choice* that all of us can make. The opposite would be to choose to be dissatisfied with what we have. If we *choose* the latter, it not only creates an unrestful spirit and unhappiness within us, but more importantly, it is saying that God’s provisions for us are not to our liking. In essence, it is complaining against God Himself; a sobering thought, is it not?

*“But godliness with **contentment** is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). If you want to “gain” something, you must go after it. If you want to capture something, you must first *choose* to pursue it. It doesn’t just happen. The Apostle Paul had *learned* the secret of being content with his lot, which was to accept whatever God allowed in his life. He speaks from experience: “I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be **content whatever the circumstances**. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being **content** in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want” (Philippians 4:11-12).*

Proverbs 27:20 states, “Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and **neither are human eyes.**” Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, “Whoever loves money **never has enough**; whoever loves wealth is **never satisfied** with their income. This too is meaningless.”

These two texts hold out for us the worldly perspective regarding life. It is a matter of focus. If our focus is on material things in this life, contentment and satisfaction will always be as allusive as trying to catch the wind or touch a star and always out of reach.

### Paul’s Health Problem

The Apostle Paul had a health problem, which I believe the Lord’s Word infers to us, was with his eyes. He prayed three



times for the Lord to heal him of this affliction. We read of this in 2 Corinthians 12:8-9, *“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is shown best in weakness.’(LB) Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

Why did Paul find peace and contentment with the Lord’s answer? Was it not Paul’s spirit of humility that prompted him to willingly accept this weakness if it was the Lord’s will for him and it could bring glory to the Lord? Shouldn’t this be our attitude as well in our afflictions? To do otherwise would create in us an unrestful spirit and make our lives miserable.

### **David’s Humble Spirit**

Let us note David’s attitude in Psalm 131:1-2, *“My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother. Like a weaned child is my soul within me.”*

David possessed a humble spirit. This served him well throughout his life. Even after he was anointed to succeed King Saul, he was content to wait for God’s timing for him to become ruler of Israel. *It was nearly 15 years between the time that he was anointed king, and he actually became king. Fifteen years!* That is a long time! He had no intention of running ahead of God. Had David expected to take over the kingdom soon after his anointing by Samuel, he would have been greatly disappointed. But David’s faith in God’s promise did not waver. As he *waited on the Lord* for those 15 years, he learned a great many lessons which served him well when he became king. He went from a good shepherd of sheep to a successful warrior for Israel. The secret of his success was *his confidence in God*.

One of his most famous victories was when he stood up to Goliath. We read of this in 1 Samuel 17:34-37 when David requested permission to face Israel’s enemy and giant warrior. *“But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a*

sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it, and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. **The LORD who rescued me** from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

King Saul agrees and in verses 45-50 we read that David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but **I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel**, whom you have defied. This day **The LORD will deliver you into my hands**, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the **LORD** saves; for **the battle is the LORD’s, and He will give all of you into our hands.**” As Goliath moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching in his bag and taking a stone, he struck the Philistine on the forehead and watched as he fell face-down on the ground. So, David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.”

It was this kind of confidence that he had **in God** that was the source of his being content, knowing that God would one day keep His promise to set him on the throne as Israel’s king.

### **Comparisons Are Odious**

Comparisons can become a source of discontent and breed envy. Envy can breed jealousy and we know that Jealousy never breeds any-thing good. We should be content to be where the Lord has put us in this life. It may be true that there are some who can’t do some things as well as we could. If this thought comes to our minds, Satan is right there to encourage us to dwell on such prideful thinking, taking us down a road

that would be most detrimental as followers of Jesus. It is at this point that it is essential for us to make the right choice, avoiding the broad road that leads to destruction and staying on the narrow way to life eternal.

Matthew 7:13 tells us, "Enter by the narrow *gate*; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction." Proverbs 16:18 warns, "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*"

May we always keep in mind the wisdom found in Romans 12:3, "*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought**, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.*"

And in 1 Corinthians 4:7, "*For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*" May we always leave the exalting to the Lord, the Righteous judge (Psalm 75:7).

#### **Thoughts to ponder:**

- It is impossible to be content with your own life if you're always looking at what others have and desiring it.
- A harvest of peace is produced by seeds of contentment.
- We need much less than we think to be content.
- Contentment does not come from achievements but in resting in the providences of God.
- Contentment does not come from having great wealth but by having few wants.
- Contentment does not depend on our circumstances but on our mental attitude.
- He who is not content with what he has, would not be content with what he would like to have.

E. Weeks

# The Work of God

## Part 1 of 2

***"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." John 6:29***

John's sixth chapter opens abruptly at a scene many miles distant from Jerusalem. Jesus had responded at length to his angry persecutors in that city. He had come upon a man at the edge of the pool called Bethesda. The unnamed man had been seriously ill for 38 years. He obviously wanted to be cured--he came, as did others, to bathe in the pool after *"the water is stirred up."*--John 5:5-9

Jesus asked him, *"Do you wish to get well?"* The man did not say yes, but he implied that he was too helpless to enter the water in time for a miracle to be performed. This vaguely positive response from a helpless man moved our Master to reply at once: *"Arise, take up your pallet, and walk."* And the man did!

This miracle got both of them in trouble. First, the Jews accused the man who had been healed: *"It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."* When they later began to charge Jesus, He replied: *"My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."*--John 5:10,17

### **Ever Loving, Ever Working**

Our Master's assurance suggests an important principle. God may have rested from His creative work, but He never ceases dispensing mercy (Exod. 34:6,7). The Jews did not understand this idea. They sought all the more to kill Him. In their eyes, Jesus not only broke the Sabbath, but also He *"was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God"*--or so they reasoned.

Jesus was also accused in another Sabbath-day healing. He replied briefly at that time saying it was not unlawful to extend mercy to animals on the Sabbath day. The law did not specify when acts of rescue could be performed (Matt. 12:11,12, Luke 13:15, 14:5, Exod. 23:5,6, Deut. 22:4). That silence implied

that any day was appropriate for an act of mercy. That being so, it was even more proper to help a man.

But this time Jesus answered at length. He presented truths which enraged His opposers even more (John 5:19-47). He claimed to work cooperatively with God. He was implementing God's mercy with long-range blessings in view: deliverance and salvation for all. He said that God loved Him and had committed to Him all judgment both then and in the resurrection. Further, He told them that they should believe His testimony because Moses and the prophets had testified about Him.

### **Signs, Loaves, and Bread of Heaven**

The sixth chapter contains John's last reference to Jesus' ministry in Galilee. He was a popular teacher, *"...a great multitude was following Him, because they were seeing the signs which He was performing on those who were sick"* (John 6:2). There Jesus fed five thousand with five barley loaves and two fish. This further evidenced Him to be the One whom God was to send. *"The people...said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus therefore, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force, to make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone."*-- John 6:14,15

Our Master knew it was not yet time for Him to be made king (Zech. 9:9-12, Matt. 21:1-16). So He acted accordingly. On the following day, Jesus realized that the people were not sincere when some who had been fed previously, asked about how He arrived at Galilee's western side. They had noticed the evening before that while His disciples had travelled by boat, He had not. To them He said, *"...you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal."* John 6:26,27

All this was just like Jesus. He often built spiritual lessons around real-life situations. Sometimes He caused a miracle to

impress His teachings. Here, He was about to explain that God had sent Him with a greater purpose than to supply perishable bread. Their focus, the people's, must change if He was to benefit them. Labor not, He said. Worry not. Take less interest in the bread that strengthens only for a day. Seek for that bread which leads to eternal life. They must learn more about Him. They must learn that God had selected Him. God sent Him forth. God authorized Jesus, the Son of Man, to provide living bread.

And they did wish to know more. *"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"* What prevails with God that will assure us of His blessings? Jesus told them plainly. *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."* It was no more than a matter of faith: accept Him as the sent of God, with authority to give example and to teach.

'Well all that is fine,' they might have thought. 'We saw your sign yesterday in the wilderness meal. But now you are talking about food which builds eternal life.' *"What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'"*--John 6:28-31

That inquiry suggested their readiness to compare bread with bread. At once, Jesus shared further truths. *"Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."*--John 6:32-34

To natural minds this seemed good: *"Lord, evermore give us this bread."* But they still needed to learn more. The spiritual meaning of our Master's words eluded them. So Jesus spoke further about the life-giving bread. *"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst...you have seen Me, and yet do not believe...For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me...For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in*

*Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."*--John 6:35-40

***"...and I work"***

Many Bible passages describe God's mercy towards Israel and the nations. He communicated His purposes through prophets and judges, through kings and priests. His greatest act of mercy was the sending of His only Son. Such was essential to God's program for mankind's rescue (Heb. 2:16). Not only was His Son's ministry necessary, so also was His death. And that dying was *"the work of God,"* for it assured the purchase of all mankind and enabled the redemption of all. Eph. 1:14

Jesus purposed to die. His baptism in water spoke to that intention. He worked *"the work of God"* during His 3-1/2-year journey to Calvary: reasoning, teaching, affirming, encouraging, exemplifying...always seeking the attention of listeners so they might understand and believe. So now He would say, and say again:

*"I am the bread that came down out of heaven."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."* 'This is the work of God...'

*"My flesh is true food, and my Blood is true drink." 'This is the work of God...'*

*"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." 'This is the work of God...'*

*"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me." 'This is the work of God...'*

*"This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate, and died, he who eats this bread shall live forever" (John 6:41-58). 'This is the work of God...'*

Jesus labored faithfully. He died as He intended. And we believe. *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."*

While we believe, all do not and have not. *"But there are some of you who do not believe."* John 6:64

G. Rice

(editor: this is one-half of the article; the second half will appear in the Nov/Dec 2023 issue.)

***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Eph. 2:10***

The bringing together of these living stones beyond the veil will be by the resurrection power, beautifully illustrated in the erection of Solomon's Temple, of which we read that its stones were prepared at the quarry and then finally assembled for the construction of the Temple, and that they were so perfectly shaped and marked for their various places that they came together without the sound of a hammer -- without . . . chiseling or . . . other labor upon them at the time of the construction. So St. Paul says, the Church is God's workmanship. And His work will be so perfectly accomplished that there will be no need of rectification or alteration beyond the veil. It is this viewpoint that is especially interesting and profitable to the Lord's people. Such of them as can realize that they have been called of God to this high calling, to membership in the temple, can fully appreciate thereafter the necessity for the trials and difficulties of life which are shaping them, fitting them, for heavenly glory, honor and immortality.

*Precious Promises*



## **A Biblical View of Healing**

James 5:13-16

When Jesus was upon this earth, during His ministry He did amazing miracle after miracle. Those miracles did not stop after His ascension into heaven. Once the holy spirit came on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles were empowered to bring life to the lifeless, and their miraculous acts are recorded for us in the Book of Acts and other places in the bible.

The question I would like us to address today is: What happened to those miraculous powers? Does the holy spirit still perform miracles today?

I believe there has been a lot of misunderstanding concerning the nature of biblical healing. I have seen countless claims for miraculous healing through the laying on of hands and have seen stories of numerous people who were willing to wipe out their financial future so that some miracle healer could restore a loved one back to health. I have even read stories of people who were so convinced that God would heal them that they refused any kind of medical treatment or of people who refused medical treatments such as receiving blood transfusions, which could save their life or the life of a loved one, simply because of an erroneous understanding of the nature of God and scripture.

What I would like to share is something that you will take to heart and, if you are on the other side of understanding, that you would prayerfully consider my thoughts and words and allow the Lord to speak to your hearts for understanding and truth.

Do I believe that God heals? That is a resounding yes. Have I seen cases where God has healed when there was no other plausible answer for it? Yes, I have. Though those times are rare. But do I believe that God has placed His healing powers in a few individuals that claim to be divine healers? I do not.

While I believe that God can heal, my difficulty comes in focusing attention on a person or on a series of emotionally strong and overpowering events that surround a so called "healing service". My question still remains for them, why don't they just leave the altar and go to the hospitals, which are

filled with people who have lost all hope, and do their best work and carry out their ministry there? Why is so much of this having to do with the undergirding of money. Why could anyone have the audacity to ask of those who search them out to bring their money with them?

### **Original sin and personal sin**

Here are six statements (not all original with me), that tie in with the sickness/sinfulness issue. They are all related.

**1) Primarily, there are two types of sin.** There is original sin, which was passed down to us from Adam and there are personal sins, which we commit.

Original sin we are born with. When Adam fell, we all fell. When Adam and Eve found themselves distant from God, they, our original parents, caused us to be distant from God.

Contrary to liberal theologians and worldly knowledge, we are not born right with God, we are born wrong with God. We are not born spiritually alive; we are born spiritually dead. As a result of original sin, we find ourselves, as human beings, unable to stop sinning. We sin by practice, we sin by habit, we sin by thought, by word, by deed; we are sinners by nature. And because we have sinful roots within us, we act out in sinful fruit.

**2) Original sin introduced sickness, suffering, and death to the human race.**

Romans 5:12, *<sup>12</sup>Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mankind, because all sinned.*

I believe, had Adam and Eve never sinned, they would not have known sickness or suffering or that they would have ever died. But with the introduction of sin came sickness, disease and all kinds of human affliction and the ultimate plague of life, the reality of death.

**3) Often, there exists a direct relationship between personal sins and physical sickness.** King David, when he came to accept the reality of his adultery and hypocrisy and the murder of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, finally admitted to his sin and, as a result, found himself getting well. Until then, there had been an extended period of illness, heartache,

guilt, and shame. He probably suffered from insomnia. He struggled in his rulership of the nation of Israel. There was a direct relationship between his sinfulness and the sickness that he went through. Note David's words in Psalm 32:1-7, <sup>1</sup>*How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!* <sup>2</sup>*How blessed is a person whose guilt the LORD does not take into account, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!* <sup>3</sup>***When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long.*** <sup>4</sup>***For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality failed as with the dry heat of summer. Selah*** <sup>5</sup>*I acknowledged my sin to You, And I did not hide my guilt; I said, "I will confess my wrongdoings to the LORD"; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah* <sup>6</sup>*Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; Certainly in a flood of great waters, they will not reach him.* <sup>7</sup>*You are my hiding place; You keep me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance.*

**4) Sometimes there is no relationship between personal sin and human afflictions.** In John 9:1-3 we read: <sup>1</sup>*As Jesus passed by, He saw a man who had been blind from birth.* <sup>2</sup>*And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"* <sup>3</sup>*Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

**5) Sometimes it is not God's will that we be physically healed.** That flies directly into the face of those who call themselves "divine healers". They often have the tendency to guarantee healing, that if you have enough faith, and you come to them because they have this divine ability to bring back health, then there will be a connection and they can virtually guarantee you will walk out whole and healthy again. When, in fact, it is not God's will that everyone be healed.

There are numerous examples in the Bible – Paul, who at one time had the gift of healing, yet he left Trophimus sick in Miletus, Epaphroditus almost died while ministering to the Apostle Paul, Paul's spiritual son Timothy, had a stomach problem and frequent ailments, and even Paul was told that his "thorn in the flesh" would remain.

**6) On other occasions, it is God's will that we be physically healed** and He does so immediately and miraculously.

**Acts 3:1-8**, <sup>1</sup>Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. <sup>2</sup>And a man who had been unable to walk from birth was being carried, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order for him to beg for charitable gifts from those entering the temple grounds. <sup>3</sup>When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple grounds, he began asking to receive a charitable gift. <sup>4</sup>But Peter, along with John, looked at him intently and said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup>And he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>But Peter said, "I do not have silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!" <sup>7</sup>And grasping him by the right hand, he raised him up; **and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.** <sup>8</sup>And leaping up, he stood and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

#### **James 5:13-16**

We will now consider the context of James chapter 5:13-16:  
<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; <sup>15</sup>and the prayer of faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.

In the context of these verses, James divides the people in the church into three categories.

**1) James speaks first to those who are suffering.** Vs 13, *Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray* There is a period there and not another piece of advice given to the sufferer. If you look at the Greek word for suffering, *gk. sugkakopatheo*, the form of this word is only found three times in the NT

and all are found in 2 Timothy. In those three times it is translated 'suffer hardship'. It seems the word means "to be the brunt of mistreatment", to be suffering from persecution, or from misunderstanding, to be suffering from hard and difficult times. It is not the same word as suffering from a physical disease. It is a word to mean suffering hardship. Individuals who experience persecution at work because of their faith are going through hardship. We are told to pray. Pray for those people. They are not promised anything special. We are not guaranteed that the suffering will stop. Apparently, in the praying, new strength comes, strength to endure. The ability to withstand hardship and hard times. So, when such external difficulties occur, the answer is to pray. Praying means we are tapping the source of maximum power. God, by His grace brings relief.

**2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> category is a happy category.** *Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.*

Let them sing. We are not to hold back. There are some who want to keep success hidden under a rock or to themselves. Why? Because in many Christian circles it is looked down on – people look at it like something is illegitimate about this. Why does that happen? Usually because of envy in so many people's, brethren's, lives. We need to get to the place of maturity in our lives where the Lord can bless someone else abundantly without our need to feel He must bless me the same before I can enjoy it.

Grace allows us to praise the blessings of God in people's lives while we may not have such blessings in our own. It is a terrible and embarrassing thing for Christianity and Bible students in particular when we are unable to give God praise for someone else's joy. He says - *Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.*

**3) Now the 3<sup>rd</sup> category -- *Is anyone among you sick?***

This is critical that we understand the meaning of the word and that we understand the process we go through.

This word is the Greek ***astheneis*** – it means to be weak, to be without strength, to be incapacitated. I suggest that James is referring to spiritual weakness, not physical weakness, to be so incapacitated that they cannot attend worship or fellowship

with brethren of like-precious faith. This person is spiritually sick, spiritually weak, without spiritual strength. See Mark 2:14-17, <sup>14</sup>As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He \*said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. <sup>15</sup>And it \*happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. <sup>16</sup>When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>17</sup>And hearing this, Jesus \*said to them, "**It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.**"

Romans 14:1, <sup>1</sup>Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not to have quarrels over opinions.

Romans 15:1, <sup>1</sup>Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not just please ourselves.

**I Corinthians 11** <sup>29</sup>For the one who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not properly recognize the body. <sup>30</sup>For this reason many among **you are weak and sick, and a number are asleep.**

The moment of light for this person is that he has enough awareness to call for the elders to come and pray with him.

Let us pay attention to the step-by-step process God has given us in His Word. There are three parts of the process:

1) The spiritually sick person takes the initiative to call for the elders – the weak and strengthless person takes the initiative.

*Is anyone among you sick? Then he (she) must call for the elders of the church.* Once they arrive, they carry out two functions:

2) They pray.

3) They anoint him/her with oil in the name of the Lord, Oil in the holy scriptures is a type of the Holy Spirit

Specific results are left in the Lord's hand.

**The results: James 5:15-16,** <sup>15</sup>and the prayer of faith will restore the one who is sick, The prayer of faith will restore (Greek save) and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has

*committed sins, they will be forgiven him. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A prayer of a righteous person, when it is brought about, can accomplish much.*

### **Closing thoughts**

So let me encapsulate the thoughts of vs 15-16. *Is anyone sick* is referring to spiritual sickness, weakness – a lack of faith. In James chapter 5, as is true of the entire epistle, James is addressing moral and ethical behavior. Nowhere in the letter does James address physical illness. In the context of the chapter and letter, spiritual weakness or illness fits the picture much more appropriately.

When James states that that “...*the prayer offered in faith WILL save the one who is sick....*” can anyone make this statement with respect to physical illness? The answer is no. But we can make that statement with confidence when we are dealing with weakness of faith or spiritual sickness. When a brother or sister who has wandered from the faith genuinely: CONFESSES, REPENTS, ASKS FOR PRAYER AND THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, We have every confidence and assurance that God will heal that person. Indeed, the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much, and James gives the exemplary example of Elijah.

James probably anticipated that some believers would feel it was natural for a man of heroic achievement to be able to pray effectively, but effective prayer could not be expected of ordinary persons, could it? But James makes it clear that Elijah was a man with a nature exactly like ours.

So, remember three things when dealing with spiritual sickness:

1. Confession is spiritually healthy – practice it.
2. Praying for one another is essential. – Do not stop.
3. When healing comes be quick to thank and glorify God.

The lesson for the readers of James was that if the earnest prayer of a right-living person could be the instrument by which God controls the weather, this kind of earnest praying can also be the means by which He grants a saving, healing faith.

D. Gorham

## It Was Said ... But I Say unto You

Mat 5:21-26 KJV

*"Ye have heard that **it was said** by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: **But I say unto you**, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."*

The contrast here is between a superficial interpretation and a profound interpretation of the Law. Jesus is not contrasting the Mosaic Law with His, but the scribal oral interpretation of the Law as over against His. Notice that each time Jesus begins with the words, "***It is said,***" not "***It is written.***"

The Scribes and Pharisees were concerned only with external acts. Jesus traces every deed to *the underlying motive and thought*. Law, He insists, must be understood in *internal or spiritual* terms. Righteousness of the Law is *righteousness of the spirit*. Obedience to the Law has a dual character: *the inner attitude or motive*, the causative element of obedience; and *the visible act*, the effect of inner righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees considered only the outer aspect of righteousness. *The Law demands right inner spirit as well as right external action. It always connects motive and act.*

For His first illustration, Jesus refers to the law against murder. *He goes beyond the outer act to the inner attitude.*



Anger, says Jesus, is equivalent to murder. The person who is angry with another, who insults another with words of contempt, who seeks to destroy one's good name with malicious slander, may never have committed a murder in action, *but nevertheless is a murderer at heart.*

*Jesus also insists that the Law must be interpreted positively, not negatively. Don't simply avoid murder and hate—that is negative—but be positive and promote reconciliation between yourself and another. And notice carefully that Jesus does not say, "Go to your brother if you have something against him, but "Go to your brother if you remember that he has something against you." This is the implementation of the Beatitudes. A correct human relationship is essential to genuine worship of God. God will not accept our gift at the altar, however costly, until we have first been reconciled with others.*

Thought for the day: Don't hold on to a grudge - it's too heavy.

J.T. Seamands

*"...by the world's standards a man is a good man, if he never does a forbidden thing. The world is not concerned to judge his thoughts. By Jesus' standards a man is not good until he never even desires to do a forbidden thing. Jesus is intensely concerned with a man's thoughts...this new standard kills all pride, and forces us to Jesus Christ Who alone can enable us to rise to that standard which He Himself has set before us..."*

William Barclay

Mat 5:43-45 KJV

*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

## Perceptions

The woman arrived at an airport one night with several long hours before her flight. She hunted for a book in the airport shop, bought a bag of cookies and found a place to drop. She was engrossed in her book but happened to see, that the man sitting beside her, as bold as could be, grabbed a cookie or two from the bag in between, which she tried to ignore so as to avoid a scene.

She munched the cookies, watching the clock, as the cookie thief diminished her stock. She was getting more irritated as the minutes ticked by, thinking, *'If I wasn't so nice, I would let him have it!.'*

With each cookie she took, He took one too. When only one was left, she wondered what he would do. With a smile on his face, and a nervous laugh, he took the last cookie and broke it in half. He offered her half, as he munched on the other.

She snatched her bag and left while thinking... ooh, brother! This guy has some nerve and so rude! Why he didn't even show any gratitude! She had never known when she had been so galled and sighed with relief when her flight was called.

She gathered her belongings and headed to the gate, refusing to look back at the thieving ingrate. She boarded the plane, and sank in her seat. Then she sought her book but as she reached in her baggage, she gasped with surprise and a look of horror for there before her eyes was her bag of cookies!

If mine are here, she moaned in despair, the others were his, and he was the one sharing. Too late to apologize, she realized with grief, that she was the rude one, the thieving ingrate!

*How many times have we absolutely known that something was a certain way, only to discover later that what we believed to be true... indeed, was not?*

Author Unknown

*"Love ~ does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil." 1 Corinthians 13:5*

*"Casting down imaginations...and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..." 2 Corinthians 10:5*

*"As one thinks in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7*

## A Portrait of Jesus: Spending Time with His Father

*“Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.” Mark 1:35*



For Jesus who had so many demands surrounding him daily, “the wilderness” or “desolate place” often became his momentary sacred space. He regularly escaped the noise and frenzy of his ministry to be alone with his Father, where he could give God his full attention and where he could refocus himself. This time with His Father helped him to stay grounded and to live in accordance with His Father’s will.

Each of the gospels tell us of this pattern of retreat and reentry; it was a part of the ongoing dynamic of Jesus’ human life. See Luke 4:42; 5:16; Matt. 14:13; John 6:15. Our Lord needed to renew his soul and the only way he could do this was to spend time alone with His Father in prayer, seeking His guidance and assurance that he was walking according the his Father’s plan.

Jesus did not only *retreat* to be alone with God. He also taught his disciples to do the same. In Mark 6:31-32, he invites his disciples to join him, saying, *“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.”* Mark explains, *“For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves.”* Jesus taught us that solitude is an opportunity to open our lives to him for whom we were made and by doing so we will be renewed and refreshed.

Let’s follow the example of our Lord and daily seek a quiet place to spend time in prayer and solitude, seeking our Father’s guidance and direction for our lives. If we do this, we will be as the prophet Isaiah tells us in Isa. 41:31, *“but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”*

D. Mathewson

## Prayer List

*“Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.” (1 Samuel 12:23)*



### Let us be Prayer Warriors for our Brethren!

|                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Adkisson, Grace – TX                | Howes, Paul & Carla - UK       |
| Boswell, Arlene – IL                | Karavas, Anna - CA             |
| Buxton, Jean & Family - UK          | Leavitt, Denise & Richard – ME |
| Casell, Agnes & Family –VT (d)      | Lepitre Family - IL            |
| Cooper, Carmela – NJ                | Mazzotta, Eva – VA             |
| Csutor, Judith – CT                 | Miller, Alain – Canada         |
| Day, Ronald – PA                    | Moore, Ralph & Maryellen – CA  |
| Dalesandro, Jim and family - IL (d) | Ostwald, Dick - WI             |
| Dickson, Roberta Jo – CA            | Parker, Geraldine – CA         |
| Dunn, Kim - IL                      | Penton, Jim – Canada           |
| Feliciano, Carmen - NY              | Phillips, Stella – OK          |
| Fischer, Mike & Liz – WI            | Rice, Michelle – MA (d)        |
| Foster, Jean – IL                   | Rowe, Bryan - UK               |
| Hauslein, Karen – MD                | Schwartz, Ruth – TX            |
| Hawk, Barbara – PA                  | Seminoff, Brenda – CA          |
| Hildebrandt, Lois - FL              | Tuscia, Priscilla – FL         |
| Hoffner, Steve – NH                 | White, Joan - NY (d)           |
| Hogrebe, Joan – MO                  | (d) = death in the family      |

### Entered into rest:

**Important:** If you know anyone in the names listed above whom no longer needs special prayers, please advise us so we may remove their names. Also, if any of the information is incorrect, please let the editor know. Thank you.

*People do not care what you think until you care what they feel.*

## **Bible Correspondence Course New Graduates & Websites**

*Congratulations* to the following students who have completed their course and have been awarded a Certificate.



**No new graduates to acknowledge.**

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You are invited to view the following websites:

<http://www.cdmi.org> (Christian Discipling Ministries International)
(Current/past NC magazine issues are available on our website)

<https://www.christianbelieversconference.com/>

<http://www.cbfchurch.com> (Christian Believers Fellowship in NH)

<http://www.biblefellowshipunion.co.uk> (Bible Fellowship in UK)

<http://www.bbschurch.org> (Lombard, IL)

<https://sites.google.com/site/quietwatersdevotions/home>

<http://www.cartyorkshire.co.uk> (CART)

<http://www.campblessing.com> (Camp Blessing)

<http://www.newcovenantfellowship.org.au> (New Covenant News, Australia)

<https://e-biblia.org/> (Os Estudantes da Bíblia, The Bible Students, Brazil - Portuguese/Span) email: contact@e-biblia.org

Conferences & Conventions

Note: If you would like to have your Convention, Conference, Camp, or Seminar published in The New Creation Magazine, send information or a program *at least three months in advance* of the issue month of the magazine to the editor, Bob Whittaker.

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Any information published in this magazine that you know is incorrect should be brought to the attention of the editor at his email address: bobwhittaker64@gmail.com. We strive for accuracy but do not have full knowledge.

“Do you want to be in control of your emotions and not have them control you? Do you want your emotions to enhance your spiritual life rather than work against it? You can only do this if you rise up and begin influencing your thoughts. The stream of your thoughts will be the most important factor which influences how you feel. If you can keep your hand firmly on the wheel of your thoughts, you will not be subjected to extremes of emotional buffeting and will move to the place of emotional freedom.”

A. D. Hart